

PART 2

Then Came The War

(World War I, 1914-18)

The illustrated war diaries of
Chas Manners and Dick Fryer-Smith,
his friend and fellow forward scout/runner.

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World War I

Foreword

by Ron Manners

What started out as a simple task of assembling my father's First World War diaries, expanded into a larger task. As I became immersed in details of life on the battlefield, it focused my mind on, what Australians owe the veterans of each of the wars that our country has fought.

Above all, we owe them our freedom, our right to live as we wish in a nation, however troubled, however divided at times, that still remains one of the best countries in the world.

Most importantly, for putting their lives on the line to protect Australia, we owe them our gratitude and remembrance. Regrettably, amidst the clutter of modern life it is becoming difficult to take 'time-out' to say thanks.

The following personal war diaries of two young Australians are sandwiched between a few introductory and closing words so that the context of the World Wars is understood. What caused World War I? How did Australia become involved? What was the link between World War I and World War II? What was Adolf Hitler doing during World War I? Was he preparing for World War II?

In 1913 a 24-year-old penniless vagrant named Adolf Hitler, becoming tired of painting picture postcards for sale in a Viennese poorhouse, moved to Munich where he continued to pursue his artistic interests. His life as a struggling artist came to a sudden end in 1914. The Austrian heir, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was assassinated in Sarejevo by a Serb terrorist. Austria declared war on Serbia on July 28. Russia mobilised against Austria. German Kaiser Wilhelm II mobilised German forces against Russia. France and England entered the war soon after, against Germany & Austria.

The Austrian and German people were swept away by war fever. People roamed the streets and demanded action. As described by Jacob G Hornberger.¹

"German Nationalists were singing: Heil der Kaiser! Hail das heer! We must gather all men of German tongues into one Reich and one people.

An everlasting master race will then direct the progress of mankind!"

They could have been speaking for Adolf Hitler, who felt this same elation.

*Hitler wrote in Mein Kampf*²

"I am not ashamed to say that, overcome with rapturous enthusiasm, I fell to my knees and thanked Heaven from an overflowing heart for granting me the good fortune of being allowed to live at this time."

Hitler, an Austrian, joined the German army and obtained the rank of corporal. He served as a regimental messenger, saw combat, was seriously wounded, and ultimately awarded the *Iron Cross* for personal bravery and general merit.

Hitler therefore was one of the links between the two World Wars as is the fact it is governments that declare war on other nations and not citizens of one nation against citizens of another.

¹ J G Hornberger 1995, *President of The Future of Freedom Foundation in Repatriation-the Dark Side of World War II. The Future of Freedom Foundation 11350 Random Hills Road Suite 800 Fairfax Virginia 22030 USA.* www.fff.org

² A.Hitler, "Mein Kampf" Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1990

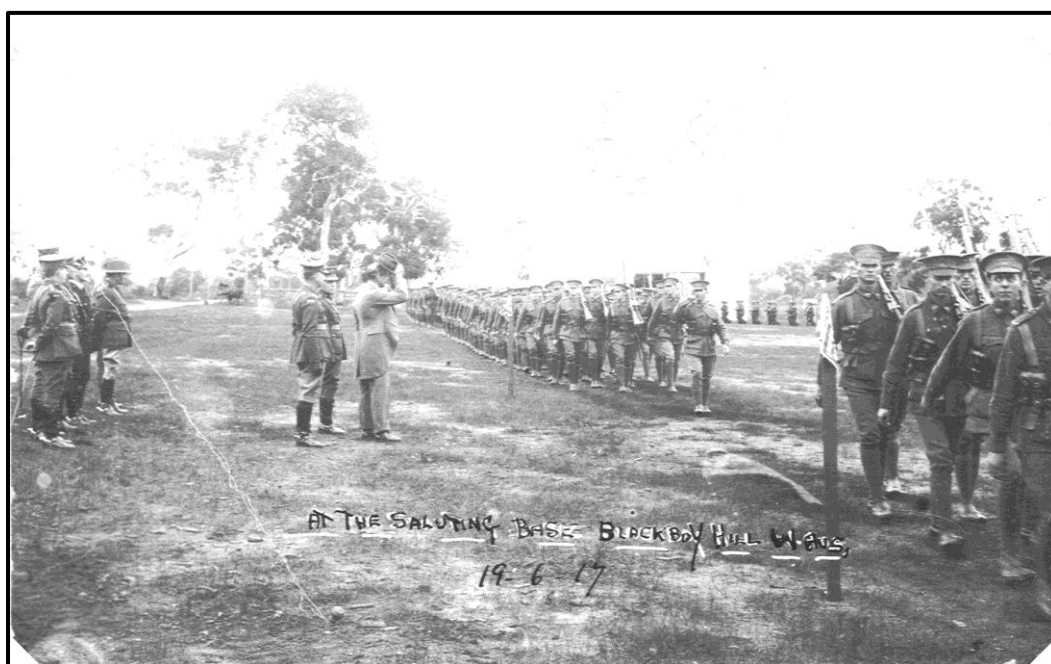
Not many governments appear to be without the authority to declare war, but Switzerland is worth studying. Its government appears to have the brief to arm the people and to maintain vigilant and capable defences without declaring war on others. This sounds like the United States of America as originally envisaged by its Founding Fathers. This may have been the original intent. Unfortunately the role of governments have expanded and the roles of Adolf Hitler and Franklin D Roosevelt in creating circumstances leading to World War II will be explored in the Afterword to the following War diary notes by my father, Chas Manners, and his friend Dick Fryer-Smith.



Training at Blackboy Hill Camp, W.A.



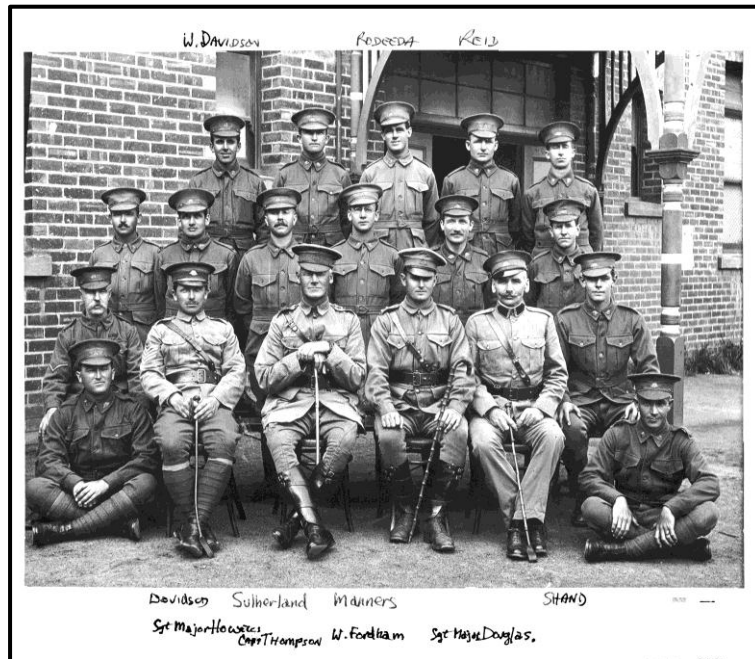
"Good old stew" at Blackboy Hill, April 21, 1917



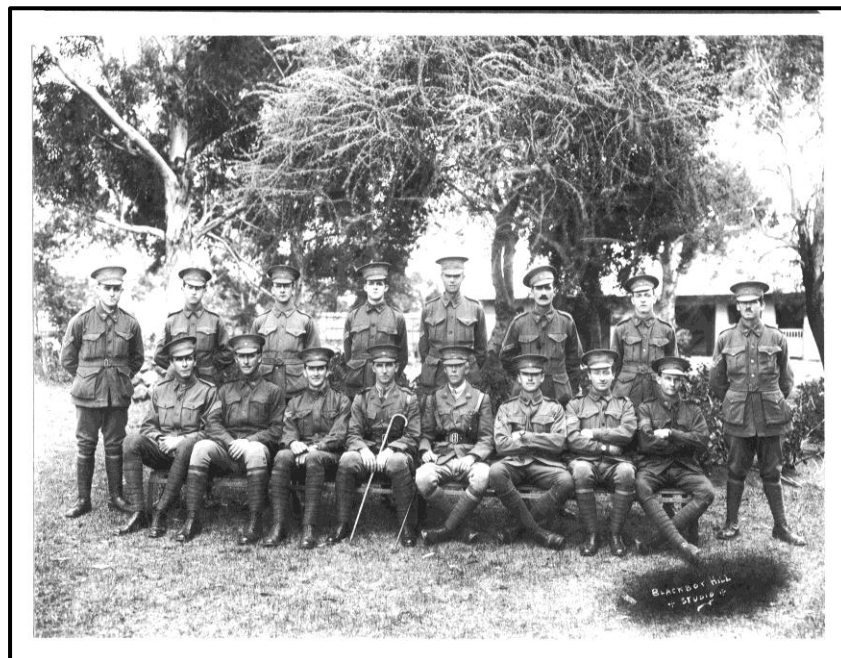
Lieut. Aberle saluting in front of the 28/16 Btn Blackboy Hill, June 19, 1917



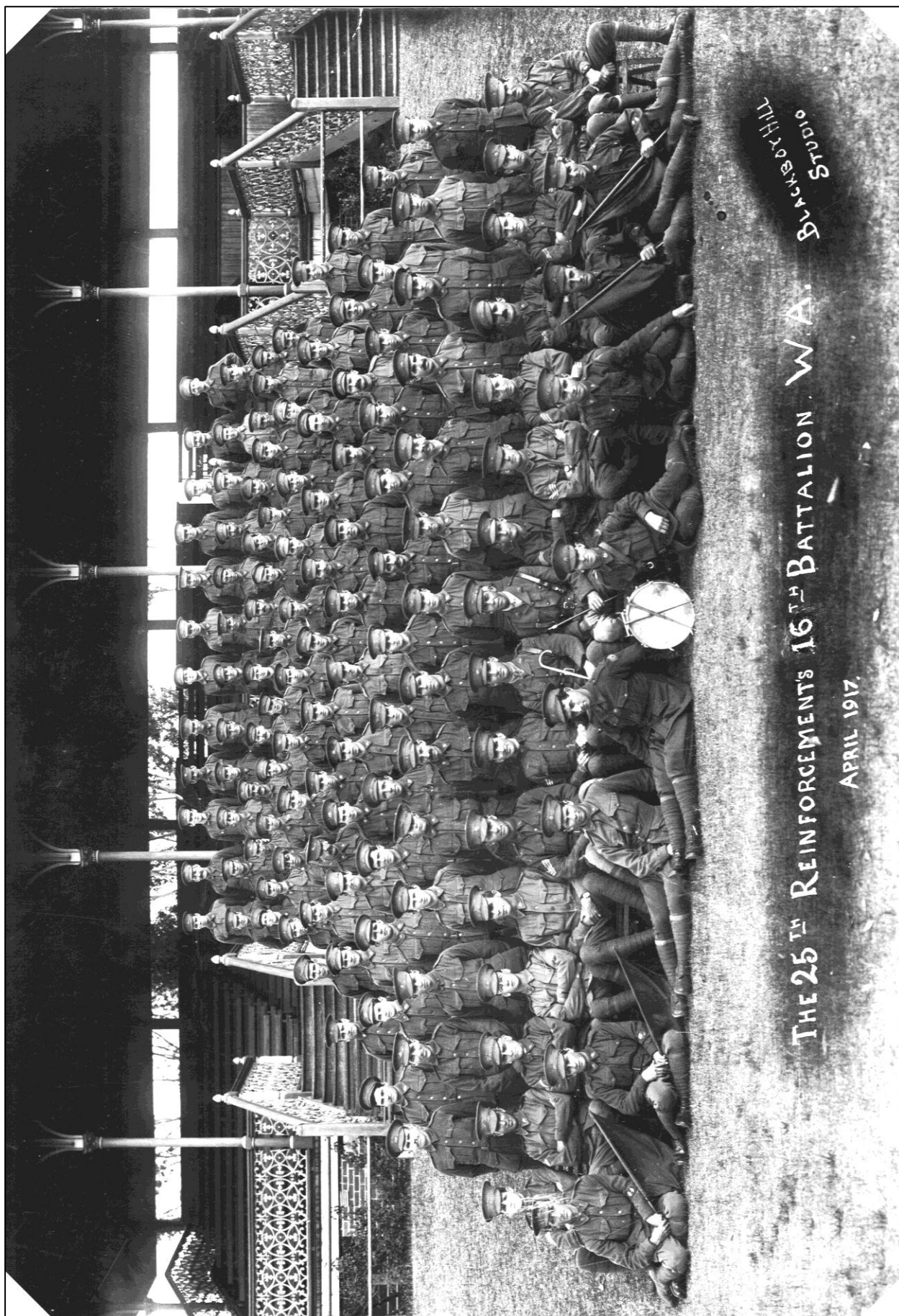
Blackboy Hill- March 2, 1917 (Chas Manners, centre rear)



Platoon No.4 N.C.O. School, Claremont November, December, 1916 No.9 School



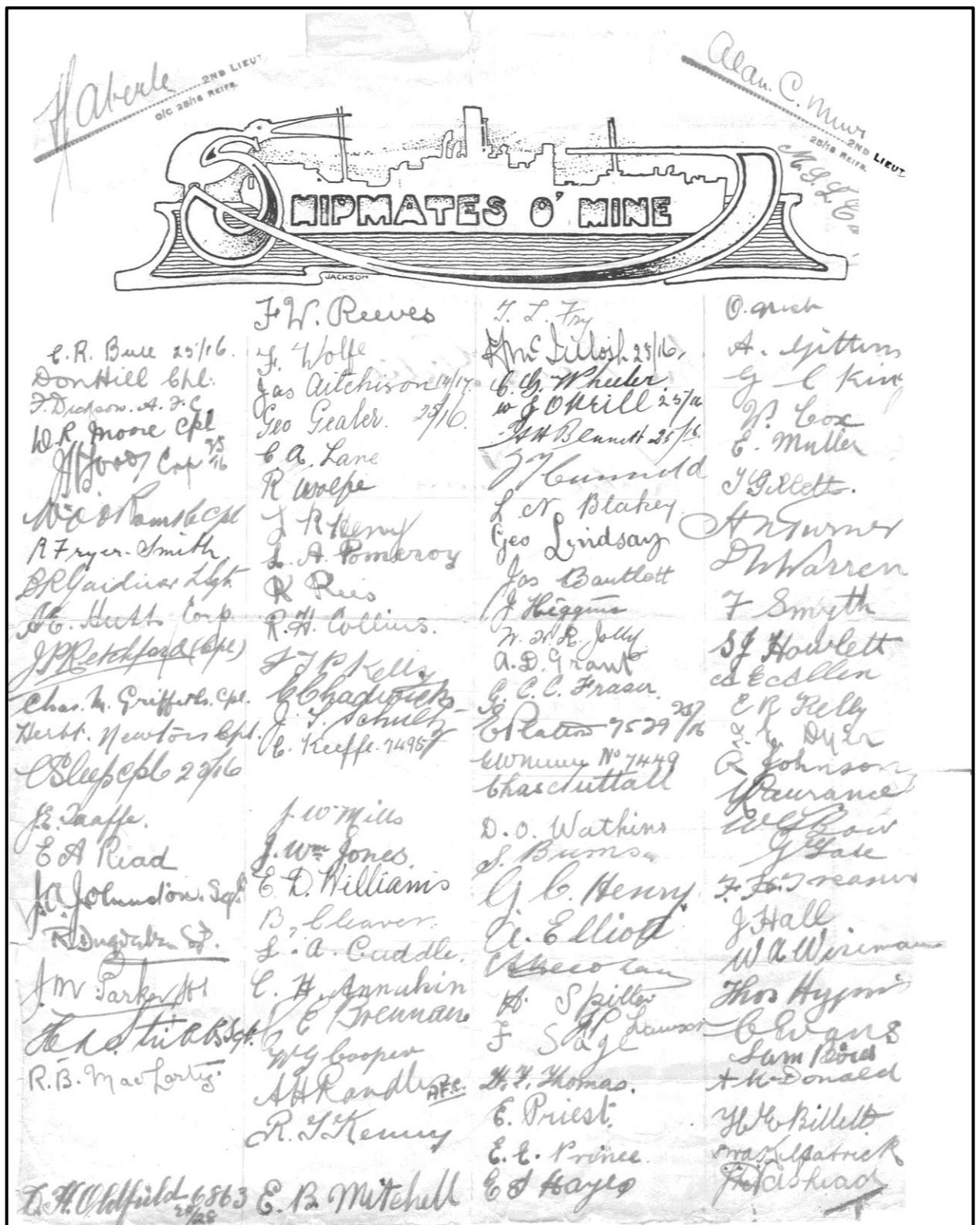
OFFICES & NCO'S; 28/16 BTN; 2nd BRIGADE A.I.F. at Blackboy Hill W.A., April, 1917
Standing: Cpl C H Hoare; Cpl Manners; Cpl Hill, Cpl Gardiner; Cpl Sleep; Cpl Ford; Cpl O'Rooke
Sitting: Sgt Grimwood; Sgt J Johnson; Sgt Stubbs; Lieut Aberle; Lieut Muir; Sgt Roberts; Sgt
Cockburn; Sgt Parker



BLACKBOTHILL
STUDIO

THE 25TH REINFORCEMENTS 16TH BATTALION W.A.

APRIL 1917.



Shipmates of Chas Manners, Sailing on the Troopship "Borda"

Background to Chas Manners' Arrival in France For Active Service

After several unsuccessful attempts to enlist at Albany, (Western Australia) and being rejected each time "for defective eyesight ", the 22- year-old Charles Manners (CBM) challenged the recruitment office staff to a marksmanship competition and was "subsequently allowed " to enlist.

1916

He attended training camp at Blackboy Hill (Western Australia) where he first met Dick Fryer-Smith, as co-tenant of the same army hut. They met again and again during the war, and remained firm friends for the rest of their lives. In 1917, they sailed on troopship Borda arriving in Devonport (UK) 57 days later, on 25th August.

At Cape Town local residents and troops were being entertained by Peter Dawson a famous Australian singer of that time. Dawson "turned on" five encores and gained from the audience a rousing cheer when he announced the presence of Australian soldiers in the audience.

Thirty-nine days into the voyage they crossed the equator and each soldier was presented with a traditional certificate by King Neptune.

A severe epidemic of food-poisoning struck hundreds of the troops [not including CBM] and severely weakened them. Authorities became alarmed at the continuing distress, and discovered by analysis of the vomit and remaining food, that arsenic had been mixed in with the food. There was obviously a scoundrel with evil intent on board, but if his identity was ever discovered it was certainly never revealed to the passengers.

After 42 days out, they arrived at Sierra Leone on the West African Coast where they spent four days.

The ship was darkened at night for six weeks of the voyage.

Letters from CBM, sent his best wishes back to his father in Kalgoorlie, and to the rest of his family at a farm at Denmark, near Albany.

After arrival at Devonport (UK) on December 25, 1917, Chas and Dick travelled by train to an army camp at Codford, Wiltshire because there had been a large number of mumps cases on board the ship, so the troops were placed in isolation tents for a month. Three letters from brother Stan awaited Chas in the UK, written from hospital because Stan had been gassed.

Military training seemed unending and Chas noted "after a few more training schools we will at last be sent to France for some action. I expect this at the end of September ".

Editor's Note

1. These excerpts from CBM's diaries cover only about 15% of the total diary notes available.
2. In tracing through the notes, there was difficulty in correctly identifying the Battalions in which CBM served. He apparently started with 28/16th Battalion, then 16/44th Battalion, and 25th reinforcement of the 16th Battalion, then 13th training Battalion of the 44th and it seems both CBM and Dick Fryer-Smith transferred to 16/44th at the same time. Dick Fryer-Smith's diary shows that they transferred from the 16th Battalion to the 44th Battalion on December 3, 1917.
3. Names have been checked in *Bean, CEW, 1937 Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18*, *Angus & Robertson 1937* where often conflicts or no reference was found.

4. During 1995 I was fortunate in locating Mr Tony Fryer-Smith, the son of Dick Fryer-Smith. Tony and his sister Julia have kindly made available details of their father's war diary.

Dick and Chas were fellow field scout-runners, and although they shared the same duties, at the end of each day they reported on their different experiences. Their diaries cover vivid impressions of the bloody battlefields of France, including the shooting down of the famous Red Baron.

Extracts from their two diaries now follow, the authors are identified with identified with "C" (Charles B. Manners) or "D" (Dick Fryer-Smith) following the date entry.



Dick Fryer-Smith & Chas Manners near Codford Training Camp,

June 1917

Off to Battle

*As I commence so shall I proceed.
Striving to furnish words for you to read.
To mark, to learn and inwardly digest,
or any other thing you may think best;
When you've scanned the ink stained pages thus,
and they can prove no further use to you,
another purpose will they nicely serve,
a fate presumably they well deserve;
by being used to stoke the old home fire,
that it may blaze and burn and be,
a hearth of extra brilliancy.
For those at home and those abroad
must forge ahead with one accord.
In truth, we both the fire at home require.*

CBM

*Chas with C.H. Hoare (seated)
at Blackboy Hill Training Camp
April, 1917*



*Codford Training Camp, England
Rear: Frank Woolfe (Denmark, W.A.); Chas Manners
Front: H.F. Thomas (Perth); Jack F. McIntosh*

World War I Diaries of Chas Manners and Dick Fryer-Smith

4/12/17 C

Au Revoir to Blighty (England) for a while. Sailed from South Hampton at dusk, enjoyable short voyage across the "pond " in a first class cattle boat. But what does a soldier care? Le Havre hove into sight and we soon had soil under our feet and the fact that it was French made it the more welcome. From the port we marched six miles to our new temporary home, the Third Divisional Base Depot (DBD). Thursday to Saturday was spent undergoing various tests and being properly fitted out to strafe the horrible Hun. During our stay, which proved all too short under such agreeable conditions, we were fed like fighting cocks. A vast improvement on the 13th Training Battalion at Codford.

6/12/17 D

We march up to the most talked-of Bull Ring to go through a gas course, a dirty job, but very necessary.

7/12/17 D

Another trip to the Bull Ring for more experience. In the evening Van Raalte, Chas and self get leave to proceed into Le Havre. We spend the first hour looking for a suitable food joint. After Van has practiced his French on one or two polite gentlemen of that nation, we hit upon a very comfortable cafe and partake of a delicious, though expensive meal.

9/12/17 C

Astir quite early having received our marching orders. Weather is rather disagreeable and roads very sloppy. Loaded like camels but smiling and joking we set out for the station six miles away. Active service conditions in earnest. At last we emptied and packed ourselves into the troop train like nails in a box.

9/12/17 D

We are travelling in cattle trucks, thirty in a truck with all equipment. Heavens! What a crowd. Man soon adapts himself to these circumstances; so after a few growls we find ourselves settled very comfortably. It is a wonder some of us are not under the wheels. We shall be under each other if we attempt to sleep. Oh! What a night. Shall I ever forget it. As the song says;

Cold was the wind

That blew through the cracks

Hard was the timber

For the repose of our backs.

Crushed though we were

There was room and to spare

Twixt the top of our truck and ourselves.

10/12/17 D

About 11.00am we heard the guns for the first time. Arrived at Caestre about noon...our destination. After marching three miles through the village, we get to our camp. Tents in a square, and a very muddy square at that.

13/12/17 D

Heavy bombardment of Hazebrouck from Ypres district between 9.30 and 5.00pm, some fifty shells. Weather not so bad, but hazy. Our last day in this camp.

14/12/17 D

We marched to Bulford camp near Neuf Eglise. We are now in Belgium and see some of the ruin caused by the enemy. We are here drafted into Companies and Chas meets one or two old cobbles.

14/12/17 C

Joined up with the Battalion at Bulford camp met Billy Currie and Jack Blaikie 27 Battn. Only here for the night. Having humped pack some 15km, feel like resting here longer.

On the move next morning again. Battalion just out of the firing line. Shifting back further in reserve. A matter of 6-7km. Unbeknown to either of us [brother] Harley and I were both moving toward each other. They were shifting up from Boulogne. We met that evening for the first time for over two years. Stan [another brother] was in his section too.

15/12/17 D

We marched to Wakefield Huts, between Locre and Dranoutre. Put in five days here, Chas and self in D. Coy. Dougdale arrived about the 18th and we immediately buttonhole him for the latest information.

16/12/17 C

Harley and Stan moving up into line today. Our time together very short. Met Lt Walton Blare and many other old mates. Cpt. Jimmy Peat's grave in this vicinity, intend hunting it up. Am in his old company. Many of the boys knew him well.

19/12/17 C

On move again. Marched 11km. Camped overnight at Jesus Farm. Bitterly cold. Everything frozen. Some good skating. We settled into small dug-outs, trenches at La Vissie. Each dugout fits two.

22/12/17 C

Good day for observation. Aircraft very active. Throwing some very heavy stuff about. Spent all night laying barbed-wire around the field.

Spent a very happy Christmas. Snowing galore. Everything ice-bound. Artillery swapping Christmas greetings. Received my first wound; a severe cut on fore-finger; opening a tinned pudding.

24/12/17 D

Whilst in these trenches we do guard duty all night, two hours on and four hours off. The nights are very cold but fine, for which one ought to be thankful.

At 8.00pm on the 24th Dec, Christmas Eve, Doug and self have orders to move up to machine gun post under Corp. Pringle. Thinking it to be rather a strenuous stunt, we are not actually pleased, but after getting our orders, and a couple of tins of preserved fruit, our spirits rise a bit. We arrive at the machine gun post very tired, having shuffled many slippery yards of duckboard in the winding maze of trenches. Then after a sip of rum from our new companions' bottle, we discussed the job.

It now appears that we are better off than the rest of the Company, as we only have an hour and a half of guard duty to do, with just the weight of a revolver to accompany us. I do not think I shall ever forget this, my first one and a half hours on the machine gun post, not on account of excitement, but the whole appearance of the surroundings and my sense of important duty. I feel very conscious on this Christmas Eve of 1917. The evening air is still and crisp, occasionally punctuated by the slow measured barking of the German machine guns, which is followed-up in turn, right down the enemy line. After this, a brief silence and one notices the grave beauty and solemnness of the long lines and heaps on the parapets with their nakedness clothed in snow.

Suddenly the silence is rudely broken either on the right or on the left by the sharper rattle of our own Maxims. One sees the vague or sharper shadows cast by broken trees, and they ridiculously appear to have the form of a man. One takes a second look and again tries to pierce the deeper shadows. As a cloud slowly screens the moonlight, one's senses are sharpened by the leap of a rat on the parapet. In such like manner did my relief pass on that Christmas-eve.

27/12/17 C

Spent the last couple of days out on a bombing post, one has to slide and skate along the roads to get back from one place to another. Have not seen Dick for a couple of days. Having a very quiet life, plenty of work after dark dodging stray bullets.

27/12/17 D

Dougdale and myself are detailed for gas guard, during which time we discussed many things. Doug is clever, and a thorough gentlemen in every sense. Chas is billeted further down the road, and hops in for a yarn occasionally, on his way to the line in a wiring party.

1/1/18 C

A very quiet commencement to New Year, mostly on wiring work all night. Have to assume prone position, stray bullets rather plentiful and very annoying.

9/1/18 C

More wet weather. We are quite handy to Belgium towns Locre and Dranoutre (near Hamel Hill) and generally slide into one or the other during the evening.

10/1/18 D

After Chas and self paid the dentist in Baillieu several visits, we were on a working party to Masnières, passing on the way, two huge craters caused by the mine explosions on Masnières Ridge in 1917.

13/1/18 C

Met up with Paul McInerney,³ who is now a one-pip artist. He joined the Battalion a couple of days previously.

19/1/17 C

Went on a route march during morning. Past 16th Battn billets. Caught up with Lt Aberle (our original Lieutenant from Black Boy Hill training camp WA). Met a Percy Manners from Victoria Park.

27/1/18 (Sunday) C

³ Paul McInerney later became a senior executive of W.M.C. following his successful business career as manager of SKF ball bearing and Co. and M.D. of his own firm, R.P. McInerney & Co. Pty Ltd (see photo and story)

An early start to our marching today. Passed along the way a French establishment with two bold signs painted on the window "Bock Beer, very good ", but it was the other that caught the amusement of our group "English spoken, Australian understood ".

Being on the move all day one is apt to lose sight of Sunday being the one day set aside for rest and meditation. Sunday cannot very well be observed when lives and liberty are at stake; it's generally the busiest day of the week.



Paul McInerney's Reunion with Old Friends

(Portion of an Article in Westminster Vol. 1 No. 1, Autumn, 1967 – reproduced with kind permission from W.M.C. Resources Ltd)

"Paul's long journeys, however, have also had their happy, personal side, for last year when in Luxemburg for a week-end, he thought back forty-eight years to when he was a young soldier in the Australian Expeditionary Force in World War One. The armistice had been signed and while waiting for repatriation, he was billeted in a Belgium village with a family who had two small daughters.

They all became so friendly that Paul spent his spare time teaching the girls English. And throughout all the years since then they have by correspondence kept in touch with Paul and his family. This, however, was his first opportunity to see them again. He took a car to the village where they lived, and knocked on the door of the house where he had so long ago been billeted. Two smiling, grey haired ladies welcomed him: Paul's 'young' English language pupils.

"Do you remember the way to the room you slept in? " they asked. "Then go upstairs and look inside."

The room was furnished with the same bedstead, the same table and chairs, the same wash basin and jug, the same pictures on the walls, even with the same kerosene lamp he had carried upstairs when going to bed. It was a reunion which will last in the memories of both Paul and his lifelong Belgium friends; for it was not only a memorable meeting but a celebration of Paul's seventy-first birthday. "

[Appendix II contains Paul McInerney's obituary by Sir Laurence Brodie-Hall, AO, CMG]

30/1/18 C

Didn't get any sleep last night so today has been a hard one. Just as dinner came on the scene, Jerry opened up with "Minnies"⁴ and "Pineapples"⁵ and made things very hot. All our stew and dishes were either filled with mud or blown to ribbons. The dugout stopped a "Mississippi"⁶ and had it been occupied, all hands would have been "vappo"⁷. Miraculously there were no casualties. It is a wonder though as many of them were 6-10 yards distance from us. We hastily made preparation for a further visit from Fritz but fortunately, the raid he no doubt intended to make, was postponed. He then put over a lot of gas but bagged nobody. Little instances such as these are a boon as they break the monotony which is worse than all the Jerry strafing.

1/2/18 C

Had a peaceful night for a change but oh so cold. The Jerry started strafing about 7.00 this morning and mixed some gas with it. Poor Nicholson and Disson had to be taken away on stretchers. They encountered a shell all on their own.

2/2/18 C

Expect to be relieved tonight, but prospects do not seem too good. Am in for eight days no doubt. Got a gutful of gas myself this morning, just enough to rob me of my voice.

Thirteen Platoon have taken unto themselves the name of "The Duckboard Harriers", rather appropriate too. Still can't raise more than a whisper and as this is not quite a silent post, the lads reckon I've the "wind up".

5/2/18 C

Came back to Nieppe this morning. These few days away from the strafing are most welcome. We reside next door to the church which has been hit with the Boche's shells in several places and is now without windows. It is such sights as these that will remain with me. I happen to see the Padre coming out and revenge was written on his face, no doubt reflected from his heart. It is cruel to see such places in ruins. Actually fire these days is far too accurate for such shots to be accidental, and when churches and places of worship are made into targets and laid in heaps of broken stone by the intentionally, direct shells of the enemy, can God be anything but against them.

13/2/18 C

Up at the front line again like a caravan of camels. At 7.00pm we hit our destination and feeling somewhat fatigued, crawl into our respective burrows with as much satisfaction as any rabbit that has just finished a 100 mile scamper to avoid being caught. Although we are surrounded by a large number of our batteries, which incessantly send forth a belching barking sound, a gift unsavoured by the enemy in front, we sleep the sleep of the just and only stir in the morning to enable the application of a well-established fact "the troops must be fed". As relieving Quartermaster for the Platoon, I must "shake a leg" and issue out their grub and "collect their socks". While in the line, every man has the opportunity of securing a clean pair of socks each day. As a guard against Trench Feet, cleanliness and dryness of the hoofs is essential. At the moment this is one of my duties and each morning I hump the wet socks to Papot Baths, about 5km away, exchange for cleans and return. Great care is taken of the feet for the above disease is quite simple to get. On my way I pass through Ploegsteert and Romarin and sometimes call at Nieppe. These two former places, were they Australian towns that had suffered such devastation, would convert the most astute conscientious objector to a man's way of thinking and could bring home to these

⁴ "Minnies" is the shortened version for "Minnenwerfer" = German trench mortar.

⁵ "Pineapples" slang term for a Mills Grenade (named after the inventor) which had segmented squares all over them.

⁶ Presumably a bomb

⁷ "Vappo" = vaporized.

unwholesome, undesirable specimens of humanity, by such spectacles of destruction, the reality of war. Really, the condition of many of the French and Belgian towns cannot be imagined and one eye-full of such sights is sufficient to cause a human's blood to boil and make him want to fight on, no matter what the odds. Lt Crawley (A Coy) was killed out on patrol tonight. He was the idol of the company and loved by all. Most unfortunate.

18/2/18 C

Russia and Germany box-on again. May Germany contract the same trouble as Russia suffers. What a big factor it would be in drawing nearer the grand day of victory.

America is gradually drifting her army into France and has even now taken over many sectors. What a difference we hope they will make as regards the day of peace. If their deeds prove as good as their words, the war is "all over bar the shouting".

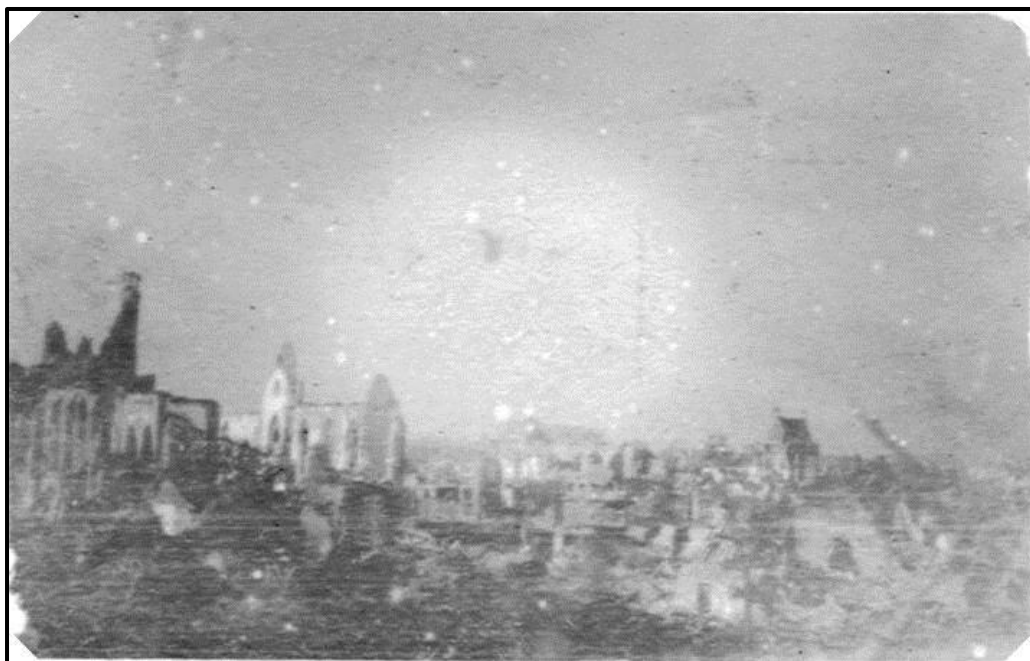
24/2/18 C

By the way, it's Sunday, but who would have thought it. There is much of a muchness about every day to us that we feel quite pleased with ourselves if we happen to remember the name of it. As for the date, this little book is invaluable to me for that reason if no other.

2/3/18 C

Up at 3.00am on working parties for the last three nights, feeling rather second-hand. It is snowing a bit this morning and the order that no blankets are to be taken in, together with the apparent promise of a cold spell, does not give us a healthy feeling.

Scenes from France



Sunrise over ruins.



Gas mask in Use – Our (Barbed) Wiring

Scenes from France



Anti-Aircraft Guns



Trenches in Snow – No Man's Land

More Scenes from France



Somebody's House

More Scenes from France



The Battle Continues

Chas Manner's Photos

3/3/18 C

Well, here we are keeping the Hun back again, and of course we didn't do a perish during the night. Gee, she's cold and not a blanket to be had. Here's one by the name of "Snowy " offering his next pay for one. Judging by his name, one would naturally conclude that he required more clothing than the remainder of us. However, as is generally the case when things are not too juicy, the language is 120° in the shade, and flows like molten metal from the mines. So guess we manage without the blankets, as long as we've a stock of human braziers.

14/2/18 C

Dick and self left for Boulogne early this morning. Got opportunity of leave late last night. About 30km by motor, had a glorious time, saw interesting sights, had glorious feeds. Got back 10.00pm.

16/3/18 C

Dick has gone away on a week's guard at Brigade Headquarters. It is a day off today, all busy washing and blancoing equipment. We are toy soldiers once we get away from the line. Am warned for Brigade NCO's School.

17/3/18 C

Getting kit together and polishing up. Must leave for Watherdal at 1.30am. Goodbye to boys for three weeks. Not keen on this stunt one bit. I shall have to put my head down as they are mostly Sergeants or Corporals and Sgts Yeates and Folly are amongst the number. Both of these were Staff Sgts Majors at Claremont School when I was there. Capt Rockcliffe is in charge and may not make things too willing.

21/3/18 C

Passed through Coulombrie on way to gas demonstration. 44th Bat billeted here last April and are all well known to the inhabitants. Greeted by all hands as the "Eggs are Cooked" or "Cat-Battalion". Warned to "stand to". Something exciting seems to be happening. May- be "Otto" has commenced his march on Paris!

22/3/18 C

Up at 4.30 this morning. Have to rejoin our Battalions urgently. That's the end of the new NCO's school. Fritz evidently has commenced his big offensive.

22/3/18 D

At 5.00am we are warned to get ready to move off with full kit. Gee, it can only be for a route march or else a false alarm. About 9.00am we find out that it is dinkum all right. We are to entrain for some destination. Now the rumour begins to spread "the Huns have broken through ", "we have to line the coast "etc. At 12.00 noon we move off and the old Madam fills my water bottle with cider.

We travel to Caestra again, and I wonder if Marie⁸ is still there. We turn to the left and march to St. Sylvester Chapel, billeting in a large barn next to an estaminet, (beaucoup hock⁹ for sale) and one can easily see this by the wet look of many of the fellows. There is very little sleep and Chas and myself find our way into a decent little joint where we get eggs and chips.

24/3/18 C

On the move again today. Something big going on at Somme. All sorts of rumours flying about and looks as if we are moving that way. Being Reserve Division we are in for a lot of shifting about so expect

⁸ [See later entry 18/7/18 C. Ed.]

⁹ *Beaucoup Hock* = good wine.

to move further tomorrow. Went in search of a feed-very hungry. Eggs are all that a fellow can get, so had 7 of them. Feel a new man.

24/3/18 D

Lorries to Blaringhem, passing through Cassel and many other beautiful towns. The towns in themselves are not beautiful, having very narrow streets, but the outskirts are breathtaking with beautiful gardens and chateaux. What born artists the Frenchmen must be.

Everyone is on the move and one gets too tired to wonder. Here I am to be unlucky enough to be called out to guard a straggler and the march becomes more weary still on account of the slowness of our charge. At last after winding and marching up and down many hills, we see some of our own Bttn in billets, and heave a sigh of relief. "Here at last, thank God! " but still we march, and pass more soldiers, other companies billeted in old farms with the crooked old madam and the pigs laying in the manure heap outside the kitchen-dining-sitting room all in one. These good people sleep with their cattle. It is wonderful to me how they manage to keep their health; you ask them and they smilingly reply with a sense of vacancy (as we perhaps ignorantly see) "Mais ce ne fait rien", "What our fathers did, will do us, Messieurs". They are anyhow wonderfully philosophical.

At last we come to our D. Company's billets, right at the end of the Battalion. Chas and I camp in an attic near or over the stables and after a rest, stroll down to a canal nearby for a dip. The water looks very inviting, but just a bit cold, but here goes! That may be the coldest swim I can remember. That water was cold. The old Regimental Quarter Master revelled in it, while the madam watched from the far bank with great amusement at the mad Australians' sense of enjoyment. I don't think these French are over-fond of water. We feel much refreshed after the dip, and now intend to hunt for food. Here luck is with us, as the village nearby has beaucoup bread, and we walk slowly home, hugging our French loaves with a very keen edge to our already partly appeased appetite, lately having disposed of ham and eggs.

25/3/18 C

Had to "stand-to" all day. May move off at any hour. The Boche are bombarding Somme and it looks as though that is our destination. Poor Aussies again, always go where the fight is hottest and hardest. Weather turning cold. Had another feed of eggs.

26/3/18 D

The morning is spent in preparations and there is a sense of the importance of our next move hovering about. "We are now attached to the fourth army and move off at midday ". Thus speaks the skipper, Captain Bremer. He speaks also of the necessity of every man preparing himself for a big campaign, and I feel a glow of importance, and begin to wonder where it will be. "We are now awaiting word from Army Headquarters as to our movements, whether north or south ".

About 3.00pm we leave Blaringhem and move off; after the colicky feeling wears off, the wits begin to banter and help to liven the march. "Brevity is the soul of wit ". We soon settle down to a good swing and with the help of songs and whistling, time flies and the kms are soon covered. It is 5km to Arques, where we entrain once more. Crowded trucks, a slow train, cheerful men, and a full moon. What a glorious night, and one begins to think and wonder why the good God allows war. All is so peaceful here. We are just passing through a pine forest and the moon shines down on the earth, and the shadows of the pines flash along the side of the trucks laden with men, whom God may see fit to sacrifice.

We travel all night and few sleep. This evening the tide of events for us is taking some important change so we watch and many pray. We pass through Arras in the early hours and see the ruins of the station and many large buildings; Fritz has been bombing here quite recently.

27/3/18 C

Fired upon by enemy aircraft. Motor transport took us from here to Franvilles where we alighted about 9.00am. Wasted no time in getting on march. After an hour's tramp, dumped our packs on wayside and got into fighting order. We are not far from old Fritz. He has pushed in a good way. Believe we are somewhere behind Bapainville. Got into position along banks of Canal de la Somme, after passing through Hulques, Sailly about 4.00am. By gosh it's cold. Any amount of wounded. Things have been pretty willing and promise to continue. So two of our company hopped over tonight. Did good work. Sixty odd rounds fired. Left the position in evening and after being on move a couple of hours dodging shells on way, we finally got back to Sailly drenched to the skin. Some of the shells, in their course, must have punctured clouds. We got under shelter but were too crowded to get any rest. May be wanted as reinforcements at any moment.

27/3/18 D

In the afternoon of the same day, we arrive at a little village of Franvilles, and here is every evidence of the advancing Huns. The villagers with their old-fashioned carts and wheelbarrows and every possible and impossible conveyance are hurrying to depart, with phrases such as "Allemands no bons", and "C'est la guerre!". It is terribly sad to hear this and know that perhaps in a hour or two the village will be as silent as a grave; it is even now awaiting its death knell.

Even this minute the hum of a German plane is heard hovering overhead, seeking for information, and we have to crouch against the wall to be as invisible as possible to this means of observation.

We have a little spell here, awaiting orders from Brigade, and about 11.00am we move off toward the advancing Boche. The country here is beautiful and we see it laid out before us in long undulating slopes, and our road winding up and down, now and then completely lost to view. Right ahead I can see an occasional shell burst, but too far away to hear. Our cheeriness has the damper put on it by the order suddenly passed along to open out half Platoon with connecting files, at distances of 50 yards. A little further, and the order comes to prepare in fighting order, packs to be stacked on the side of the road. We found (No. 13 Platoon) a small cleft in the side of the road formed by a fall of sand and place our packs down, wondering if we shall ever see them again. The whole Battalion now formed up in skirmishing order, in a semi-circle on a slope of a hill with rifles loaded. One or two shells begin to fall, and although falling well over, they are coming closer, the Boche is finding range. A shell bursts on the top of the ridge, and one chap is thrown up and lands back in the shell hole; The stretcher bearers come at a run and take him away.

At 5.30pm we "fall in" and march on toward the village. Even now, although shells become thicker every hour, there are civilians loath



A typical illustration of the difficulties encountered in the Ypres sector in Belgium. 1917-10, in transporting supplies to the forwards areas. A mule team is here seen getting out of the mud on a track near Potijze Farm

E00963 Australian War Memorial



The mud and slush throughout the Ypres sector in Belgium kept the feet of the troops in a continual state of dampness and caused the complaints of "trench feet" to become fairly general. Members of the 19th Australian Infantry Brigade are here seen taking advantage of a rest at Dragoon Farm, near Ypres, after the Battle of Passchendaele Ridge, 1917-10-12, to bathe and oil their feet in order to obviate the malady.

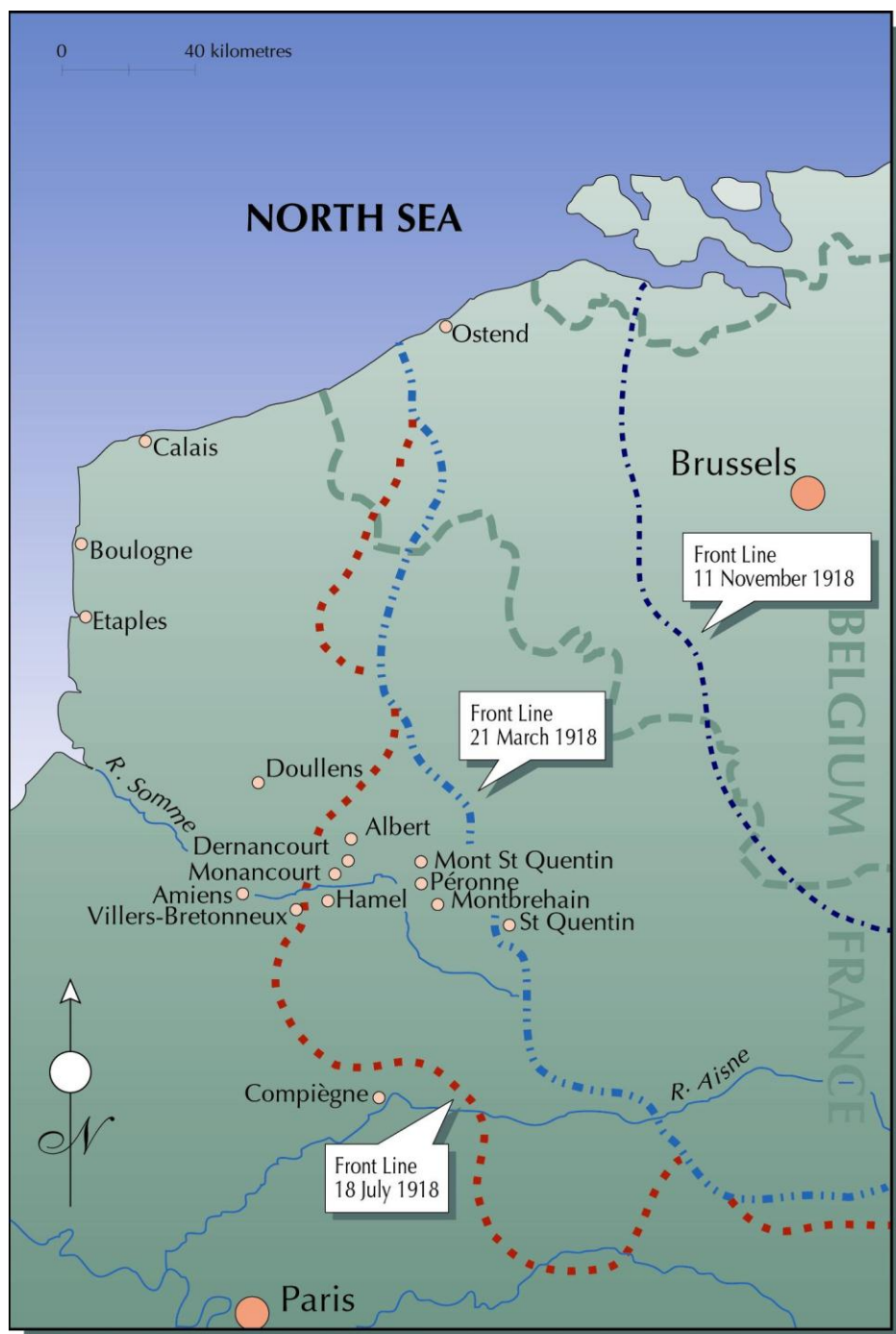
E00942 Australian War Memorial



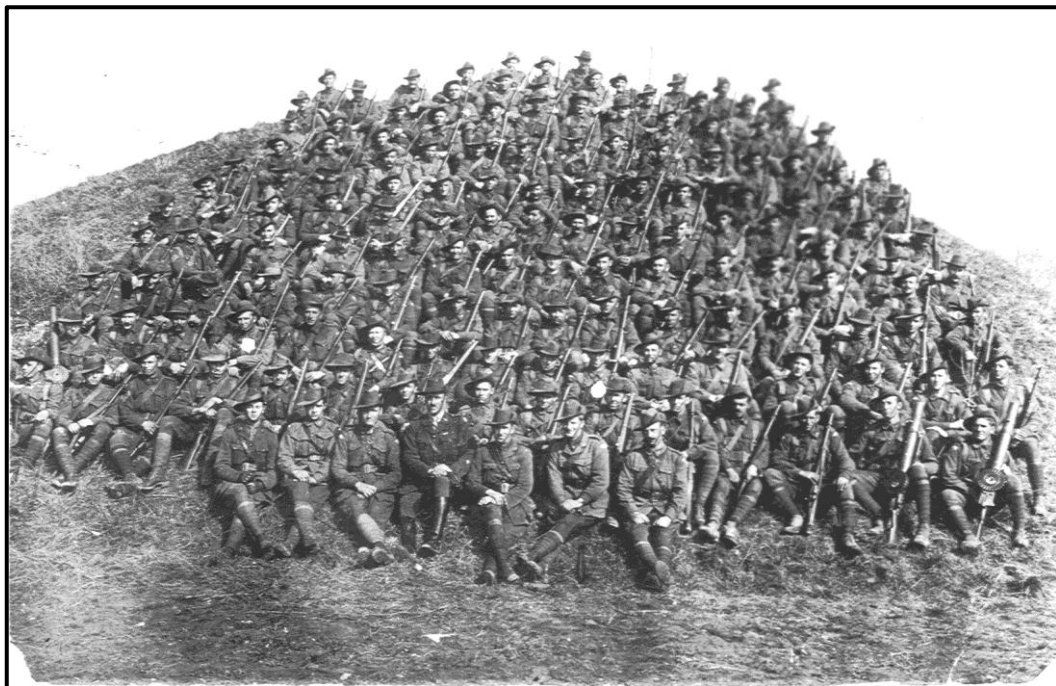
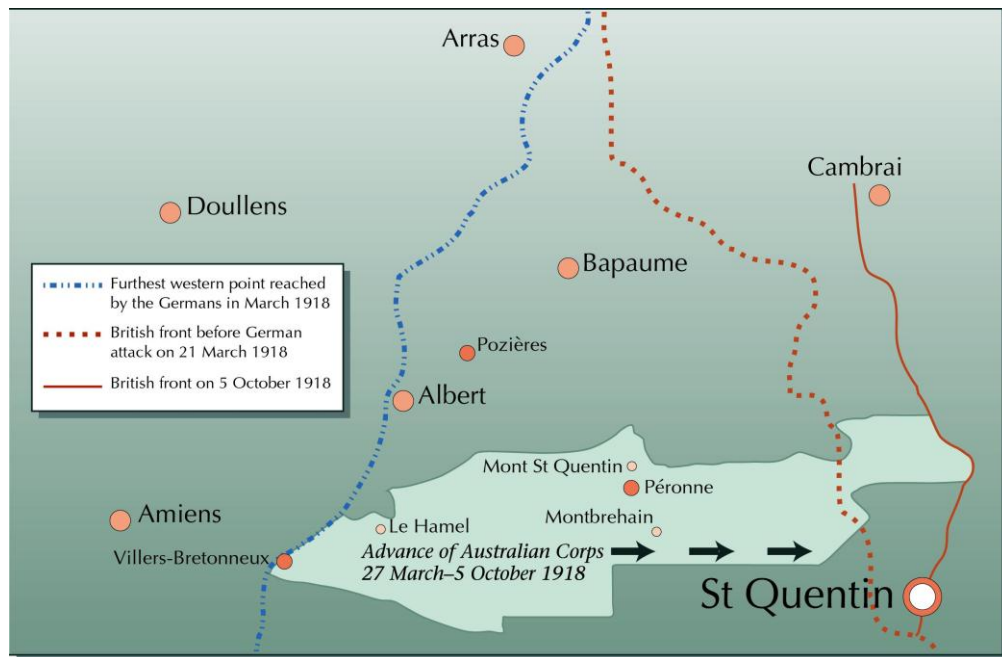
*Belgium. 1917-10-29. Five Australians, Members of a field artillery unit passing along a duckboard track over mud and water among gaunt bare tree trunks in the devastated chateau wood, a portion of one of the battlegrounds in the Ypres salient.
E01220 Australian War Memorial*



*Stuck in mud. Transport difficulties.
Christmas, 1917.
H00944 Australian War Memorial*



The map on this, and next page, reproduced with the kind permission of the department of Veterans Affairs, from their publication "Beaucoup Australiens ici" by Dr. Richard Reid.



"The two poor chaps marked with white dots were both "sent west". They were killed right next to me in both cases"

Chas M – France, May 1918

to leave their homes. Oh! God, how sad it is, and one wonders why, and when it will cease; the bursting shells make death a ghastly business from which there seems to be no quarter. One would need to be as empty of feeling as these whistling curses flying overhead, to appreciate war, or take it unfeelingly; an impossibility, yet one thinks and wonders.

It is just slaughter and the guns do the work. There are old women and men wheeling their belongings away on a wheelbarrow, or staggering along with their burdens, with sad yet philosophical expressions on their careworn faces. Their phrase of "C'est la guerre!" expresses this feeling. Oh, it is indeed cruel.

We pass through the village with a short spell midway and hear the bursting shells cut up the roads, and the Diggers are taking over possession of the "Deserted Homes "; cooks, and signallers creeping into cellars, hunting out old mattresses to make themselves as safe as possible, and adding a little comfort.

This is the point where we have to look for the Boche, and in artillery formation, with fixed bayonets, we move on into the covering night. There are a few patrolling lancers ahead, and these dim figures move along the crest of the hill, occasionally giving the password. One or two men are lying wounded on the side of the track, (it is not a road, and this shows the close proximity of the Hun). At 3.00am we, (No. 13 Platoon), move down to the bank of the Canal de la Somme. It has started to drizzle, slowly the morning breaks and finds us dug-in, in a narrow body trench, filled with grass, about a foot deep. At about 20 paces apart, we are thinly holding the line, a tenth Brigade sent forward in advance of the fourth Army Reserve.

In spite of climatic conditions, we are very comfortable and hope that the war will end some day. Chas is always most cheerful, a great companion to have.

28/3/18 D

Fritz has evidently discovered us, as one or two shells are falling in our vicinity, and we get behind the willows. One may not go far in any case, as we are between the canal and its overflow creek. Jack Schultz was pretty close to one burst, but lucky no one was hit.

After a hot stew, we load up our gear, and move off to the village in readiness to move over the top. We are half-way through Sailly, and the shells are flying thickly now, and we wonder what is on the cards. Then the order comes through to return to the village, and as the dust gathers we take up our abode in a cellar to await the result of a stunt; three companies of the 44th are to take a position and D. Coy. are to relieve them if successful, and if not, we are to await further orders.

It is a wild night, pouring with rain, and we wonder what it is to be. Get what sleep you can is the order, and so we wait, rather crowded, one or two hunched up in corners, others stretched out on the floor with perhaps a little hay, a few wisps underneath their heads. All are in full fighting order, and overhead the shriek of shells is heard, sometimes dying far away, and again too close to be comfortable; and now and again a man prays as he awaits the inevitable, and outside our friends are moving forward in the darkness, to they know not what, perhaps death, or worse, and their success or failure means much to us. Oh, God! How can a man sleep; and yet bodily fatigued and perhaps resigned to fate, we close our eyes and doze (some of us perhaps). It is worth mentioning that on either side of us are cellars full of choice wines of France, and there they remain.

29/3/18 C

Good Friday proves a bad day for us again. We are on the move before dawn, taking up a position on nearby hills. We have to dig ourselves in quickly as Fritz is already in a good many miles, but it won't pay him to advance further. Heard today that Ostend and Zeebrugge have fallen into our hands. Also Lens and Till¹⁰ have been evacuated. Excellent news. We have Fritz stopped here now. Cannot understand him

¹⁰ *Till Trench was an important front line trench.*

coming so far. Couldn't have met with much resistance and the Tommies have a lower position than ever in our estimation now. Moved into a new position about 10.00pm last night and worked until 5.00 this morning on new trenches. At daybreak, we shifted into a wood in rear and tried for a few moments of sleep. Are surrounded by howitzer (18 lb) batteries and they are socking it in. Couldn't sleep as enemy artillery opened up. We climbed quickly up the slope of the hill and started digging in. Shells dropping thicker and faster every minute. Talk about keep your head down, digging in pretty fast. It is brother Bill's birthday and I shall never forget it.

Our lads are getting smacked right and left, can't get down fast enough. Cpl. George Barrow in charge of our section was killed only a few yards from Dick and self, a piece of shell pierced under his shoulder blade. We helped carry Barrow to his last rest. He was a fine fellow. Others were killed; many wounded. Capt. Bremmer Commanding Officer of Co. got a Blighty shell, Chas Sleep also.

It rained during afternoon, we are wet to the skin and cold and frigid sitting here in our hole. Dick and self console and agree that our opponents are "dirty dogs".

The affair quietened down toward evening, but we start work at dark. Must finish our trenches tonight. Eleventh Brigade complimented on holding the line. During bombardment Jerry made an attack on our front but ended back where he started. Believe Yanks and French are doing something big today.

31/3/18 D

Things are quieter today. We have been working until past midnight digging the trench on the top of the hill. Charlie Sleep is badly wounded we hear, and hope it is not serious. Ted Roberts is posted as missing, he was last seen going out with a wound in the arm, but never arrived at the dressing station.

31/3/18 C (Dead Horse Gully)

Blimey I'm tired. Last decent sleep was on the 25th, Stan's birthday. Feel as if I could sleep on a barbed wire fence for a whole week. Got a bunch of eight letters last Friday night and haven't had a chance to read them properly yet.

4.00pm. Well things have been different and quite a relief to get a rest. We have congratulations from King George for having stopped the German advance. We lost a fair number of men in doing so, but hundreds and hundreds of dead Fritzes are laying out in front of us. He should never have advanced as far as he did but maybe he hasn't come to stay. But may the Tommies, who didn't stop them, come and try their hand at pushing them back.

1/4/18 C

April Fool's Day and none bigger fools than us. Covered in mud from head to foot, no wash, no shave for days now. A bit of sun today and a chance to get things dry. Have to move somewhere tonight. Just as we get a bit of comfort we've got to leave it behind. Our officer, Mr Yule transferred to "C" Company. Bad luck for us. We also seem to lose all our good commanders. Most of the lads haven't much room left for joking. Today's available fun was put aside.

2/4/18 D

We moved up to old French trenches, with Cooper in charge, a boy not fit to wear uniform, in charge of men. Cooper swears and curses, and runs.

3/4/18 C

We are all here enjoying the scenes of the Somme, and lending our hands to carry on the wholesale slaughter of poor innocent souls. This is not a war but a scientific means of murder and dastardly destruction. The little village of Sailly, lying at our feet, crashes and crumbles, smoulders and burns as the shells bury themselves into its midst. One by one they sing and scream through the air seeking a mark on

which to smash and burst. We leave these tunnels tonight and dig in a mile or so from here we are thankful to see the last of this place.

Rained heavily today and we are drenched.

*But as we can't get any wetter,
the next place must be better.*

We're damned happy and light-headed.

Rejoicing that we have started on our task.

Another home to make and find.

*With the hours of early morning drawing near
along a sunken road we dump our gear.*

And get to digging bunkholes in the bank,

*along the track where we lay and do a perish until mother night comes back. Through the cold and
wet hours of morning and the dangerous hours of day,*

we are cheating deadly bullets and the shell and shrapnel spray.

4/4/18 D

Chas and self fix up a straw dug-out on the side of the road, very damp, and we are not sorry to move into a picket post in an old orchard, about 1 acre area, with old hedge around. Here we dig in during the night, and cover our dugout, with branches for camouflage.

We are only 200 yards from the Hun and it is devilish wet. We have to get what rest we can, often lying in a pool of water. Chas and I do first relief of guard, and it is a pitch black night. We dig a small manhole for a listening post and await results. One does not go to sleep on these posts. It is a wet dark night, and we are apparently the only beings alive, all is so deadly still. No lights show the Boches position he is too close, within 200 yards.

5/4/18 D

Rained all day. Chas and I remained in dug-out asleep when we are not writing. A great liking for philosophies has taken a hold of me, and I attempt to write poetry. Chas feels the same. We do our guard at night and our two meals are brought during the hours of darkness, as no one may venture out to the picket post in daylight.



*Walking knee-deep in slimy mud along a communication trench at La Basse Ville, forward of Messines, in Belgium, 1918-01-24. The photograph fairly illustrates the conditions encountered in the trenches of this low-lying area during the Winter.
E01497 Australian War Memorial*

No. 5.

June, 1918.



Aussie

THE
AUSTRALIAN
SOLDIERS'
MAGAZINE.



Drawn by Chas. H. Gould.

ALAS! IN WONDERLAND.

Walrus Bill and the Kangaroo were walking in a land composed of quantities of mud and very little sand. "If this were cleared away," they said, "Oh! wouldn't it be grand?" "Do you suppose," the Aussie said, "the war will last a year. And will we transport duty get and be allowed to clear 'o Albert Park, or Moonee Ponds, or any place but here?"



PRINTED IN THE FIELD BY THE AIF PRINTING SECTION

6/4/18 D

A party of Germans advanced in front of us today and attempted to mount a machine-gun, under cover of enfilade fire from Hamel and Villers-Bretonneux. Our two Lewis guns, under Diver Hughes, opened fire and Hughes knocked six, driving them back; they had other casualties from our rifle fire. Scotty McNall, only a lad, killed by a bullet through the brain, the second of our section to be killed within a week. Jack Christie takes over the section. Lieutenant Madderfold wounded in the hand and goes out.

A rotten night; our dugout is flooded and Chas and I have to roll up in our oil sheets outside, as best we can. This rain is worse than anything. Glad to have some work to do these nights. We have great difficulty and amusement in extracting Way from his hole to do his sentry duty.

7/4/18 C

Witnessed some thrilling air duals today. Two air fights in the one day, right over our heads. Three Boche three-deckers chasing a single-seater British Spotter. The RAAF pilot put up a brilliant and brave fight, but he had no chance and he was brought down in flames about 100 yards away, and burnt to death.

We were more successful with the other fight with a plane outmanoeuvring two Boche pilots.

9/4/18 C

Had an opportunity of going across to the aeroplane I witnessed fall on Saturday. Came an awful crash. Poor chap burnt in his seat and lies buried where he fell! "No grander death could heroes wish to die; than such as claim these gentleman that fly".

11/4/18 C

The wet mud is by far the worst thing we've to contend. The mud is everywhere and the runners have to make sure they get through every time. Dick and Jack Christie are also runners to "C" Headquarters and we have to wander forth on an urgent job at the most unearthly hours of night and day no matter what elements prevail.

We are entering our 16th day of this most strenuous job. The German advance has been checked here all right but he seems to be making headway up north. News is not very cheering but, we've a lot of hard fighting before us. We look to the Yanks to come forward and wave their magic wand as it were. We get so little news, just enough to fill us with a yearning for more.

13/4/18 C

We had to go back to the death-trap of a picket post again last night, after a somewhat strenuous climb and tramp across the hills, as the usual road was too dangerous. To improve our spirit and progress we were favoured with an inky black night, a boisterous gale of a wind and rain possessing the usual wetting qualities. However, after an exciting couple of hours ducking our heads to cheat the passing bullets and seeking cover to prevent being the best of targets to the screaming shells that at periods fall thick and heavy, we hit our home of a week past, welcoming it only for the opportunity it afforded us of dumping our weighty paraphernalia.

The "hole" is now large enough to accommodate the three of us; Jack Christie, Dick and self, in which we bide away the weary hours of daylight from 5.00am to 8.00pm. An eternity it seems.

15/4/18 C

Our efforts have resulted in our dugout being the select one of No 13 Platoon. A rain-proof room, straw on floor and so securely covered that a light can burn in absolute safety. The striking of a match in the open would spell disaster so we are well set up and secure.

Fortunately this position has been unobserved owing, no doubt, to the careful precautions we take to conceal our presence, for we are within 300 yards of the enemy strong-post. We remain unmolested by his artillery whilst the posts on our right and left are constantly strafed.

17/4/18 C

Five of us now go out all night putting up barb-wire entanglements in front of our post, coming in at day-break to smother up in our earthly abode until the next spasm of darkness when we proceed with the good work. Day by day we live through times that will never be forgotten. Last night, six of us were out scouting, crawling along like reptiles and just as ready to pounce onto anything of interest that may chance to cross our path, but we returned empty-handed and successful as we got the scent.

18/4/18 D

We go out scouting for a prisoner and after crawling over 100 yards of ploughed field, we find the object just gone, and return empty-handed, much to the chagrin of Yule, the Platoon Commander.

19/4/18 D

Chas, Christie and self with Treasure, go out on wiring parties every night along the bank of the Canal, without a covering party.

20/4/18 D

We finished the wiring last night. At 9.00am the rest of the Coy is relieved; nine of us remain, having volunteered for a raiding party. We load up with bombs and await the hour, 2.00am just after the moon sets in before dawn, about one hour of darkness in which to do the trick.

We crawl out to our position and find by the sudden bursting of a Verylight that Fritz is apparently aware of our intention, and return after waiting for a good half an hour for an expected barrage.

19/4/18 C

Very quiet today. One gets fed up when all is very quiet on the Western Front. It helps one to keep happy when the guns are going strong and heavy. Tonight we finished up the barb-wiring exercise.

21/4/18 D

Arrived at our position on Flying Fox Hill at 7.00am next morning to find no breakfast, no meal for 48 hours now. We dig in. Meal at 11.00pm.

Germany's best airman, Baron Richthofen [known widely as the Red Baron, Ed.] brought down today, much cheering from us all on the ground.

21/4/18 C

Today we actually witnessed the fight that resulted in Baron von Richthofen, the famous Hun aviator being brought down. Very thrilling, but the British airman led the fight right through and von Richthofen met his Waterloo. We will always remember this place as the Brick Kiln as von Richthofen's plane crash landed near an old brick yard with a huge chimney stack. Many have been killed in its vicinity.

It was not a bad landing, except right at the end when the plane came to an abrupt stop. None of us assumed that the Red Baron was dead and we were all silent for minutes, waiting for him to climb from the plane. When this didn't occur we abandoned all orders and, realising the significance of the event, all ran toward the plane.

I think that Cpl Jack Homewood [Rivervale, WA] of B Company 44th Battalion and Alex Grant [also of Rivervale], of our Battalion got there about the same time as I did and we were busily souveniring buttons from the Baron's tunic when a South Australian Padre arrived and made the request that all these things "be put back ". Everyone in our Battalion ended up with a piece of the deep red fuselage material that had become so identifiable with the Red Baron and his legendary downing of 80 of our allied planes.¹¹

I must write more about the events of today, but I think the most surprising thing of all is that, due to his rank amongst the world's best airfighters, his death today was treated like that of a true war hero, rather than as an enemy.

26/4/18 C

We two are the stiffest things on two legs in the whole of France. We have just been transferred to Hell from Paradise, as we were not in this peaceful looking, inviting town two solitary hours before it was converted into a hell fire. The bombardment of Bony commenced at 3.30am and we had to evacuate a darn sight quicker than we came in. Buildings crashing down and shells falling thickly along roadways. Poor chaps being killed and wounded to right and left. Place filling with gas. Everything is excitement and bustle. However we got out, fortunately with our lives. Bony is crowded with troops, many hundreds gashed and killed. Dick went back to Platoon and I went back to hospital. Plenty of "grub" at the hospital but it won't last long as I go back to Battalion tonight.

The battalion is back near the Brick Kilns and we are just across the canal from them. They are coming back further at any time now. In these back areas it is a darn sight worst than in the frontline, as this is where Jerry puts all his big stuff and most of his gas. Most of our casualties accrue behind support lines.

27/4/18 D

Scotty Aitchison turned up, he is an old friend of Chas and they had a long yarn. This is the last that we see of Scotty. There are big battles waging up North, the First Division is there.

30/4/18 D

Marched back to Le Houssoye. Linked up with Chas again as we are both attending the HQ signalling course.

5/5/18 D

I move up into reserve. Chas is in advance guard. Our new dugout is on the slope of a hill, just below the spot where Richthofen fell. Chas again suffering from severe symptoms of Trench Fever.

12/5/18 C

Any amount of our Yankee cousins about. Quite a good stamp of men. Supposed to be 500,000 of them in France. Should soon make a big difference.

14/5/18 C

Learning signalling today. Very interesting and this knowledge will always be useful.

16/5/18 C

First review before Brigadier Cannon this afternoon. 44th is best Battalion in Brigade.

17/5/18 C

¹¹ CBM became interested in the events surrounding the Red Baron's death, refer photos. Additional correspondence in Appendix II

Baron von Richthofen The Red Baron

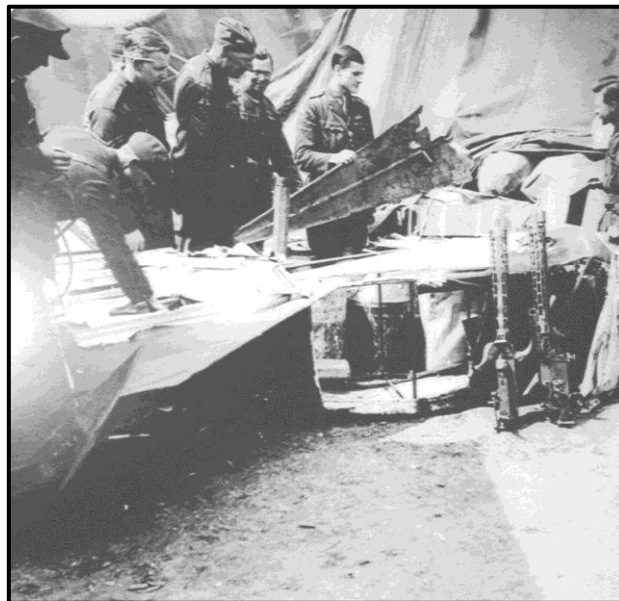
Baron von Richthofen, a cavalry officer at the outbreak of the 1914-18 war, joined the German air service in 1915. Under the instruction of the German air ace Oswald Boelcke he became a master of air combat. He was awarded the *Pour le Mérite*, the 'Blue Max', Germany's highest decoration, and by the time of his death was credited with 80 victories.

On the morning of 21 April 1918, four of von Richthofen's Fokker triplanes attacked two British reconnaissance aircraft over the Somme. British Sopwith Camels went to their aid, and von Richthofen closed on a Camel flown by Lieutenant Wilfred May, a Canadian on his first operational flight.

There is considerable controversy about what followed, some claim that another Canadian, Captain Roy Brown, fired on von Richthofen from behind killing him. Others believe Australian machine gunners firing from the ground killed von Richthofen.

Von Richthofen's body was recovered by the Australians and buried at Bertangles, France, but was later exhumed and reinterred in Berlin in 1925.

(Australian War Memorial)



*Australians inspect remains of von Richthofen's Fokker Triplane
(Australian War Memorial)*



Richthofen's room showing trophies from various 'kills'.

*Note the aircraft radial-engine light fitting
(donated by German War Museum Kongenluft 1477)
(H13502 Australian War Memorial)*

Aire, France. An elaborately engaged brass plaque mounted on a wooden propeller forms the shape of a cross over the grave of 2nd Lieutenant John (Jack) Hay, No. 40 Squadron, FRC (Royal Flying Corps) at a cemetery just outside the town. The inscription on the plaque reads "The earth holds not a finer gentleman". A grazier in civilian life, Hay was shot down by the German flying ace, Manfred von Richthofen, the Red Baron, during an air battle on 23 January 1917. Aged 28, he was the only Australian of the Red Baron's eighty-nine victims.

(Donor C. Goddard)

(P02118.002 Australian War Memorial)





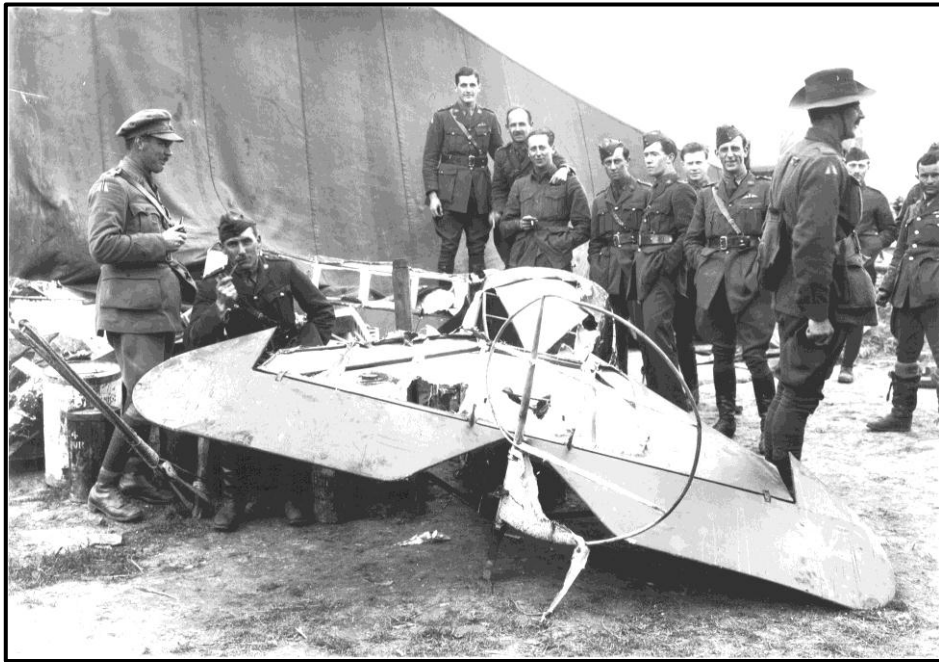
*Richthofen (right) and Reichskanzler Michaelis.
(C04711 Australian War Memorial)*



*Baron Manfred Von Richthofen,
the "Red Baron"
(A03158 Australian War Memorial.*



*A posthumous photograph of captain
Baron Manfred Von Richthofen. The
special value of the photograph is said
to be that it shows the wounds in the
head could not have been caused by
fire from the air. (for further
particulars see appendix II) (A03158
Australian War Memorial C. 1918-03.)*



Bertangles, France. 1918-04-22. The remains of Baron Von Richthofen's Fokker Triplane at the aerodrome of No. 3 Squadron of the Australian Flying Corps, Bertangles. The famous German airman was shot down and crushed in the Australian lines while flying a Triplane very near the ground on the tail of a British Scout. Only one bullet – believed to be from Lewis gun attached to a battery of Australian field artillery – was found in his body, and that through the heart. It was a dramatic event. [for further particulars see appendix II] (E02044. Australian War Memorial)



France, 1918-04. Remains of the Late Baron Von Richthofen being carried to vehicle by six pilots of No. 3 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps. Most evidence shows that Richthofen was shot down on 1918-04-21, by Australian guns on the ground, and No. 3 Squadron salvaged and buried his body a couple of days later. (Photographer J.R. Alexander, 3rd Squadron Australian Flying Corps, Donor J. Alexander) (P0073/01 Australian War Memorial)

Doug Haig is going to have a look at us this afternoon [General Sir Douglas Haig, Commander in-Chief of the British Army in FranceEd.]

19/5/18 C

Church parade this morning. Got word of going back to line. Am going up with advance party. Jelly Belly (alias Col Clarke) announced on parade this morning that the Brigadier was so pleased with our performance on Thursday afternoon that he had presented the Battalion with 50 French Francs. What generosity some of these peanuts are blessed with. All this money between one thousand men. What a handsome gift!

20/5/18 C

Had a glorious march through some exquisite country. Marched into a beautiful summer's evening. The fields and hills magnificently green and then we passed through Amiens. The cathedral is perfect. The city is quite deserted though, and very much battered about. Arrived at Villers-Bretonneux about midnight and came right through to the frontline. We are taking over from the 16th Battalion. Met cousin (Bob McMullin) and camped with him during the night. I am on the same stunt, a company runner

24/5/18 C

This village, Villers-Bretonneux, took a great deal of getting, some two weeks ago, and we must not let it slip out of our possession now. The 51st Battalion, WA, were in that stand and lost a number of good men. The streets have seen much hand-to-hand fighting and traces of some very dirty work are still to be seen. This has been quite a busy and prosperous place but is now a total wreck. Every house, shop or factory without exception has been smashed. The streets are littered with furniture forming barricades and barb-wire entanglements are in evidence in every direction. Alas poor Villers-Bretonneux once so gay and pretty is now a cruel picture of work, wrought by war. Oh! but these everlasting signs of devastation and disaster, of bloodshed and slaughter tend to knock a chap silly. If we didn't shut our eyes to it all there would be little hope of carrying on.

26/5/18 C

Today is [brother] Harley's birthday. What sort of time will he be having? Would like to get a line from him and hear news of [brother] Stan. It seems ages since I heard of them. Fritz put a lot of gas over last night. All night long the artillery on both sides were extra active. We nearly got blown to Kingdom Come today but were fortunately spared.

29/5/18 C

Another year of my life is completed and done with [CBM's birthday - Ed.]. The coming one promises to have more action in store for me than I require in civvy life over a period of ten years.

One day this will be over and I will sneak away into the bush somewhere in dear old Aussie and live down the memory of this blood-thirsty butchery.

2/6/18 C

Enemy is making some great headway down south and by reports have crossed the river Marne. If they don't stop soon, I guess the Aussies will have to be sent down there. "Jock " says he's got a great surprise for the Australians. Suppose it's some big hop over the sandbags. The worst is that the heads think we are a blood thirsty bunch and that we are never in our element unless we are rushing in where angels fear to tread. The cap, assuredly, does not fit, but there's nothing else left but to wear it. Our reputation is our misfortune and more's the pity, may be the death of us.

9/6/18 C

Today, a typical Sabbath on the Western Front. Many have lost count of the days of the week without even worrying about the date. No difference is made on one day from another. The war proceeds

just the same and one is just as likely to "collect " on a Sunday and it's quite as easy to be gassed. The ambulance cars are just as active. The death dealing pieces of machinery are just as effective and both sides seem to enter into the struggle with the usual keenness which, in spite of the four long weary years of suffering and slaughter that have passed, does not seem to diminish but rather the reverse, growing more intense as the days pass by.

It is as well for it is essential to final victory. We are up against a keen, cunning race. But we are keener, if not as cunning, and as treacherous as our enemies. More, we have not abandoned God.

In all the many trials encountered in the course of duty, the light-hearted crisis-saving comments of the Aussies can always be heard. It indicates a philosophic spirit in adversity which will surely endure. If a man can face the trials of life in and around the trenches with unquenchable optimism, there is not the least doubt that he will rise superior to any of the comparatively petty troubles of civil life and in years to come will meet misfortune with a shrug and the old familiar ability to "get on with it ".

Dick, Woolfe and self have made ourselves as comfortable as possible in a small dugout, dozing, with nerves at very high tension. Everything is in readiness for moving up.

SOUTH-EAST OF COMPIEGNE

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In the Villers-Cotterets battle the Germans have gained a footing in Couvres and St. Pierre L'Aigle.

GERMAN MAIN BLOW NOT YET STRUCK.

Rupprecht's Reserves Intact and Waiting.

PARIS OR AMIENS?

The Daily Mirror understands that as the Germans have covered only a distance of six miles as the result of five days' fighting, the present attack is regarded in military circles as very much less successful than previous ones.

The French have put up a particularly fine resistance, and the German losses have been very much heavier than they were in the recent battle on the Aisne.

The view is held that the German main attack has not yet been delivered.

The principal portion of Prince Rupprecht's reserves are still intact, and he can use them when he likes.

It is not known where the bulk may be thrown, and so doubt still exists as to whether the main attack is to be towards Paris or Amiens.

Back the Germans delivered on Compiègne and a number of forward without arms to give at the intended to surprise. got close to the French lines on the ground, enclosing battery of Germans with machine

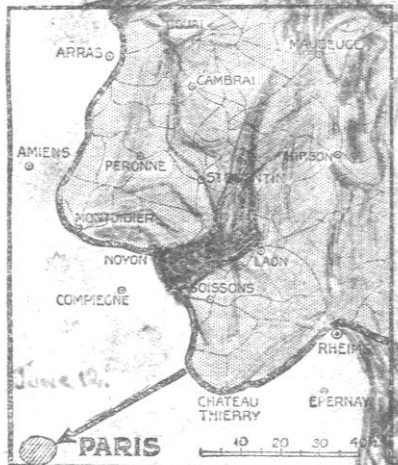
BRITISH DAYLIGHT RAID

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 1918.

LOOK AT THEIR RAILWAYS.

A high military authority in the British Army a few days ago remarked upon the advantage which the Germans enjoy in the possession of the "interior lines." The small map which we print shows that this advantage is reinforced by an extraordinarily complete network of railways. For clearness the Allied system is not printed, but it is not so satisfactory as the German, now in the hands of the enemy.

The German front south-east of Amiens shows two distinct salients, one at Montdidier and the other at Chateau Thierry. These two salients are thrust out against the flanks of an army defending Paris against a direct attack from the north-east. With their "interior lines" for which we have a shorter com-



THE WONDER-B MUSIC.

THE WAR GRAMOPH

Before the war a gramophone upon generally as one of two toys either a toy unworthy of serious it was an intolerable nuisance.

But when war broke out the gramophone began to find a new place in the world. Almost one of the first things the Cross Society did when it had set stride was to order a hundred or more gramophones and a thousand records for the hospitals in France. That recognition of the fact that music was a part in creating a cheerfulness where it was most necessary.

To meet this need, handy portable gramophones were devised, and these were sent out and despatched to the front. To-day, there is not a hospital in France without its quota of gramophones. They are to be found in the hospitals, officers are either owned by the companies. And the men value their gramophones more than their food. It is their music appreciated. Every Y.M.C.A. has one, every hospital, every front has a gramophone, and a repertoire of records played many times a day.

To-day the gramophone at the front is the wonder-box of music, an inexhaustible source of good cheer and melody. Not only the greatest influences for good are found. It gives the boys the music they never mind, whether it be standard overture, or the latest comic song, shine-music and brings with it home.

What music do they demand at the front? A leading manufacturer tells me that 50 per cent. of popular musical comedy and revue number songs of the moment, and the other good standard selections of the past. In one Y.M.C.A. hut there

Trench doodling
By CBM

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munications) the Germans are able to threaten many points without disclosing the real direction in which they intend to strike. They are also in a good position to improve a success if they are unexpectedly fortunate.

The Battle of Hamel

3/7/18 D

Chas, Frank Woolfe and myself are taking on Coy running for this stunt. It will be our first hop over, as we are all from the same Btn. I hear that Billy Hughes [Australia's PM] spoke to some of the chaps yesterday, and that he is to watch the stunt from Tower Observation Park outside Sailly le Sec. Chas went forward with advance guard.

We arrived at the deserted village of Hamet about 7.00pm, all cigarettes out and perfect quietness has to be maintained. Marching through this village in connected files I noticed that the church spire does not lack ventilation, a 5 inch shell having penetrated and passed through.

This village has not escaped the effects of the German love of destruction, and may suffer long before all is finished. Chas meets us and guides us to our dugouts about a mile from the frontline; this is our dwelling until 2.00 or 3.00am on the 4th. Here we are given all information known, and receive 48 hours dry rations, 280 rounds of Mark 7 ammunition, also five bombs each, and aeroplane plans. Being runners we carry less ammunition than others. Dick Woolfe and self are to run with the Skipper, with orders not to lose sight of him whatever happens.

There is great disappointment amongst the Yanks, orders having come through from Pershing that they are not to hop over on the 4th of July (anniversary Day of Independence). In spite of this, some are determined to come. They want a fight and by heavens they will get it.

4/7/18 D

At 3.00am we are asked to load ourselves with what we consider much useless material, spade, pick, bombs, rifle, ammunition, tucker and sandbags, besides equipment and accessories. One can hear the rumble of our tanks and we pray that Fritz does not. We come to the frontline, and after repeated orders, slight whispering is still heard. It only takes a few minutes to be guided or to find our allotted positions, in this case between the barb wire and trenches, gaps being cut in the wire for passage of troops. This has been done and marked out earlier in the evening. I feel in the highest state of excitement and many thoughts race through my head. Where will I be wounded, is the main theme which I try my best to forget. The R.S.M. is alongside me, Dick Woolfe the other side, and the Captain in front. I am trembling with the thought of unknown excitement. Then we are lying down waiting for the barrage to open. Only a minute to go by the R.S.M.'s watch, the longest of a man's life, I guess! Does the uncertainty of the thing make one feel like this?

About this time I distinctly remember a Sergeant in front of us giving his Section a sip of rum. Two minutes later he was dead, killed by a piece of one of our own shells.

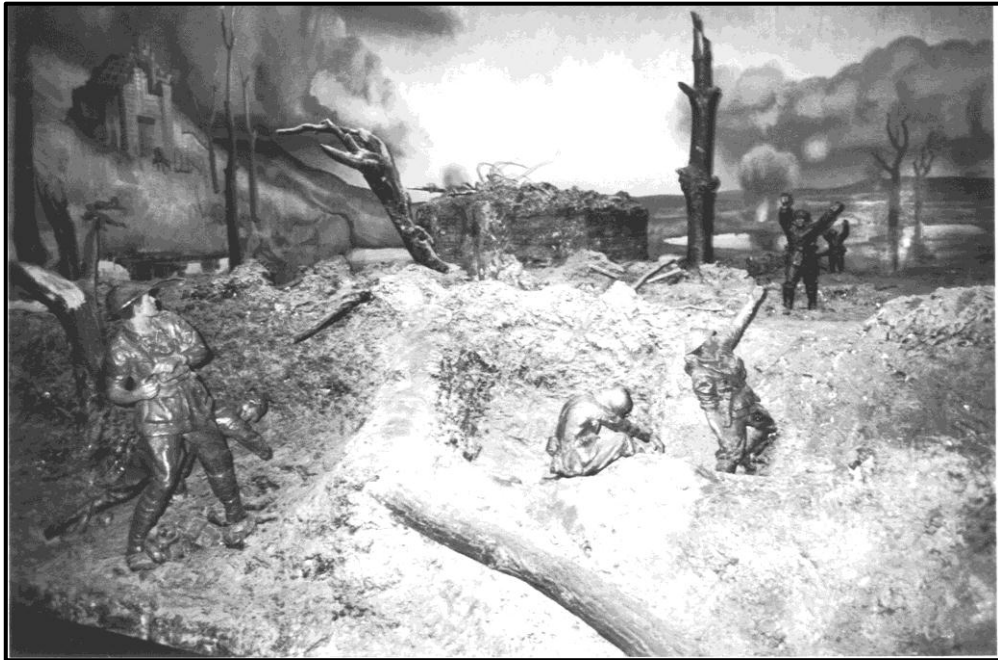
Zero hour. A thousand lightning flashes behind us, a mighty rush of air, and then shells shrieking overhead and bursting with a blinding flash. The barrage had opened! It is 4.00am on the 4th of July and the Battle of Hamel has begun. I feel as if my heart will burst out of my body, not on account of it swelling but the strain is so great. Shells are bursting everywhere, right where we are lined up. One shell has lighted up now, and we stand crouching forward, waiting for the word to advance. God! what a suspense. Shells bursting behind us everywhere. I feel my self knocked sidelong and find later that the top of my rifle has been blown off as I held it on my back. "A lucky escape ". Many are killed here, some of the Yanks among the number.

At last the barrage leaps forward, and the order is given to move. We do so, willing enough with a sigh of relief. The big strain is over and my heart feels its normal size again, although still beating like a kettle drum. The sandbags are rudely placed on the ground, perhaps a bomb will go rotating through the air to lose itself or burst harmlessly amidst its larger kin in the barrage. On our left is a never-to-be-

forgotten sight. The village of Hamel, until now in German hands, is under concentrated fire. Every kind of shell mainly incendiary, making a blazing inferno. Once it was a picturesque French village, later, a series of heaps of charred timber and bricks. Behind the village is the hill our Btn. has to take. The Captain is wildly excited and has me rushing everywhere with various orders. One poor beggar called out asking me to ease his leg. This I do by raising it with a rifle under his jerky instructions. Looking up after this operation I see figures of men, everyone slowly advancing, the R.S.M. rushing about waving his revolver, meanwhile yelling to the chaps to keep up and fill in gaps, many wide ones growing owing to chaps collecting in bunches, but no Captain! At last I see him forging right ahead with great agility for one of his stamp; then making a rush to reach his side before he gets out of sight again, I find myself entangled in the barb-wire. As German machine gun bullets are getting pretty thick, I get pretty annoyed and hasten to extricate myself from its coils. It is still dark, and I have a job to find the Skipper.

I manage to discover him at last rushing at three Fritzies. On bailing them up, my bayonet drops off with the top of the rifle! They are no trouble, only in the devil of a funk. Tumbled thoughts of souveniring entered into my head, but I don't quite appreciate myself collaring even a German's watch, etc. Perhaps if the Skipper had not rushed to new fields, I may have ratted the blighters. I had to follow the Skipper anyhow, one's sense of life preservation holds good.

Images From The Australian War Memorial Diorama

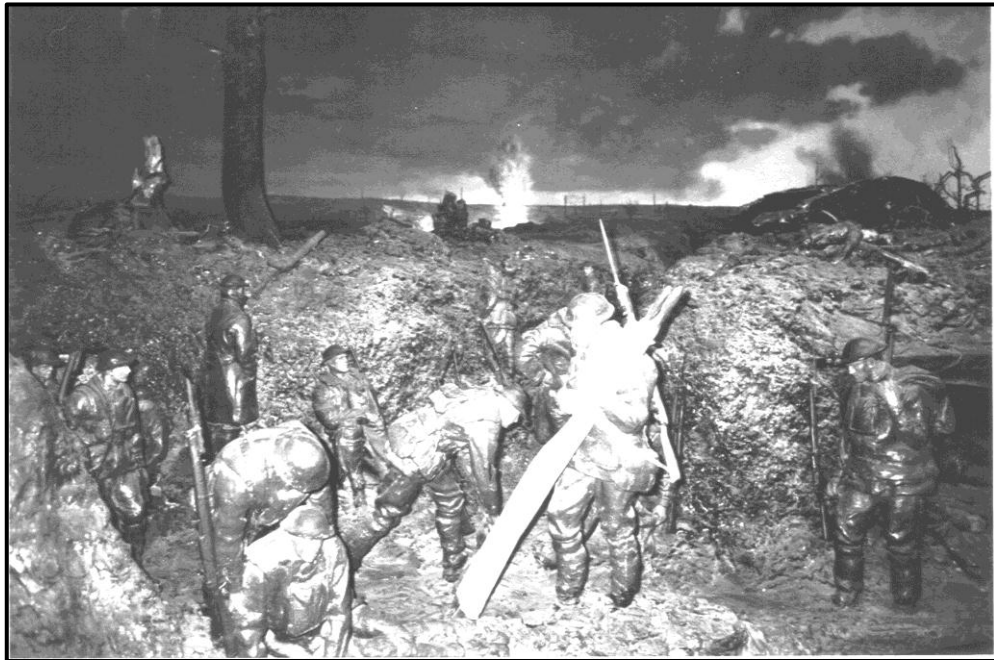


Ypres 1917



Dernancourt 1918

Images From The Australian War Memorial Diorama



Somme (Winter) 1917



Bullecourt 1917

Dawn is breaking and the Germans are manipulating their machine guns to some devil's tune. The apparently cumbrous tanks are well ahead doing fine work, and the village of Hamel is a mass of burning and tumbled down buildings. Prisoners, shell-shocked and dazed, passed us with shaking arms upraised in deadly fear of death, on their way back to HQ. We have the last slope in front of us and can see the tanks attempting to climb again and again until successful. A short spell here, waiting for the barrage to lift. I am disgusted because the Captain sends me back with a message to HQ. I would much prefer to go to the last objective about a hundred yards further on. Nicholson returns with me, and we see many terrible sights on the way. One's excitement now cools off and one finds the one-hour-old battlefield most depressing. Small groups of men digging new trenches have got to work, and stretcher-bearers are looking for the wounded, and too often finding the dead. We get to HQ all serene and mighty tired. Questions are fired at us right and left. Frank Woolfe is back here and informs us that Ted Taafe and Chas are wounded, Chas not badly, thank God. Poor old Taafe has lost an eye and many others have gone West.

Our return is pretty exciting and we have to duck at times, and after some scouting we find the last objective, now in our hands. We make our report and hop into a dugout, bolting a small snack of grub whilst we can. The Germans are shelling the trench and we have to keep very low; the beggars have the range to a "tee". About two hours later there is a call for runners, and I go down with a lad who is sick. It is getting pretty warm now, as the German artillery is ranging back. On my return I collect a small piece of shrap in the leg; nothing to go out with and one is lucky to be alive.

About 4.00pm the Germans are observed preparing for a counter-attack. Everyone is on the alert, awaiting anxiously for the next move. We are short of bombs. Their fire is very heavy about 6.00pm and about an hour later A Coy on our left fire their SOS and are seen retiring to a shallow trench about 30 yards behind the frontline. Our artillery and machine guns open up with the fury of the devil. There seems to be a curtain of steel and lead tearing through the air over our heads. Dick Woolfe is firing like the deuce into the gloom awaiting orders. These come as expected. We are to go back and get a message through to HQ by B Coy who are in reserve. This does not appear difficult, but we have a job to find their station in the dark. One will never forget this night. Hamel is now behind us, a burning ruin. The Germans are now pouring a few shells into the ruin. These shriek overhead and land with a crash. Now and again an occasional gas shell with its shriller shriek tears through the sky and bursts with a dull thud, the sound of which serves to put the wind up one and all, the more on account of its deadliness. One is right glad of another man's Company on the top of these awful nights. On our return, I go back to HQ again with Nicholson who is none too well. My leg is getting stiffer. We will have a job to find our way this time I imagine, but keeping well out from the village have no difficulty in picking our lonely way, hurried on by an occasional shell. The Germans have now a hold in our line and have to be driven out before dawn.

Frank Woolfe returns with me in Nick's place. He is mighty disgusted when I inform him that he must go cautiously and not walk into the Germans who are holding our line on the left of D Coy. Both parties are firing Verylights and as one or two of these land at our feet, we wisely hop into an old communication trench just in time, as the bullets begin to get mighty close. With every nerve on the alert, we creep up the Communication Trench and listen for voices, and are not sorry to hear Dick Woolfe who is manipulating a Fritzie machine-gun with good effect. Under the command of Mr Gaz, a party of men bomb their way into the German-held trench, killing many and capturing about 80 prisoners, incidentally relieving seven or eight of our own chaps who were captured by the Germans earlier in the day. Having had no sleep for 48 hours, at 8.00am on the 5th July, after dragging five or six dead bodies over the top and dumping them, I am very thankful to crawl into a bunk after an acceptable tot of rum, and fall asleep at once. After four or five hours of this bliss, I wake and finding my leg pretty bad, have to go out to Advanced HQ to rest it. Here I remain feeling fairly safe until the evening of the 6th, when the Battn. was relieved. Marching back to Allexville to our old resort. Here we compare notes and find that many of our

companions have "gone West". It takes about three days rest with plenty of sleep to recover from our strenuous three days at Hamel.

4/7/18 C

Even though the Yanks withdrew from our Battalion at the last moment, after receiving instructions not to fight on their Independence Day, we still managed to recruit enough volunteers to fill the gaps. Things were very willing for us last night and we made it all the way through, and gained our objectives, but what a lovely war! Here I am with a lump of lead in me and now out of the action. Got a few souvenirs and Tim Healy (also from Denmark, WA) got a similar smack and came out with me. Being able to walk, I went looking for a dressing station. Fritzies were running everywhere. "Mein Kamerad, mein", we were met with this comment on every side. From the dressing station we set off for F9 about four miles. Ambulances were too much in demand so had to foot it. Rode on a tank some of the distance then to C.C.s, about 30km on motorcycle. Am now back at No. 1 area General Hospital at Rouen after very tedious ride in train.

6/7/18 C

By Jove! This is hard to take. Sheets and a bonza bed. Felt very crook on it last night, a bit better now. Was x-rayed this evening and am exceptionally lucky. Bullet didn't penetrate through chest wall, was making direct course for heart. Doctor does not like interfering with it so possibly I will have it attached to my anatomy for the term of my natural. Do not think it is a Blighty bullet. Have to be very quiet. It is painful but might have been a thousand times worse. Some of the chaps are in a horrible mess. Would like to hear news of Dick and mates now. Wonder how they got on. The Yanks and aeroplanes were a great assistance and the former more than retrieved their reputation with the Australians.

8/7/18 C

Tim Healy went to Blighty (UK) this morning. My wound is healing rapidly under treatment and the Captain not going to operate. This will enable it to get better providing the lead does not give trouble. The nurse in charge of our ward is just bonza, quite a dinkum Australian herself and she makes life very pleasant for us. Although this is an Australian hospital, it is seldom that Aussies come here and we are consequently receiving royal treatment.

10/7/18 C

It is raining hard these last couple of days and we are not envying life for those in the battle areas. There is nothing worse than an existence up there under wet weather conditions.

It isn't the foe that we fear. It isn't the bullets that whine. It isn't the business career of a shell or the burst of a mine. It is isn't the sniper who seeks to nip our young hopes in the bud. It isn't the Huns! It isn't the guns. It's the mud.

13/7/18 C

This is a very pretty hospital. Situated in the centre of the racecourse on the edge of Rouen. I would very much like to get into the town and have a look around but alas, I am to be held for observation purposes, as the missile is still in there.

Marie

18/7/18 C

Marie lived in Belgium just over the French Border. She wasn't exactly beautiful. Very small was Marie, with corresponding hands and feet, quite unlike the majority of women one meets in Belgium and the north of France. Her face, not even pretty, arrested attention! With a complexion almost sallow, it was necessary to look at her very carefully to find out wherein lay her charm. Well, one soon discovered a pair of wonderful black eyes in this 19-year-old Belgian girl. And with those eyes, she had a quiet, peaceful

expression and a quick vivacious manner. It was Marie's misfortune to be a cripple - not that she seemed to mind. An early fall had resulted in a hip disease, and she walked with a perceptible limp. One wondered if that was the reason for the peaceful expression. Looking at her, one gained the impression that here was a person whom the ordinary cares of life would not worry. Her sweet placidity seemed a thing eternal. People suffering from deformity or chronic illness, seemed to fall naturally into two classes - the first being of the peevish, complaining order, the second (which embraces Marie) quite happy and cheerful with the atmosphere of calm, which is, perhaps the compensation that nature accords to some of those, with whom she has seemed to deal harshly.

Marie and her mother used to dispense coffee to the troops at the price of one penny per bowl. The coffee, I might mention, was quite decent. I used to drink a lot more than I needed, for the pleasure of watching Marie. Incidentally, before closing time, it was customary for all present to drink a final bowl - a coffee *Doch-an-dor-Is*¹² in which Marie and her mother joined, but for which no payment was accepted. We soon came to understand the friendly custom and ceased to proffer small change. Marie could talk a little English and delighted in extending her vocabulary. She told us about the Huns, one of whose officers was billeted in her house, when first the flood of invasion swept over Belgium. Apparently these Barbarian enemies had not treated them badly. The tide of invasion ebbed, but has again rolled on and that house wherein we sat and talked and drank coffee, in all probability again shelters Huns.

Marie had an older brother who died fighting against the invader, when the war was yet in its early days. A younger brother was always present of an evening, but the extent of his English was only sufficient to enable him to accept a cigarette. I never saw him refuse one, and the number of issue fags he consumed was something prodigious. Well, well! I am very, very glad the war is not being fought in Australia but very, very sorry for France and Belgium. Glad that none of our fair Aussie sisters have to dispense coffee even to friendly, foreign troops. Glad that they never hear the sound of distant drum fire rolling through their native atmosphere, nor wonder how the battle rages and whether it will cease, or roll in fury to their very doors. Sorry for these French and Belgian folk whose quiet life has been so rudely disturbed, on whose peaceful fields such horrors are daily being wrought. Sorry for the people who tilled the land that is now gaping with wounds. The thirsty land that absorbs the red rain, shed over it. Yet earth is beneficent. It takes into itself these ghastly human wrecks - absorbs them into its being.



(above) Marie & Mother

*I sometimes think that never grows the rose, so red,
as where some buried Caesar bled.
And every hyacinth, the garden wears,
dropped in its lap from some once lovely head.*

This flow of blood will someday be arrested and dammed back to its source. The eternal circle of the seasons will roll on, unfolding its processes, healing the wounds of the sorrowing lands. The generation now striving and amazedly watching the conflict, will pass on. The conflict itself, will cease to be a living memory. And Marie, too, will sleep. But that time is not yet. Just now, I wonder how many Maries there are in France and Belgium and sometimes I wonder whether Marie and her people escaped that second tide or.

Poor little Marie! Poor Belgium! Poor France!

5/8/18 C

¹² A drink for the road, or for the door.

A month today since I left the village of Hamel safely in the hands of those less fortunate than I. For one is terribly lucky to get away from the line for a time. Most of my gear has been lost and many items I badly wanted to keep. Luckily I jammed as much as possible into my tunic pockets before the stunt and consequently still have my much valued safety razor, my diary and wallet and photos and my precious little Bible. After being wounded I collected a few good souvenirs. My watch keeps excellent time. The scarf Doreen¹³ made for me before I came away was always well in demand, and I would like to have taken it back home with me. I wore it round my throat. It was cold and overcoats were left behind as being out of the question. But it served the same purpose admirably. But it did not come out of the stunt with me. It was wounded with me. The shot passing through it where it was tucked in round my chest. And in all probability it marks the place where I was "stouched", that shell hole that I crawled to, for machine gun bullets were making things unpleasant above the surface.

¹³ Doreen from Denmark was a close friend of Chas.

Doreen's Scarf

*Just before the dawn
On that chilly July morn
As patiently out on the tape we lay
It was worth its weight in gold
It was keeping out the cold
Ah yes! It went with me into the fray*

*Up till I got the crack
That set me spinning back
And put me firmly off the fighting roll
When some passing clobber
Quickly pulled aside my clobber
And gently plugged some dressing in the hole*

*Dear I wasn't feeling clever
But the stouch was thick as ever
When I set off for the boys a bit ahead
By now my veins were flooding
it was all so quick and sudden
There was nothing hadn't blood on
And my scarf had freely added to its red*

*A streak o' dawn was breaking
When my heart seemed stiff and aching
And I felt and found my chest was cold and bare
But I dinkum lost my scarf
Was back there in the strafe
Lying where I got my issue. Somewhere there.*

*So upon the battle scene
There's some faded red and green
That stayed to see the finish of the burl
And it fills me with regret*

*When I picture it there yet
Weathering the wind and wet
That scarf you made and gave, my little girl*



*Its companions day and night
Other relics of the fight
Tell tales of a greater loss than mine
Gazing o'er that battlefield
Wooden crosses are revealed
Simple symbols of a sacrifice divine*

2/8/18 D

We move back to left of Hamel and get wind of a big stunt, according to rumour the last big attack in which all AIF will take part.

8/8/18 D

The Coy. rise, feeling more at ease and we follow our own advancing fire. We have to descend into a valley and up the opposite rise; the atmosphere is thick with smoke-shells, and we cannot see any more than two yards ahead. Dick Woolfe and I keep together and slowly advance, picking our way by the flash of bursting shells ahead. We have lost all trace of the rest of the Coy. HQ and decide to keep straight on.

There is an enemy "wizz-bang gun"¹⁴ firing along the road on our left, and the shots get pretty close; it must be firing point-blank up the road; but of Fritz himself there is no sign. At last we see someone ahead and form a skirmishing line with some of the 42nd and our own men. We come across a few enemy dugouts here, and yell at the Huns to come out and if he is not out in a few seconds, a Millson is hurled into the opening, and that is the end.

At last things are quietening down a bit, and as the dawn breaks over the battlefield and the smoke clears away, we draft ourselves out and join our own Companies, find our allotted positions and by 10.00am have a long narrow trench dug, with any cover we can lay our hands on. How our friends in England and Australia would look, could they see these shelters, a narrow trench four feet deep, two wide, damp and musty; an oil sheet over sticks on top, with earth and grass camouflage thrown over it. Beneath, one spreads a rug and there you are!

On our left flows the Canal de la Somme, with the tall swaying poplars lining its banks. How these poplars have suffered, blasted and lopped by shell-fire; they cannot retaliate, but what could they not tell! On the far side the bank rises very steeply, forming a long hill about three quarters of a mile from our position, and we can see a division, or remnants of a division, advancing along the ridge in artillery formation, and we watch "as they advance" the concentration of German artillery fire, shrapnel with this distinct little cloud bursting over the bowed heads of the advancing troops, the white smoke of gas shells, spreading with deadly slowness, and the quickly disappearing smoke of the "heavies" amid a cloud of dust and soil, torn out of the ground as if a mighty scoop had been swung into the earth and the contents cast up to the heavens. We watch these poor beggars advancing; dropping, returning wounded, yet still advancing, until a bursting shell from a Fritz heavy makes us seek cover for safety. A few minutes later

¹⁴ Wizz-bang = high velocity shell.

runners are called for, and Dick W and I go back over the battlefield with 16-20 Hun prisoners. We collect quite a number of prisoners on the road, and questions are flung from all sides by advancing diggers. A finer sight I have never seen than all these men and guns advancing. From the top of any rise we come to we can see miles and miles of men, guns, ammunition, and rations, moving up to carry on with the big push, and we get some idea of what is happening. The observation balloons are advancing in the air; here we get an idea of how fast the advance is moving. The prisoners are no trouble, but some of the troops wish to souvenir them, but they h'ain't a skerrick left! Back and back we go, and some we see who will never fight again, and I cannot but feel fed up with it all.

Dick Woolfe wants to shoot the blighters, as Battalion Headquarters have moved from their early morning position. However we go on, passing an army moving up the lines. We pick up some wounded men, and make the Huns carry them back to the Dressing Station. At last we come to the village of Caestre, and I leave Woolfe to rest, and take the prisoners onto the cage, report, handover, and return to Woolfe. He is resting outside some Army Service Corps chaps dugout and this friend in need comes to light with coffee, a loaf of bread and some jam. I don't think I have ever enjoyed a meal more. We have been going since 12.00 last night until 12.00 today, moving nearly all the time and this is our first snack in the 12 hours and we have walked over 25-30km. After this meal and a short rest, we return to the Coy. and have a couple of hours rest; and we don't suffer from insomnia these nights.

The next few days are spent in advancing, and (for runners) plenty of carrying despatches backwards and forward. We learn the troops advanced 15km the first day, and took a good haul in prisoners and guns. The Germans have started bombing the roads at night time, about 8.30, they fly over, drop low down a flare bomb, which lights up the country for about 30 acres or more, and then he drops his deadly pills, six of them as a rule. One evening as we are moving up, a plane comes over, drops his flare and then the bombs come right along our advancing line, killing and wounding. Dick Woolfe is among the later, having his lip cut open by a piece of flying bomb. We move onto the side of a valley and on our right there is a battery of 5.9's. I wander across and find dear old Reg Cockshott, going for his life. We had a long yarn together, and saying goodbye wondering when we will meet again.

We dig in on the slope of the valley and await orders to move. The idea is that our Battn. move out behind the Germans and drive them with bombs, back toward our lines. With this ahead of us we wait for orders to move. Between 8.00 and 9.00pm, the Hun planes come over, and we are in the midst of bombs all night long. It is an absolute hell and very little shelter. How thankful I am to see the dawn, and all suspense is over as the considered stunt has been abandoned and we retire to reserve.

Meanwhile Back At The Western Front

12/8/18 D

We miss Chas muchly, he is now in hospital at Rouen and we are also, to some extent doing a fair bit of recovering.

21/8/18 D

We go up to the front again today, after two days spell, and over the top in the second wave toward Bray-sur-Somme. About midday I have to go on a run to the platoons, and am chased by a Hun plane, at least the beggar had the Lewis gun onto me and I made a break for cover. We dig in above Bray, and I go reconnoitring with the Captain.

23/8/18 D

This evening we prepare for another advance to take place early tomorrow morning. About 2.00am we start and moving in single file, advance toward the starting point. The enemy is not restful tonight as they keep sending over gas shells. Moving down into the valley on the Bray-Corbie road, the machine

guns opened fire, and we have to crawl and there is just room to move on the stomach without being seen. One poor beggar turning over raised himself, apparently, and was hit in the stomach, his cry for help as we move down into the valley full of gas, is appalling, and I feel a coward.

We put on our gas masks and move through a deserted village, taking up our positions on the other side of the valley still wearing masks. At last our barrage opens and we move ahead. One of our shells lands on a large dump of Verylights, and these ignite and fly in all directions. It is a most beautiful sight but we have very little time to watch it. We move on up the hill and see no sign of the enemy, although his machine guns are rattling like the devil, and a few big guns drop a shell or too behind us. We arrive at our position at the top of the hill feeling very tired, but with no fighting, as I have not seen a single Hun, and we commenced to dig-in. The runners' job of returning falls on me, and I take Frank Woolfe, as he and I are the only ones left now; both Chas M. and Dick Woolfe are in Hospital, and a newly appointed runner has been blown up, and evacuated with shell-shock.

27/8/18 D

Frank and I dig and dig and about 5.00pm we are down far enough to sit in our little trench. It took about five and half hours to dig this and we are only there for about a quarter of an hour when the Hun lets loose again, and we are living in a hell, the whole valley is a mess of bursting shells.

Their yell for stretcher bearers and runners is heard, and we wearily yet warily rise and crawl over to the Captain's trench, receive orders to tell the platoons to leave their trenches and form up in old French trenches in their left. The place is an absolute pit of bursting shells but we are too tired to be cold-footed, and leave our gear, and run as fast as dead legs can carry us to give the orders, runners by jove, yes, we run! Frank warns the signallers and the two front platoons and I am taking the two far ones. I get there somehow and throw myself down on the edge of the trench and jerk out the orders, leave them and go onto the next, I have no thought of being hit, yet I see men in every trench wounded and killed. At last I find them and after giving the orders run back. The shell fire begins to die down, but gas and machine guns still continue the game.

28/8/18 D

We move over the top in open formation, under light machine gun fire and we reach our position with a few casualties. I find that I can hardly walk, and have to get to the doctor somehow. My eyes are also very bad. What is it I feel? "This is my very last experience at the frontline ". We arrive at the advanced Dressing Station, I lie down and know very little more.

Somehow someone got me into an ambulance car and back to the Dressing Station. Here my burns are dressed but my eyes are practically useless. They put me in another car and I'm off again.

A bed at last; how gratified I feel, and how nice it is to be cared for by nurses once more. I spend about five days here, eyes getting worse. On the sixth day, sent onto another hospital. This time a real bed in an American hospital. Three weeks at "peace " here and then the Yank Doctor decided that I had better be transferred to a British hospital as he is not certain how to treat these burns.

Put in five days at the British hospital at Le Havre.

4/10/18 D

Although I am not feeling fit, I will be glad to leave tomorrow as I hear this is their verdict. We hear our chaps are out for a well-earned rest, but return in a short time. March from hospital to camp, feeling pretty shaky, more like riding in an ambulance than walking. Put in about four days re-fitting at the AIF camp.

N° 11 Convalescent Depot Concert Party

— WILL GIVE A. —



GRAND CONCERT

IN THE DINING HALL



TO COMMENCE AT 7. 30 P. M. PROMPT

STAGE MANAGER

Cpl. J. H. WRIGHT

MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Pte. H. WILKINSON

GENERAL MANAGER

Lt. E. H. DICKETTS

by KIND PERMISSION of

Lieut. Colonel. F. A. Mc CAMMON. M. C. R. A. M. C.

Commanding

N° 11 Convalescent Depot B. E. F. (France)

Printed at — Imprimerie A. MICHEL.

"Health, Wealth, and the Girl You Love" S.H. Soulsby

C. Brady

"Admiral's Broom"

H. Carnuthers

"PARKER'S WEDDING"

Parker

G, Peasegood

Mr. Dudley

J. H. Wright

William Dudley

His Daughter

W. J. Hughes

a Poor Widow

G. Dix

Box 1 em

An Undertaker

S.M. Dyer

Mr. Wilson of Wilson's Matrimonial Agency H. Bonnington

Mr. White

His Manager

G. Priest

Miss Flossie

HLS 790134

H. Marshall

Bob Hawkins

F.N. Paril'etj

A Much Married Man

C. Dickens

a swell

W. H. H. H.

Office Boy

D. Hunter

Jack Metcalf

J. Snow

1st Client

W. B. C. W.

[illegible]

GOD SAVE THE KING

The Depot Orchestra will render Selections from 7 to 7:30 p.m. and during the interval H. Williams, Conductor

a programme of one of our Concerts
You would be surprised at the
way the female characters are
taken and carried out to almost
perfection by some of our Chaps from
the ranks. We have fortunately
entertainment. Quite a number of
impersonators. Unless one is wise to be would never

12/10/18 D

I fall-in with 60lb of kit and march to the Station. Quite a number of 44th Battn. chaps are returning. Sergeant Betts and I are camping together. Charles Manners turns up and we greet each other like long-lost brothers, and then the beggar stays behind to get his teeth fixed. The old cattle truck once more

13/10/18 D

I am feeling rotten, but have a two day journey to the Divisional Wing. A long drag up hill to the camp which consists of a few tents on a bleak hill site. I fall out and see the Quack, who orders me to stay behind on special diet for dysentery.

17/10/18 D

I leave with a small party, still feeling shaky, to re-join the Batt. They are outside Allenville, preparing for more stunts and collecting the returning sick and wounded, to make up the numbers to prepare the company for more fight.

23/10/18 D

Reported to the Doctor that I was feeling rotten. Down with rheumatic fever, taken to hospital. As the Brigade Field Ambulance Hospital is full I at last get to number three Australian hospital at Abbeville with a temperature of 106 degrees according to the nurse, and greeted with the news that I am to be shipped out for Blighty (UK) that day. Goodbye France.

Chas Completes The Story ...

26/8/18 C

My chest, after a few physical exercises is not too good. Giving a great deal of pain, but probably due to stiffness. I guess I shall find a great change when I join with them again. They are constantly in action and are doing some great work. Soon the enemy will have lost all his last March's gains and we will be hoeing into the old Hindenberg line. That is where the line should begin to tell. We have a huge map erected in the camp with the line marked out with little flags. It is very interesting to follow. Some wonderful headway has been made since August 8th and it's Jerry's turn to get the wind up now.

4/9/18 C

The cross-country comes off today and I'm giving it a fly. Have not trained as I should have done. There were close on a thousand competitors. All those who travel the two and three quarters miles in less than 25 minutes, score two points for their camp and, under 28 minutes 1 point. There were about 100 home before me but I did it in 21 minutes. Better than I reckoned on. But now I'm so stiff, can hardly walk. Will certainly train for the next cross-country in a fortnight's time in the off-chance of still being here. [That is, at No. 11 Convalescent Depot, where approximately 6,000 men were being physically prepared for going back to the frontline - Ed.].

8/9/18 C.

Life here at the camp is "what you make it ". It is well-run under the Colonel of the Depot and our own camp commander, Captain English. Both of these gentlemen are first raters and appreciate us colonial troops. A state of affairs very uncommon with English officers.

9/9/18 C

We appreciate such men who temporarily have charge of us. My friend, Jarvis, another Canadian who sleeps in the next bed, won the heavy-weight wrestling yesterday. He is a fine character and I get him talking about his country after lights out at night. Although two years my junior, he turns the scale at 14 stone and is only 6 foot 3ins in height.

13/9/18 C

I have just heard that Dick is a casualty. Nothing official but I am afraid rather reliable. Badly gassed I have been told. Poor old chap. What a rough spin our chaps are getting.

*There's a soul in the Eternal
Standing stiff before the King
There's a little English maiden sorrowing
There's a proud and fearless women
Seeing pictures in the fire
There's a broken battered body on the wire*

Anon

16/9/18 C

I have been in contact with men from Canada a good deal of late and find them all right. Also some from South Africa but never seem to pull along with them quite the same. They are a different class of people and suffer from swelled headedness and over-confidence. A girl that welcomed us and waves us all farewell at Durban writes openly of their indifference to the call of war. They have nothing to skite about.

*Oh God, could we show these
The path that the Anzacs went
Could they rest in their beds at night time
Or live in their damned content?*

*Could they talk with a sneer of Australians
When one or two get drunk?*

*I'd rather a drunk Australian
than a wealthy Durban Funk*

They're coming in tens of thousand

And here's to their honour today

Here's to their Sister Dominion

Who is showing us the way.

21/9/18 C

The wrestling is a great pastime and one witnesses some keen contests between Tommies, New Zealanders, South Africans, Canadians, West Indians and Australians. But the colonials always win and of the victories the Diggers easily hold the record.

Boxing is another sport where we usually win, in this particular camp.

When a Digger was asked by the Padre to think of his wife when tempted to drink, replied that when the thirst was upon him, he was absolutely devoid of fear.

23/9/18 C

The work of our "birdmen" cannot be overstated, as we only have some vague idea of what "ascendancy in the air" means. Its interpretation grammatically helps, but we now realise that it spells ultimate victory to the side that attains and keeps it. It is as essential to us arriving at a glorious peace, as being mistress of the seas. Now we could, at the worst of times, always hold our own aloft, but America's entry into this arena of the European upheaval has made for the Allies, everything that could ever be wished for in the air, possible.

25/9/18 C

And before long we will have the German capital whining for mercy. "Berlin or bust" is a motto that every airman has decided to act upon. But they will not bust. They are too good for that. Berlin will bust. Jarvis went away this evening. His base is at Étaples. We have had some great times together. It is the way of war. Good friends come and go like an endless chain. When they return we are gone.

27/9/18 C

Today the monthly sports are held and it is one day in the month that the colonial soldiers shine more than ever. For they never fail to carry off the majority of the prizes. Today the Diggers and the Canadians won every event except one.

29/9/18 C

Something gives me a feeling, and maybe I am not isolated, that something decidedly grand is about to happen for the Allies and that the end is not so far away.

30/9/18 C

Well, back to the frontline, and not before time too.

Splendid news today regarding our victory in Bulgaria. It will make you all quite happy at home. It's going to lead to further important issues in this fighting business. It will be at an end very soon.

2/10/18 C

We are in our last stunt before a promised spell. By the time this 90 days are over there will be little if any fighting to do. Bulgaria being right out, makes all the difference. Turkey and Austria will be the next to shy, and then Hunland will have to face the music single handed.

4/10/18 C

It is rumoured that the Emperor of Germany has issued orders for all his troops to change their socks. He can evidently smell "de feet".

5/10/18 C

Up at an unearthly hour and make preparations for an early start for Le Havre. This time travelling with a train loaded with German prisoners. Many trains laden with them have been passing through each day. Further evidence that we are winning the war.

On arriving at the base about midday, the first friend I collide with is my good mate Dick, he who should have gone to Blighty, so I was too surprised for words. Dick had bad luck not getting across and, although it is great to be together again, I was sorry he was not home with his dear people in Bedford (UK). He has been at the Base for a week already.

7/10/18 C

They are fitting us all out with new gear, we didn't realise that our other stuff was all worn out.

11/10/18 C

Quite a big batch of 1914 men marched in here last night. Many of them from First Army Service Corps They all knew Doug and Gordon well. What a grand time is in store for these chaps, and they have earned it. Judging by the news that's going around we will not be many months in following suit and taking a boat for home sweet home.

13/10/18 C

The big batch of Anzacs left here for Blighty this afternoon. Also a draft for the Battalions and Dick is on it. One of the coldest nights we have had. The poor chaps going up in cattle trucks with only one blanket per person have my sympathies.

14/10/18 C

Had an afternoon in Le Havre on leave. The weather was bad so I was obliged to knock about on my own. It's very hard to find company that just suits me. Guess I'm very hard to please.

15/10/18 C

There must be something wrong with the water in France, seems to decay the best of teeth. Have lost more than half of mine. Many of us are having the same trouble. I'm realising the truth of "one tooth in the head being worth two on the table".

Have been chosen for Quarter Guard. On duty every alternate 24 hours. First guard went on today, we mount at 9.00am in morning. Am not keen on it for it is a fortnight's stint and I'm desirous of rejoining the 44th as most of my friends are back there now.

16/10/18 C

As guards we seem to be punished more than the prisoners. No resting boxes. The guard room consists of two leaky tents, it is quite a disgraceful state of affairs. Everybody is sweating on peace but it may be a long way off yet.

*Why will General Foch's Armistice, when granted, resemble
pigs' tails?*

The end of a lot of swine.

28/10/18 C

Moved off today about 3.00pm. A repetition of the journey of last December 9th. We head toward our objective under cover of darkness and have a great deal of buckshee [free] fun finding room to drop our bundle. Many had dropped their bundle on the way. It is a cruel march.

29/10/18 C

Reached Amiens 9.00am and ascended a mountain for the purpose of getting to the Divisional wing. Only have another 4km march to the Battn. We reached this resting place late in the evening, weary and footsore devoutly declaring nevermore we should go to any more wars.

30/10/18 C

Back amongst my old acquaintances, but many unfortunately are not with us. Dick Woolfe is here. Wally Davis also, but Dick has gone to hospital again. Out on parade all morning from 8.30 to noon. Am only just re-sampling what the Australians are having to put up with after doing such grand work in the line for all those months. It is useless making a song about it at all. We are getting absolutely no rest and are nearly driven mad with the "carrying" on of the dud-heads that always hang-out behind the line ready to pounce on us when we come back for a period of rest.

1/11/18 C

Yesterday was a big day. Hard at it from early morning until tea time and today there is an all day route march on. Full marching order. Heard that Dick has departed for Blighty last Monday. He has acute rheumatism so it will be quite a time before he returns now.

2/11/18 C

Same old stunt again today. But we are permitted to have the afternoon to ourselves, spent in writing letters. We are billeted in a little shanty of a room where we have rigged up a table and plugged up some of the many large holes in the wall.

3/11/18 C

This morning we are at our most industrious as we are cleaning and polishing, for tomorrow there is some inspection stunt. Competition for best platoon in brigade, so much work is entailed in making necessary preparations. Bert White and George Burn came back today. Two old stagers of D Coy. Signals Section.

4/11/18 C

We have a very cosy little dugout between half a dozen of us and what little time we do have to ourselves we try to spend in as much comfort as possible. We get no assistance or encouragement from those responsible for our welfare. Their object seems to be "get every man on parade and keep him there as long as possible ". We learn nothing there, and gain nothing by what we do. The only outcome of such treatment is discontent. One can safely predict a little trouble in the near future for the war will not last long now, and when that is finished we will expect the end of such piffle.

11/11/18 C *"Armistice Day "* [The simple two word entry for this dayEd.]

Back to England

19/11/18 C

Left France at 10.00am with an incredible mixture of emotions.

[CBM's diary continues with notations through to the end of December covering various army duties in the UK, including a period as Officer Relieving Sergeant of Embarkation Wing. He recounted meeting "Peter Pan ", a Miss C Warlow of Bedford who wrote him many encouraging letters whilst he was at the front. The letters were treasured by Chas for the rest of his life. He described her thus "She is

the hardest case I have ever yet met and one of the wittiest and dearest of her sex. I would like to claim much more of her time ".].

10/12/18 C

Poor Third Division gets rather a bad spin for many of the "would be " Anzacs fail to see why we should be allowed to journey home the same as the other Divvies. Of course, any man who argues that the "Eggs are Cooked " is not as much entitled to everything that is going, as any other Digger is certainly not in his right mind. The real Anzac, or the men who came early in to this fray, never begrudges another man anything. In his estimation, everyone who has done his bit, has played his part and by the mere fact of coming to such a well advertised death trap has proved himself to be as much a man who started out on the holiday jaunt in the first days of war, when the horrors of the game were an unknown quantity and everything was a promise of a picnic [The above comments and the reference to "*Eggs are Cooked* " are explained fully in Captain Cyril Longmore's introduction to his book of the same name, subtitled "*The Story of the 44th; War, as the Digger Saw It* ". Details in Appendix II].



*Chas & friend,
"Peter Pan"
Miss C. Warlow
Victoria Statue
in park at Bath, U.K.*

25/12/18 C

This Christmas is a great contrast to the last one and also the one before, however we have enjoyed it all and it will always be worth remembering.

27/12/18 C

I am starting to think of the days that I will be enjoying in Australia soon. Will not regret bidding farewell to this country, for it will be a treat to return to a place where the sun shines on both sides of the road.

29/12/18 C

Have a splendid chance of getting three months leave on full pay to study agriculture. Almost feel inclined to take it although it will delay my return home. I have no real desire to stay in this beastly hole if I can not gain either in knowledge or experience. Will wait until [brother] Harley returns tomorrow and discuss the matter.

30/12/18 C


Had a letter from [brother] Stan who is returning to France.

31/12/18 C

This is the last day in the last year of the War, and the last page in my dear little, well worn, pocket notebook.

Note:

More CBM poetry in Appendix II



The Kalgoorlie Digger

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EDITORIAL

By the time this paper goes to press we will have passed Armistice Day with all its attendant worries, its memories and its meetings.

That 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month will ever remain in the minds of all true British subjects as a day when we must, for our very existence sake, think in Empire and take care to carry our thoughts into actions.

This Empire of ours can only live in harmony and in prosperity by living together, by buying what some other part of the empire can produce and which you cannot.

Can we carry on this coming year with a firm desire to emphasise this aspect of Imperialism ?

.....

The launching of the Goldfields Comedy Company in its initial production of Ian Hay's "Middle Watch" which was played in the Kalgoorlie Town Hall on the 9th and 10th of this month.

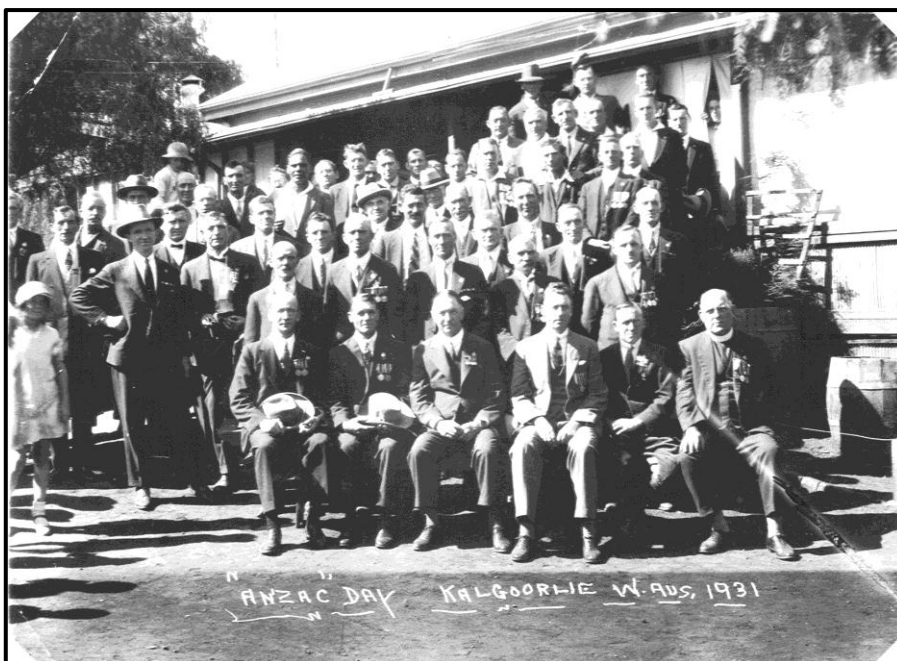
Great credit was and is due to Mrs Berthold and the cast for the excellent show put up and to Mr Berthold and his staff for the excellent stage work.

The profits from this show go to swell the General's a/c and some of it will be devoted to Anzac House.

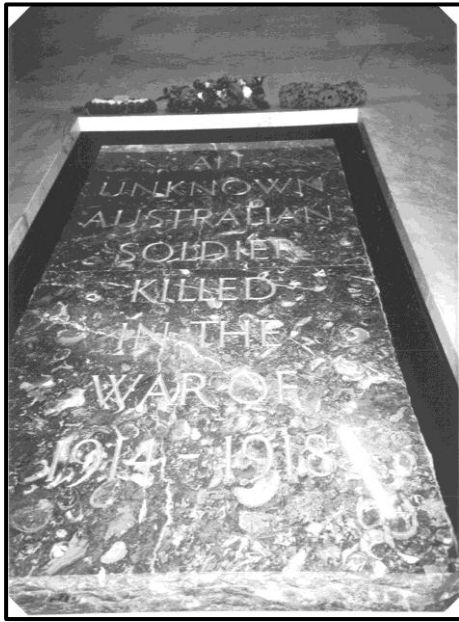
.....

Next Month we will have the Children's Ward Christmas Tree to organise again and it is hoped that as many as can will do all in their power to make this a successful function.

.....



Anzac Day – Kalgoorlie, 1931



*Tomb of the unknown soldiers
Hall of Memory
Australian War Memorial*



*Statue of Simpson
And his donkey.
Australian War Memorial.*



*Roll of Honour
Australian War Memorial*

**War Observed,
By Sir Norman Angell
(1933 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate)**

Norman Angell created considerable controversy in his 1909 book *The Great Illusion*, arguing that a European war would be economically disadvantageous for victor as well as vanquished.

The Great Illusion had a tremendous impact on the intellectual community of that time, leading to the establishment of various study centres and the journal *War and Peace*.

Angell joined the UK Labour Party and became an MP.

His re-written book *The Great Illusion 1933* (Heinemann) helped him win the 1933 Noble Prize for Peace.

From his original *The Great Illusion*

"Are we to continue to struggle, as so many good men struggled in the first dozen centuries of Christendom – spilling oceans of blood, wasting mountains of treasure – to achieve what is at bottom a logical absurdity, to accomplish something which, when accomplished, can avail us nothing, and which, if it could avail us anything, would condemn the nations of the world to never-ending bloodshed and the constant defeat of all those aims which men, in their sober hours, know to be alone worthy of sustained endeavor? "

From Norman Angell's subsequent book *Why Freedom Matters* (Penguin 1940)

Part 1

The Enemy Within and Without

Chapter 1

Why this Book has been written

"We fight for the survival of political and intellectual freedom. Yet we have so little feeling for that freedom, or real understanding of what is involved, that it has been very fashionable in recent years to deride and belittle it. That disparagement shows that this generation does not grasp the significance of the thing for which we fight. The purpose of this book is to recall what political and intellectual freedom means, and how vital it is for the survival of any humane civilisation. "

World War I; Editor's Afterword

by Ron Manners

July 1996

What caused World War II?

Even after that, have we learned anything?

Germany's second defeat and the aftermath.

The postwar German Economic Miracle and its lesson for Australia in the 1990s.

Nine million fighting personnel were killed in World War I and five million civilians died during the Occupation, from bombardment, starvation or disease.

Our gallant soldiers, who risked their lives for family and country must have felt confident this war, called the "Great War " was a one-off event in the World's history. Their sacrifices, discomfort and six-shillings (60¢) per day wages were to them a small price to pay for victory by the Allied forces. Would they have believed that within their lifetime it would be "on again"? What went wrong?

We know individuals don't declare war on individuals of other nations, but that their governments do.

How was it that political leaders refused to learn from the lessons of World War I? As a child I remember being given the one word answer to the cause for World War II. It was simply "Hitler ". But was it really that simple?

Many people have searched the public record for an explanation of the link between the two World Wars. A study by Jacob G Hornberger¹ reviewed several learned explanations and links it directly to the clumsy policies of the Allied victors of World War I.

The vast changes that the First World War was to bring began to occur even while the War was still going on. In February 1917, the Tsarist Russian State collapsed, and a provisional government was established. But in October, this gave way to the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, who promised Russians what they yearned for - peace. In January 1918, Lenin concluded a peace treaty with the Central Powers. The Eastern Front had ceased to exist.

Professor Ralph Raico (Professor of History at the State University of New York at Buffalo) explains in the Hornberger study that with Russia out of the War, German divisions in the East were then shipped to the Western Front in a race with time. The Germans calculated that they had reserves and resources for one last offensive before the Americans arrived to decide the outcome of the war. In March 1918, the Germans threw everything they had left into a final attempt to crack the Western Front.

For the first few weeks, it looked as if they might succeed, but years of fighting the whole world had sapped Germany's strength. There were already over a million fresh American troops in France, with thousands more arriving daily. Their offensive was halted, the Allied counter offensive was launched, and, in September, the German High Command advised the Kaiser to seek an armistice. As Germany's few remaining allies were knocked out of the War, Berlin was ready to discuss peace terms on the basis of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. On November 11, 1918, Germany signed the Armistice Agreement, and the guns fell silent.

America had won the War for the allies, but instead of letting Europe find its own way to a compromise peace, American power had swung the balance decisively in favour of Britain and France.

¹ *Founder of The Future of Freedom Foundation 11350 Random Hills Road, Suite 800, Fairfax Virginia, 22030, USA. Hornberger (1995) together with other economic commentators has produced a series of articles examining both World Wars and the relevant responsible defects in American foreign policy.*

Among the consequences was the fall of the Kaiser and the old Germany, which Woodrow Wilson, (believing his own propaganda) considered the epitome of evil. But Professor Raico draws attention to the writings of the diplomat and historian, George Kennan, who wrote wryly after the Second War :

Today if one were offered the chance of having back again the Germany of 1913 - a Germany run by conservative but relatively moderate people, no Nazis and no Communists - a vigorous Germany, full of energy and confidence, able to play a part again in the balancing-off of Russian power in Europe, in many ways it would not sound so bad.

The model regime Woodrow Wilson insisted on as a peace condition of negotiating the Weimar Republic - was to careen from one crisis to another until, finally, in 1933, it succumbed to Adolf Hitler.

In 1919, when US President Woodrow Wilson appeared at the Paris Peace Conference, his popularity and prestige eclipsed that of any world leader before him. Now he was ready to create his New World Order, his real aim in steering America into war. But, like virtually all American leaders who have dabbled in international politics, he knew practically nothing of other countries and peoples. What Wilson did possess was a little bundle of abstract principles; democracy, self-determination of nations; and, above all, his cherished dream the League of Nations. By applying these few principles, he intended to solve, once and for all, the complex, age-old problems of Europe, if not the whole world.

The purpose of such a Peace Conference should have been to make peace with the defeated nation. But vengeance was the order of the day at Paris in 1919. The Peace Treaty would be written by the victors and then imposed on the Germans.

During World War II the Allies concluded a series of secret treaties among themselves to divide the spoils. Now, at Paris, each of the Allies claimed its share of the territorial plunder, mainly in the form of the Arab parts of the Turkish Empire and the German colonies. These were accordingly parcelled out, the victors preserving their pose of virtue by calling them mandates instead of colonies.

Woodrow Wilson probably convinced himself that as long as the League of Nations came into being, it did not matter what injustices he agreed to and, when presented with the treaty of Versailles, German delegates at first refused to sign. They were then threatened with a resumption of the war; since they were now disarmed, having put their faith in Woodrow Wilson's promises, the Germans had no choice but to acquiesce. They insisted that this was no true peace treaty but a dictated peace. Many veteran diplomats present understood and were filled with foreboding; Germany would abide by the treaty until the day that it became strong enough to tear it up.

Woodrow Wilson signed the Treaty of Versailles, including the Covenant of the League of Nations, and the treaties with the other defeated nations, on behalf of the United States. However he was later unable to gain the two-thirds majority needed in the US Senate, thus the United States never signed the Treaty of Versailles. A few years later, under President Harding, America declared the war with Germany ended, and never joined the League of Nations.

Generations of school children were taught that it was the dreadful "isolationists" who torpedoed Wilson's project of a League to outlaw war thus paving the road to World War II. In fact, it was Wilson himself who started the world on the road to another war by helping to cobble a vindictive and unworkable peace.

As for the League, its real purpose was to lock in the borders of 1919 - to preserve forever the balance of power at the point where Germany and Russia did not count and British and French imperialism were triumphant. It is not surprising most patriotic Americans wanted their country to have nothing to do with the League of Nations. This led to the American people, in 1920, showing their hatred

for the whole rotten Wilsonian system of economic control, and War and meddling abroad and they voted in Warren Harding who achieved the greatest landslide in any Presidential Election to that time. He simply promised a return to "normalcy" but too many institutions had changed, and too many special interests had been awakened to the scent of wealth and power at the taxpayer's expense.

Robert Higgs, in his indispensable work, *Crisis and Leviathan; Critical Episodes in the Growth of American Government*, writes of the aftermath of the First World War;

"Legacies of wartime collectivism abounded; the corporatism of massive governmental collusion with organised special-interest groups; the de facto nationalisation of the ocean shipping and railroad industries, the increased federal intrusion in labor markets, capital markets, communications, and agriculture; and enduring changes in constitutional doctrines regarding conscription and governmental suppression of free speech. "

"Looming over everything was the ideological legacy ", Higgs concludes - "the change in fundamental ideas. Americans might have despised him as a self-deceiving fraud, but Woodrow Wilson had changed their country permanently. When the next crisis came - the Depression and another European war - Wilson's methods would be resurrected and vastly amplified by a president who had served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy in the Wilson administration, Franklin D Roosevelt ".

Robert Haupt² explained;

"World War I was a collision of ignorant forces that put the world onto the path of this century's fatal expansion of state power. For the first time in modern times, we had full mobilisation: all resources of capital and labour put at the mercy of the state, a fateful precedent. "

"Among all the things that changed in 1914 was the idea that the money a man earned was his own; from then on, in war or peace, the State would get a slice of the pie, or should we say the apple?" [*i.e. the advent of taxation*Ed.].

Haupt refers to the task of repairing countries after the ravages of collectivism (socialism and communism) as "the Western project", and he states;

"And if socialism is no longer the threat to 'the Western project', what is? A note sounded early in our conversation came to mind. We had forgotten, Professor Skidelsky had said, how similar in spirit were Roosevelt's New Deal and Hitler's National Socialism."

"One difference between Hitler and Roosevelt was that Roosevelt was constrained by a working constitution and Hitler was not".³

As World War I defeat was looming, German life began to disintegrate. Marxism had already prevailed in Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution in November 1917, but Marxists were not willing to settle for that triumph. They intended to spread their control to Germany and the rest of the world. Capitalising on the chaos of war and Germany's journey to defeat, Marxists began fomenting revolution in cities all across Germany. It was in this time that Hitler's deep-seated and malevolent anti-Semitism became a driving force in his life; Hitler, like many other Germans, associated Jews with Marxism. From

² The Shape of Political History, a Robert Haupt review of prof. Robert Skidelsky's book *The World After Communism: A Polemic For Our Times* (Macmillan, London 1995) In the *Australian Financial Review* Nov. 1 1995.

³ This is a point to ponder as Australians consider moves towards becoming a republic. The debate should focus on importance of Australia having a very specific "limited government" constitution, once again limiting governments to a few, vital and specific roles, with controls to prevent them from over-stepping these boundaries.

Hitler's perspective, the Jews and Reds were traitors to the Fatherland who, by instigating riots and insurrections on the homefront, were helping the enemy to defeat Germany.

Woodrow Wilson demanded the abdication of the Kaiser before America would agree to an armistice. This demand accelerated the disintegration of German society. Government after government across Europe fell to socialist revolutionaries, many of whom were Jewish. Finally, on November 9, 1918, the Kaiser abdicated and relinquished power to the socialists, led by a former saddlemaker, Frederick Ebert.

In his biography *Adolf Hitler* (1976) John Toland points out;

"It was the end of the German Empire, begun in France on January 18, 1871. It was also the end of an era. Forty-eight years earlier Bismarck had achieved his dream of unifying Germany and in so doing had created a new image of Germany and Germans. Overnight the political philosophy on which the majority of Germans had based their conservative and patriotic way of life had apparently disintegrated with a lowering of the imperial flag. "

But, as Toland observes, perhaps the greatest shock for the German people was to find Ebert - a Socialist sitting as the new German Chancellor. When Germany agreed to terms of the Allied armistice, Woodrow Wilson required the German representatives to assume responsibility for the war. Little did he know that he was finding for Adolf Hitler the tool by which he would later claim that the socialists - the "November criminals" - had sold out Germany to the Allies. Thus, in 1918, Adolf Hitler, who would become leader of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi Party), was assisted by the Allies to reach the highest echelon of political power in Germany.

So where did American Foreign Policy go wrong?

Professor Raico explains how between 1898 and 1919, a certain idea of America was "let go" and another put in its place;

"The older idea was of a nation dedicated to the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness of the people who comprise it. Crucial to this image of America was their traditional foreign policy; its aim and limit was to keep America strong enough to prevent attacks from abroad, or, if they occur, to fend them off, so that the people could return to their peaceful pursuits. It was a foreign policy custom-made for the American Republic ".

"The new idea of America, nurtured by McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt, and brought to fruition by Woodrow Wilson was of a nation made immensely powerful by its free institutions and dedicated to projecting its might in order to achieve freedom throughout the world. In this conception, they would be perpetually entangled everywhere on earth where they could "do good". Under this new regime the American people would not be allowed to return to the peaceful enjoyment of their rights until the whole world was at last free. This was - and is - the foreign policy of America, and it represents Empire, which is the negation of Republic. At the end of the 20th Century, many Americans are wondering if they will ever regain the power to choose between the two. " [i.e. *Empire or Republic*Ed.].

Even with an imperfect foreign policy, the American forces were most welcome by the Australians in France in 1918.

World War II evolved and in 1945 Germany again lay in ruins, the vanquished victim of mankind's most grotesque war.

What followed is the story of how a handful of economists defied orthodoxy and produced the economic success story of this century. This story contains parallels and lessons for Australia of the 1990s and new century, where political leaders, Labor and Liberal, appear not to have the faintest idea of how to avert national bankruptcy.

World War II had shaken the German economy to its very roots; it destroyed one-fifth of all housing, decimated the transit lines between regions, reduced industrial output to one third of its 1936 level and annihilated or displaced a huge percentage of the working-age male population. While the defeat belonged to the Nazis, the immense destruction belonged to the entire German nation. The shocking reality was that war-scorched Germany was to face its greatest economic crisis in the years after 1945. The post-war devastation was the combined effect of two principal factors, outlined by US political commentator Thomas W Hazlett in a feature article in Reason magazine, April 1978;

"First, a tremendous inflation broke loose - the predictable result of prior history. Under the Third Reich, the German government had financed a colossal industrial build-up to accommodate the designs of the Nazi war machine. The tremendous industrial expansion was paid for with rampant monetary expansion. All the screws of the Nazi State had to be tightened to their breaking point to suppress the resultant inflation; the guns of the Gestapo turned on blackmarketeers and others who sought to evade the officially proclaimed prices of goods and services ".

"Enter crisis-source number 2: Allied control policies. In an effort to forestall the inevitable realignment of money and prices, the Allied commanders of France, Britain and the US slapped on an extensive control network which fixed wages and prices at pre-inflation (1936) levels. The economically obvious occurred; goods disappeared from legal markets and were sold illegally at prices far above the official prices. Severe misallocation of resources took place ".

"This stupendous gap between the legal and illegal prices grew to such proportions that a general collapse of the currency ensued. People resorted to barter, and German cities typically saw a mass exodus on weekends as city-dwellers flocked to the countryside to trade with the farmers in kind. The economic system was reduced to a primitive condition. In the Eastern Zone, the Russian formula was basic; loot everything of value. In the Western Zone, however, there was a different problem; total indecisiveness. "

German economist Wilhelm Roepke said, "Among the victors only Russia could be said to have had a German policy at all."

The Western Zone was afflicted by an acute case of disarray, and government policy fluctuated from the vengeance of the French, reformist zeal of the British Laborites, and bewilderment of the Americans. About the only consensus to be found anywhere was to rely on economic controls.

The Allies attempted to administer the German economy through a patchwork assortment of price regulations, allocation details, and rationing. By 1946 the mechanism had reached bankruptcy and another German economist, Ludwig Erhard, reported, "All attempts at mending matters were frustrated, not only by the prevailing conditions of devastation, exhaustion and disruption, but also by the supposed experts, in and outside Germany, clinging tenaciously to their reliance on controls."

During the dark days of the Hitler epoch, a liberal⁴ economic resistance movement had developed at the University of Freiburg, including Roepke and Erhard and it was from the nucleus of these individuals that a new and exciting intellectual debate started spreading around academic institutions and government sectors in Germany. These men helped construct one of the most comprehensive political-economic

⁴ As in "Classical Liberal" and not in the U.S. sense of Liberal = Socialist or Australian sense of Liberal = semi-Socialist."

doctrines of this century; the German name being *Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, translated as “a socially conscious free market”, stating that totalitarianism is the evil to be most guarded against and that the only way to protect people from tyranny is to promote freedom. This theory spread freedom across political and economic lines and espoused a policy of non-control - by either the state or individuals - a policy of individual choice. Their conclusion was that free markets, and only free markets, provide the incentives, efficiencies, and freedoms that can lead to a vital and progressive society. This Freiburg approach of *laissez faire*; government was to be active only in promoting competition and protecting free markets from monopoly, public or private.

In 1946 Wilhelm Roepke, probably the most eloquent and vociferous of the “school”, set down a precise format for German reconstruction. The plan was to create a new currency, to decontrol the economy, and to let the German people produce. Roepke proposed a currency deflation of 100 to 1. It ended up being 100 old Marks for 6.5 new ones. Roepke also advanced the radical concept of free trade - unilaterally, if need be, - to put German exports back into the world market.

Finally, Roepke called for an end to the Allied bureaucracy, as he put it “a deflation of Allied administration which ought to be as drastic as that of the German currency”.

Roepke side-stepped the Allied bureaucracy and in his notes explained;

"It was strictly laid down by the British and American control authorities that permission had to be obtained before definite price changes could be made. The Allies never seemed to have thought it possible that someone could have the idea, not to alter price controls, but simply to remove them. "

With strong support of one American, General Lucius Clay, the German free market exponents were able to blast through the inertia of Allied supervision.

This Erhard did. Simultaneously, he instituted currency reform, which halted rampaging inflation, and moved to cut taxes and restore economic freedom. He did all this by one simple edict at midnight, on 20th June 1948, all on the surmise that although the Allies prohibited him from making any changes to their existing controls, there was no law that said he could not abolish controls.

Erhard had taken a giant step, and it worked. Ludwig Erhard then went on to become Economics Minister in the Adenauer Administration (1949 - 57) and then Chancellor (1963-66).

Erhard was already aware of another historic success model that worked; abolition of the laws governing trade in Britain that ushered in the industrial revolution.

Contemporary analysts might regard the German policy as harsh in that it left few rewards for those who did not seek to take care of themselves. While Government expenditures on social welfare through transfer payments were comparable to those of other European nations, the Germans abstained from further economic intrusions via “full employment policies”, subsidies, and income redistribution. In fact the tax policy was shifted to reduce the burden on upper-income brackets.

If the harshness of the policy was great, so was the positive record of accomplishment. Industrial production and national income skyrocketed. Industrial output increased 50% within the year, and national income (in constant prices) was restored to the 1936 level in just over a year (it had fallen to 20% below this figure). Unemployment peaked at 10.2% in 1950 but dropped steadily - to 6% in 1952, 3% in 1956 and 1% by 1960. The German free market experiment had produced the economist’s Garden of Eden; full employment without inflation.

The German experiment flies in the face of the failed Keynesian economic policies that Australia has followed and provides powerful evidence for economist Milton Friedman’s conclusion - that with the

high costs and impossible delays of information gathering, "fine-tuning " of the economy is mythical. In rejecting the Keynesian formulas, Erhard consistently balanced budgets in the reform period. Where are our Australian leaders who will learn from history and take Australia on such a giant step toward prosperity and full employment?

These measures are lessons for Australia as we end one century and start a new one.

Our socialists of both parties, are probably left wondering how the massive rebuilding and subsequent growth of Germany took place without the stimulus of government spending or loose credit. Miraculously, it was financed by the simplest and most direct sources; savings, investment, and "overtime ". Under these German free market policies, tax credits were liberally granted to savers. Investment tax credits provided incentives for corporations to plough profits right back into capital expenditure - almost tax-free. And workers working overtime were allowed to retain almost one hundred percent of all extra pay.

Tom Hazlett, in his feature article in the Magazine Reason (1978), draws attention to this "German Miracle" as a valuable addition to economic history and the science of economics itself. He shows how, when the aspirations of a productive people are fully set free, a tidal wave of entrepreneurial zest and drive can lift a nation out of economic despondency.

The story of the "German Miracle" contains much more than economic data. It is a compelling human drama involving courageous men and a powerful idea. These men were heroes of the rebuilding of Germany. And now in 1996 - carrying the dismantled Communist East Germany into a market economy, Germany, again needs heroes of similar stature to give their nation an injection of de-regulatory free-enterprise.

Out of the desolation of Hitler there arose a philosophy so profound in its appeal against authoritarianism: that a few men and an idea were able to break the chains of State control and grant a nation a truly new lease of life. It is a refreshing tale that shows us how intelligent men, a committed ideal, led against incredible odds, to an economic victory. It is a tale that deserves to remain in our thoughts, and become implanted in the minds of indecisive political leaders in Australia, who seem so intent on taxing and regulating everything that moves in our once prosperous country.

Ron Manners

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