

## Historical Officers Report April 2015

I would like to thank all of the members who gave up their time on the weekend at the Memorabilia Show and in particular those who assisted in dismantling the displays on Sunday.

The response from the public was well received with a continuous flow both days.

### Events of the Great War as reported in the Camden News Cables from the European War

1<sup>st</sup> April 1915

Aeroplanes discovered 1000 Turks near El Kubri opposite Suez on Monday. The guns at El Kubri compelled the Turks to retire, and a force under General Younghusband routed them on Tuesday.

Mr Martin Donohue, war correspondent, states that the Turkish army is retreating from Egypt as rapidly as its enfeebled condition will permit.

Numbers of the Turks are perishing from hunger and thirst in the desert, and are falling prey to the vultures, droves of which are following their retreat.

A report from Teredos states that the Allies fire has wrecked six of the Dardanelles forts. The Turkish losses are reported to have been very heavy.

In spite of severe damage some of the forts are still able to resist, German Howitzers mounted on rails and some mobile batteries have been posted along the Straits.

British airmen raided Hoboken, on the Scheldt, and destroyed a German submarine, damaged another, and then set fire to the works. Five submarines were seen on the slips.



It is reported from Amsterdam that the Germans in Poland, are carry metal knapsacks containing an inflammable liquid. Twenty Russians were burned alive during one night.

The Defence Department have been advised of the safe arrival in Egypt of the second and third reinforcements from Australia.

**8<sup>th</sup> April 1915**

A Dutch trawler reported that a great fleet of warships preceded by two Zeppelins have been seen in the North Sea.

A German hydroplane flew over trawlers and dropped a few bombs. The ships seemed to come from an eastward direction. An officer from a destroyer boarded the trawler and finding nothing suspicious returned to his ship

An almost continuous battle has been raging for three weeks in Champagne, the "Daily Chronicle's" correspondent reports, the French taking the offensive.

A perfect tempest of Fire has swept the ground, not a yard being left unploughed by shells.

The correspondent states that there were terrible struggles in the enemy's trenches. Without room to fire their rifles, the men fought with unfixed bayonets pick-axes, pieces of iron, and fists..

The British air raid on Hoboken resulted in damage to an airship shed and airship, the destruction of two submarines, and damage to a third.

### **15<sup>th</sup> April 1915**

The Defence Department announces the safe arrival in Egypt of additional Australian troops.



Sir William McMillan

Speaking at the British Empire League, Sir William McMillan (Australian Commonwealth) referred to America's attitude of dumbness, and her moral obligation in view of the enemies' acts, which contravened all international law.

A submarine commander demanded money from the captain of the French steamer Frederic Franck, and because the request was refused, exploded two bombs before the crew was able to leave.

German raiding cruisers have sunk 67 vessels, valued at £6,691,100 British trade for the same period totalled £730,000,000.

An 80 days battle in the Carpathians ended in the Russians advancing to within three days march of the Hungarian plains. The enemy's resistance was extremely stubborn.

**22<sup>nd</sup> April 1915**



Count Von Bernstorff

Count Von Bernstorff it appears has been circulating continual rumours that Britain and France wanted Peace.

The British and French governments have explained to the American that Germany must be completely beaten first.

A memorandum representing 17,000,000 American Christians has been written to the New Zealand Minister for Defence protest against the idea that America is lacking in friendship towards Britain.



E 15 after her capture

The British submarine E 15, while reconnoitring a mine field in the Dardanelles went aground. In a Constantinople report that 24 of the crew were taken prisoner and seven are reported missing.

The Press Bureau announces an important and successful action by the British, Zillebeke, south of Ypres. The battle raged along a front of seven miles the fierce fighting as that at Nunue

Capella. The Germans are utterly demoralized

**29<sup>th</sup> April 1915**



Sir Ian Hamilton

It is reported that Sir Ian Hamilton will command the Dardanelles Expeditionary Forces, of which the colonials are the backbone.

The colonial troops have developed faster and better than their best friends could have hoped. Their military efficiency is now reckoned high and they possess skill and courage of a high order.

The fighting north of Ypres continues satisfactory to the Allies.

Germans attacked the British at several points but they gained no ground,

"A correspondent says that the Germans evidently placed big reinforced bottles of gas compressed to a high pressure on the top of the trenches and opened them when the wind was certain to carry the poison into the allies' trenches.

Many of the French not knowing their danger made no attempt to escape, and died at their posts. The corpses turned black.

The disembarkation of the allies' army at the Gallipoli peninsula was successfully carried out despite the enemy's vigorous opposition.

Lord Kitchener, in a further appeal for munitions worker declares that anything less than the full output will mean the needless sacrifice of gallant lives and the postponement of victory.

### **From the Home Front**

Mr O S B Hogg, who is shortly to leave for the front has disposed of his practice at Camden to Mr. J. S. Hogg, dentist, who formerly was managing, and who may be consulted as usual at the same address.

Mr F. E. Wheeler, Camden was successful at the Royal Agricultural Show in winning the first, Champion and third prizes for his Plymouth Rock Fowls.

The King's decision to banish alcohol from the Royal household has fired popular imagination. Mr. Lloyd George has received thousands of abstinence pledges.

Mr. J Pinkerton: Captain of the Camden Rifle Club wrote asking for the use of the Agricultural Hall for drill purposes on two nights a week, Monday and Wednesdays;

So far as Wednesday nights are concerned Mr Street moved and Mr J. McIntosh seconded that the Rifle Club be allowed the use of the hall for the time being free of embargo. The military authorities have the hall engaged for Monday Evenings



Milton Thornton

Bugler Milton Thornton of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Battalion sent a letter and a poem from the Mena Camp Egypt to his parents both articles were published in the Camden News on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1915. Milton was killed in Action on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 1915.

A marked improvement was noticeable at the weekly drill of the Camden Rifle Club last night. Over 30 member's going through a couple of hours drill.

Lieut. E.H.K. Downes, A. A. Butler, and Mr. T. E. Dibdon were the instructors.

Mr. Fisher has stated that Australia has despatched for service, at the front and had in camp preparing for active service a total of 70,101 troops of all

ranks.

The Federal Government has requisitioned 22 mills, which are working to full capacity, while orders have been placed with 124 firms for a total of 630,210 garments for the troops.

Since last Budget the British Government had agreed to lend a further six and a half million. Making total loans twenty and a half million to be received for war purposes up to December next.

## **THOUGHTS IN MENA CAMP**

### **By Bugler Thornton 91**

We're settled down in Egypt,  
The land of flies and sand,  
And the life is rotten,  
The times we have are grand.

We're scaled the mighty Pyramids,  
And travelled over the sand,  
We're Seen the tombs of mighty man,  
Returned to dust again.

The Citadel and Native town,  
The forts and Mosques and Tower  
Traditions speak of great renown,  
And of days of wealth and power.

But days of pomp has passed away,  
From this fair sunny land;  
For long has Turkey held her sway?  
For long she held command.

But still the future lies ahead,  
The day may come who knows  
When Egypt hosts will rally then,  
And Help our common foes!

The Union Jack now flies aloft,  
Bespeaking British presage  
And under it protecting arm  
The land at last at rest is.

Australian troops have had the task  
Of enforcing England's claims,  
But we're a little more to ask  
We want more of the game

Too dreary is this humdrum life,  
With guards and fat I guess,  
No wonder that our Sergeants bit  
And deal in wild abuse.

So many men are getting stale,  
And some are in the clink,  
And several more are on the ale  
Our only joy is drink.

But putting all our jokes aside  
Our lads are doing well,  
And daily now we wait the word  
To sail for Old Marseilles

And when it comes, our song will be,  
Australia's in the band  
Our efforts must bring honour to  
The dear old Southern land

And when the muster roll is called  
And home is drawing near,  
May every one of you my lads  
Be there to answer HERE.

### **World War 1 Poetry**

#### **Anzac Cove**

There's a lonely stretch of hillocks,  
There's a beach asleep and drear,  
There's a battered, broken fort beside the sea.

There are sunken, trampled graves  
And a little rotting pier  
And winding paths that wind unceasingly.

There's a torn and silent valley,  
There's a tiny rivulet  
With some blood upon the stones beside its mouth.  
There are lines of buried bones,  
There's an unpaid debt:  
There's a sound of gentle sobbing in the south.

#### **Leon Gellert            1892-1977**

Leon Gellert served with the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion AIF he landed at Gallipoli 25<sup>th</sup> April 1915. He was wounded by shrapnel, evacuated in July to Malta then to London.  
Repatriated, discharged medically unfit. Re-enlisted in Adelaide in November 1915, was promptly discharged.

Ray Herbert  
Historical Officer