

## **Historical Officers Report**

Events of the Great War as reported in the Camden News  
Cables from the European War July 1916

### **1<sup>st</sup> July     First day of the Battle of the Somme**

#### **6<sup>th</sup> July**

General Sir Douglas Haig reports that during the past hours a large number of raiding parties entered the enemy trenches on the entire British front. On Saturday morning an extremely heavy British attack was made, and British troops occupied the first German line along a 20 mile front north, of the Somme River.

It is officially announced that the British have captured Fricourt and have taken 1500 prisoners 800 being capture at Fricourt.

The enemy in the neighbourhood of La Boisselle is offering a stubborn resistance reports General Haig but the British troops are making satisfactory progress.

The prisoners captured on July 1 and 2 exceed 6000, including 150 officers. The British also took some guns. Our losses were slight. Since the beginning of June, the Germans claim to have captured 158 Russian officers and 23,096 men, several guns and nine machine guns, south of the Pipet marshes.

Up to the end of June, 8661 war pensions were granted in Australia, out of 14,164 claims. The present annual liability is £312.000

#### **13<sup>th</sup> July**

Mr Philip Gibbs, after visiting the field north of La Boisselle, writes in the Daily Chronicle. "It is historic ground. Over this stretch a few miles wide, was fought one of the greatest battles of history. Many thousands of men advanced with marvellous self-sacrifice beyond the Ordinary courage of men and faced hellish fire unfalteringly when the bravest might have quailed.

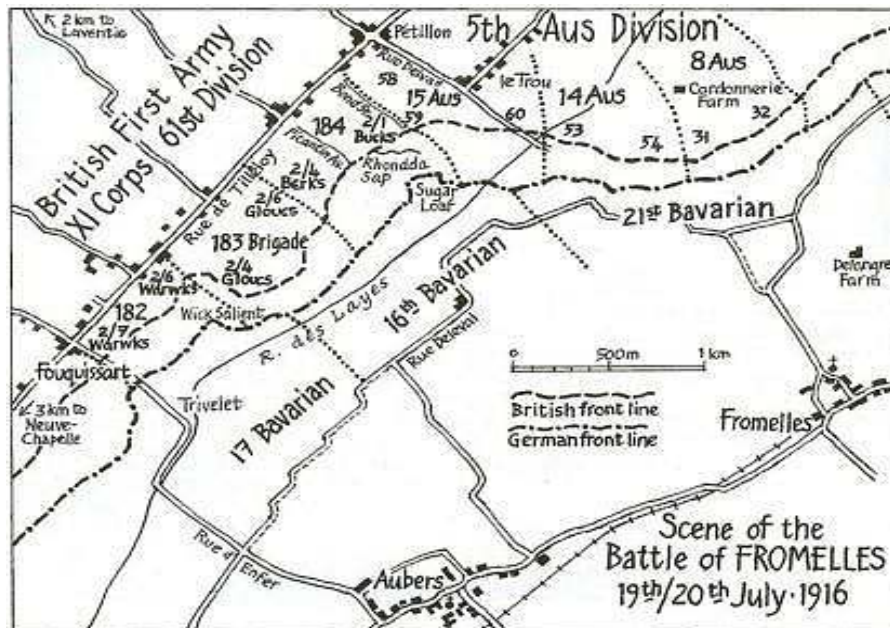
Something supernatural animated these battalions of English boys those battalions of Irish and Scots so that when many stood in the very presence of death it was a cry of 'No surrender' they marched forward again to meet their fate. Their losses were heavy and inevitable, because men's valour is counted at no cost in assaulting terribly strong positions.

Mr Lloyd George has been appointed Secretary for War, and Lord Derby succeeds Mr. Tennant as under-Secretary for War the King has approved of the appointment.

General Sir Douglas Haig reports that the British made successful raids on the enemy's trenches south of La Basse Canal.

As a result of the Jutland naval battle 200 British steamers have arrived in England from the Baltic. They had been detained in the Baltic since the beginning of the war.

### 19<sup>th</sup> July    **Battle of Fromelles, Western Front**



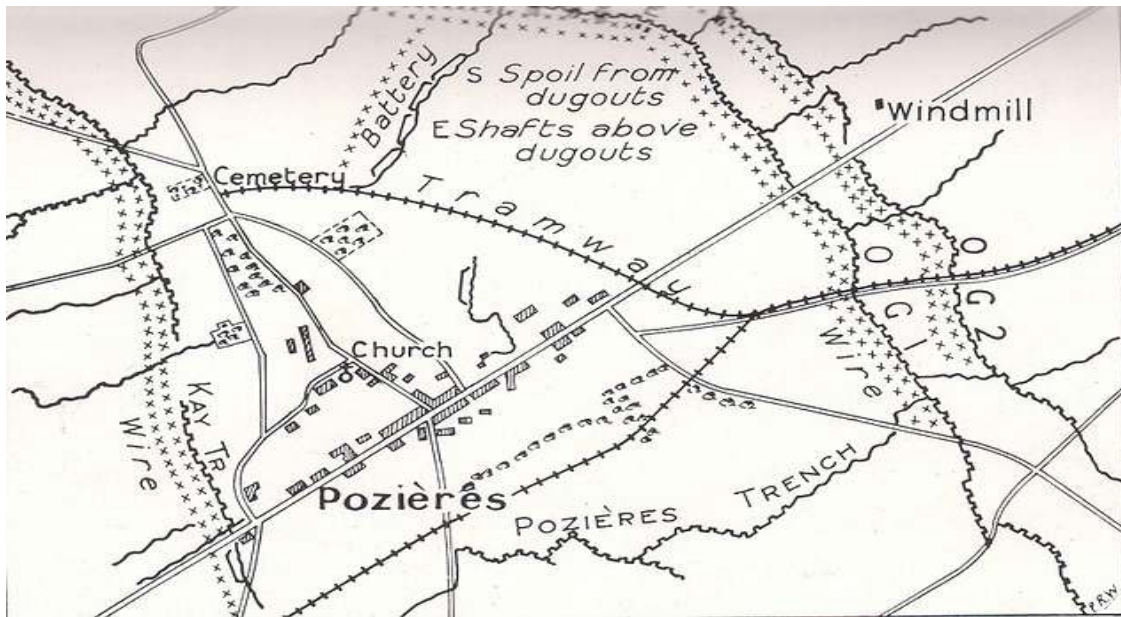
### 20<sup>th</sup> July

Brigadier-General Sir Newton Moore, Agent-general for West Australia has accepted the commandership of the Australian forces in England.

General Sir Douglas Haig reports that heavy fighting is in progress in the vicinity of Longueval and Delville Wood.

*It has been roughly calculated that since June 27 the British Artillery has rained half a million shells on the enemy.*

**23<sup>rd</sup> July    Battle of Pozieres begin**



**23<sup>rd</sup> July    Lt. Arthur Seaforth Blackburn VC and  
Pte. John Leek VC at Pozieres**



**Lt A. S. Blackburn**



**Pte J Leek**

**25<sup>th</sup> July    Pte. Thomas Cooke VC at Pozieres**



## **27<sup>th</sup> July**

Sir Douglas Haig reported on Sunday night:—"The Australians at midnight attacked the south-eastern defences of Pozieres, and carried the outer German works.

The battle was resumed "With intense violence along the entire Pozieres Guillemont front. While the Australians attacked on the south east the Territorials attacked the south west of Pozieres. Violent fighting continues in the village, and the Germans are resisting desperately. The enemy is massing a great numbers of machine-guns.

At other points on the front the fighting is equally intense. We recapture the whole of Longueval this morning but the Germans retook the northern end of the village. The outskirts of Guillemont has changed hands twice.

In a later despatch, General Haig states:—"Our troops made further progress in the neighbourhood of Pozieres. We capture a number of prisoners. The battle on the rest of the front continues with intense violence."

Following their heavy bombardment on Saturday night British and Anzac troops delivered an attack towards Pozieres-Guillemont. Notwithstanding the enemy's desperate resistance the Anzacs succeeded in establishing themselves at Pozieres where they are now consolidating their line.

It is reported that their casualties were comparatively light. Fighting at Pozieres continues. The Australians took prisoner six officers and 145 men. Despite the enemy's stubborn defence, we secured important advantages at Pozieres.

## **28<sup>th</sup> July    SGT Claud Charles Castleton VC at Pozieres**



## **30<sup>th</sup> July HMAS Pioneer bombarded Dar El Salaam**



### **Letters Home**

Ex Sergeant W. Schwarer, of Camden, reports the news that his nephew Sergt. J. W. Schwarer has been wounded a second time. About twelve months ago this soldier lad was wounded at Gallipoli, being then sent to Egypt, leaving there for France about three months ago. Word is now received that he is again wounded.

Private Lloyd Kemp, who is at present in France, writes to his old mate Sapper Bob Sidman that he is very well, and from London forwards a copy of the Anzac Memorial book.



*Major Victor Horatio Buller Samson, Killed in Action 19th July 1916 Fleurbaix, France.*

*Privates John Henry Watson and Cecil James Baxter, killed in action 19<sup>th</sup> July Fromelles France.*

*Private Percy Sydney Raymond Brain, Killed in Action 22<sup>nd</sup> July Pozieres, France.*

*Private Thomas Brooks, Killed in Action 29<sup>th</sup> July France.*

## **From the Home Front**

Another returned hero from Gallipoli, Private E Swadling arrived in Camden last week. Private Swadling was employed on Mr. Ross Whiteman's farm at Narellan prior to enlisting.

Up to the 13<sup>th</sup> July 1915 a total of 154 men had enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces.

This morning (Thursday) about 1000 soldiers from the Menangle Camp made up of the Australian Light Horse and Trench Mortar Batteries will march through Camden at 1 o'clock, and will halt here for dinner.

Directly after Dinner they will give a display of high explosives and grenades and bomb throwing. Every Sunday afternoon the military Band plays at the camp at Menangle, and Colonel Lenehen, the officer in charge will be pleased to show the visitor through the Camp.

## **“THEY”**

The Bishop tells us: “When the boys come back  
They will not be the same: for they’ll have fought  
In a just cause: they lead the last attack  
On Anti-Christ: their comrades’ blood has bought  
New right to breed an honourable race,  
They have challenged Death and dared him face to face.”

“We’re none of us the same!” the boys reply.  
“for George lost both his legs: and Bill’s stone blind:  
Poor Jim’s shot through the lungs and like to die:  
And Bert’s gone syphilitic: you’ll not find  
A chap who’s served that hasn’t found *some* change.”  
And the Bishop said, “The ways of God are Strange!”

Siegfried Sassoon

Ray Herbert  
Historical Officer