



Australian War Memorial

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THE SNOWY RIVER MARCHERS

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War Councils were set up in each State and the whole country was divided into districts. Almost every town had its recruiting committee. In 1915 the Prime Minister, W.M. Hughes sent a circular letter to every municipal and shire council in the nation urging that every effort be made to promote recruiting. Recruiting was then, and remained so throughout the war, a voluntary matter. The Government had made a further promise to Britain of an additional 50,000 men beyond Australia's monthly commitment.

In October, 1915 a group of young men set off from Gilgandra in New South Wales to march to Sydney to enlist. As they marched, they were joined by others, and this snowballing group of recruits came to be known as the "Gilgandra Gooses." Their numbers had reached 300 by the time they arrived in Sydney. This idea of a recruiting march soon caught on in other rural areas, and between November, 1915 and February, 1916, eight such marches in New South Wales and one in Queensland were organised, resulting in total enlistments of 1,456 men. One of the Snowy River March in January, 1916, starting in Delegate and ending in Boulburn. (Appendix 2)

W. C. STEGEMANN.

1. Bean, C.E.W. (Ed.) Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol. XI - Australia During the War, Ernest Scott, Melbourne, (1936) 1938. p. 292.
2. Simpson, C. Lusitania, Harmondsworth (1974) 1976, Appendix 1.
3. Bean, C.E.W. (Ed.) Op. Cit. p. 294.

1. INTRODUCTION -

On June 18, 1915 the Australian Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher, received a cable from the British Government stating that "every available man that can be recruited in Australia is wanted." The heavy losses of men at Gallipoli, and the 'barbaric' sinking of the 'innocent' " Lusitania " in May, 1915² (Appendix 1) had begun to impress upon peoples' consciousness what was involved by total war. The need for further and continuing reinforcements was daily becoming more apparent, yet in Australia the number of enlistments fell from 25,714 in August, 1915 to 9,914 in October, 1915.³ The Australian Government took measures to stimulate enlistments. In July, 1915 the War Census Act was passed, and when by September of that year the provisions of this Act had been implemented, the Commonwealth Statistician, Mr. G. H. Knibbs estimated that there were 600,000 'fit' men between the ages of 18 and 44. This vast reservoir of manpower had to be tapped vigourously by the recruiting authorities. The Commonwealth Government had committed itself to Britain to send 9,500 men per month to make up for losses of killed and wounded.

War Councils were set up in each State and the whole country was divided into 36 recruiting areas. Almost every town had its recruiting committee. On November 30, 1915 the Prime Minister, W. M. Hughes sent a circular letter to every municipal and shire council in the nation urging that every effort be made to promote recruiting. Recruiting was then, and remained so throughout the war, a voluntary matter. The Government had made a further promise to Britain of an additional 50,000 men beyond Australia's monthly commitment.

In October, 1915 a group of young men set off from Gilgandra in New South Wales to march to Sydney to enlist. As they marched, they were joined by others, and this snowballing group of recruits came to be known as the " Gilgandra Cooees." Their numbers had reached 300 by the time they arrived in Sydney. This idea of a recruiting march soon caught on in other rural areas, and between November, 1915 and February, 1916, eight such marches in New South Wales and one in Queensland were organised, resulting in total enlistments of 1,436 men. One of these marches was the Snowy River March in January, 1916, starting in Delegate and ending in Goulburn. (Appendix 2)

1. Bean, C. E. W. (Ed.) Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol. XI - Australia During the War, Ernest Scott, Melbourne, (1936) 1938. p. 292.
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2. THE SNOWY RIVER MARCH -

On December 15, 1915 a recruiting meeting was held in Bombala. Captain F.R. Wedd, Recruiting Officer, was present to promote and co-ordinate the Snowy River March. His skill as a rhetorical orator was brought to bear upon his audience. He only wanted men who were "prepared to fight for their mothers, their sisters and their country," he said, and continued, "You can hear the call across the waters: the call for men: the call from your comrades, your mates: the call from your brothers..... A man was a dastard who was not prepared to fight for his mates."⁴ The march would be a 'cake walk' in Capt. Wedd's opinion. The Recruiting Officer expressed dismay that only 100 white hats, 100 dungaree suits, 200 blankets, 100 pairs of boots, 100 kits and 100 overcoats had been sent as supplies, for he was confident of entering Goulburn with 300 men. Sgt. Donald, a returned wounded soldier added his support at the meeting to Capt. Wedd by suggesting that voluntarism might have to be replaced with conscription - "I say to you, be in the cream, don't wait to be scooped up in the skim milk."⁵ The thrust of these addresses on mateship and moral responsibility was paramount in all the speeches given throughout the entire march, and did not always achieve the response Capt. Wedd and others hoped for. Indeed, as the nation's recruiting efforts increased in momentum from mid-1915, recruiting speeches became an almost inescapable part of Australian life. The regularity and sameness of such speeches built up a 'deafness' to them and a desire to avoid them by many young men. In the Monaro village of Berridale on the night of December 26, 1915 a Ball was held to raise funds for the Cooma Hospital. The Ball was very well attended, and commented the Cooma Express, "It has been very unkindly suggested that the bumper attendance at the Ball on Boxing night was due to the improbability of recruiting speeches being made. A golden opportunity was lost, as there appeared to be quite a lot of 'eligibles' present. This would be pleasant reading for, say, any Berridale chaps in the trenches."⁶ Dr. Dan Coward gives ample evidence of public hostility to the pressure of recruiting speeches. Perhaps the biggest single demonstration was at the Sydney Stadium on August 1, 1915 when a crowd of 16,000 booed and hissed the Premier of New South Wales, W.A. Holman into silence when he began to speak on recruiting.⁷

4. The Bombala Times , December 17, 1915.

5. The Bombala Times , 17.12.15

6. The Cooma Express, 31.12.15

7. Coward, D., The Impact of War on New South Wales - Some Aspects of Social and Political History, 1914-1917 - Ph.D. Thesis, ANU. 1974 pp214/5

From Delegate on January 6, 1916, in rain and enthusiasm, the Snowy River March began its 220 mile trek to Goulburn. Fourteen recruits had been gathered. The small contingent was led by Staff Capt. Wedd and Staff S.M. Wheatley, with the Rev'd. R.E. Elliott, Anglican Rector of Bombala, as Chaplain, Cooma Station Master C. Swaddling as Piper, C. Benson as Buglar and D. Hamilton as Q.M. The group had been presented with a large banner emblazoned, "The Men From Snowy River" which it was said, was to be carried to Berlin. Each recruit was carrying with him, apart from his official issue of gear, a change of underclothing, handkerchiefs, shaving outfit, 2 towels, soap, toothbrush, and a change of clothing. The men were told by Wedd, "A real good time is ahead for all those ready to assume what they have taken on, that is to play the game and be a soldier."⁸

The first night's camp was at Craigie, the next at Mila, and then on Saturday, January 8th. the March reached Bombala, where it stayed for Sunday. The March was only 3 days old and already Capt. Wedd was expressing disappointment, if not disgust with the response. "The procession from Delegate to Bombala had been a total failure," he lamented to the recruiting meeting. He had been looking for the Man From Snowy River and he hadn't found him. It was the Woman From Snowy River he had found. "It was the biggest blank of a route march the country had ever known," asserted the Recruiting Officer. "Eligible men were hiding behind women's petticoats, ignoring their duty to their mothers, sisters and country."⁹ No mention of wives indicates a priority on young, unmarried men as recruits. Wedd's sentiments were echoing earlier efforts by recruiting authorities to use women as a moral weapon in enlistment. In July, 1915, William Brooks (President of the Employers' Federation) had said, "the best recruiting agents were the mothers of Australia. Women should feel more pride and satisfaction in mourning a fallen hero than in contemplating those who could have gone but had stayed at home instead."¹⁰ Capt. Wedd's final shot at Bombala's 'eligibles' was that he would leave Bombala with an I.O.U. for 25 men and hoped the town would honour it before the March reached Goulburn.¹¹ This recruiting meeting ended with the screening of the propoganda film, "The Heroes of the Dardanelles." Church services were held next day, Sunday, at which the marchers were present. On the morning of January 11, 22 recruits marched out of Bombala on the road to Cooma.

8. The Bombala Times, 7. 1. 16

9. The Bombala Times, 14. 1. 16

10. Coward, D., Op. Cit. p. 213.

11. The Bombala Times, 14. 1. 16

On Friday, December 31, 1915 the Cooma Express had featured an advertisement of the impending Snowy River March, and calling for subscriptions from the public towards a general fund to provide for the equipment and necessary expenses of the march. That such an appeal was necessary shows an element of hesitancy or confusion in the mind of recruiting officialdom as to the funding of these marches. Questions such as "When does the marchers' pay start?", "Who should supply their clothes?", and "should the men march with rifles?" had not been conclusively answered, although the Snowy River men were given clothing and did not march with rifles. All catering needs, it was correctly assumed, would be satisfied by the residents along the route. Ambivalence prevailed on the matter of commencement of pay - some thought it was to be from the time men joined the march (as stated in the Queanbeyan Age)¹², others from the time they were classified as medically fit (quoted by Capt. Wedd, Queanbeyan Age),¹³ and others from the time they were enlisted. On the Snowy River March, medical examinations were conducted in Bombala, Cooma, Queanbeyan and Goulburn. Because of problems such as these, says L.L. Robson, "the military authorities were not too happy about these marches."¹⁴

The March continued its progress via Bibbenluke and Holt's Flat to Nimitybelle. At this village the recruiting meeting was again supported by the screening of "The Heroes of the Dardanelles." The numbers were slowly increasing, 48 recruits in all leaving Nimitybelle. Summer Hill and Rock's Flat were overnight camping stops before Cooma was reached on Saturday, January 15. Cooma was bedecked with flags, bands welcomed the marchers, and a civic reception was held in their honour. Two ladies, Mesdames C. and A. Hain gave the men apricots and peaches as they marched along and a stop was made at Scullin's cordial factory where the men were encouraged to drink as much as they wanted. This reception was the most enthusiastic the Snowy River Men had yet experienced, even though by now they had experienced a warm reception at every stopping place except at the hamlet of Summer Hill, which was castigated for its neglect by the Cooma press, saying acidly "Fortunately for the men, this state of things does not exist on any other section of the march."¹⁵ Of Cooma's welcome to the marchers, said the press- "It is doubtful whether any previous

12. The Queanbeyan Age, 4. 1. 16

13. Ibid. 7. 1. 16

14. Robson, L.L. The First A.I.F. - A Study of Its Recruitment, Melbourne, 1970. pp 57-58.

15. The Cooma Express, 17. 1. 16

function in Cooma ever accounted for such a muster of town and district residents; and certain it is that no previous function deserved it more."¹⁶ A presentation of 2 flags and 100 handkerchiefs was made, and fortunately for the men a downpour of rain cut speeches short, but not before the Mayor, Ald. G. Kaufline had managed to say that although he did not believe in compulsory service, if the number of men required could not be obtained voluntarily, then he would vote for a Compulsory Bill.¹⁷ The men were hurried to the Showground where they were billeted in the Agricultural Hall. After a clean-up in the improvised showers, the men returned to the town where they were treated to tea by the Red Cross ladies. The local Federal member, the Hon. A. Chapman attended this function. He had missed the start of the march due to illness. By now disillusionment seemed to be overtaking Capt. Wedd. In responding to Mr. Chapman's toast, Wedd repeated his disappointment as expressed in Bombala a week earlier. He said he had expected one man per mile, so that he would arrive in Goulburn with 250 men, and that so far, he should have 80 instead of only 50 men. He expected 60 men to join from Cooma. He was sorry that he had seen many eligible men hanging around street corners, refusing to enlist. This had made him think that Banjo Paterson had made a mistake when he immortalised the Man From Snowy River; it should have been the Women From Snowy River, for every 3 or 4 miles of their march they had been met by women offering refreshments.¹⁸ That night, at a film showing, says the Perkins Papers, "Capt. Wedd appealed for recruits but appealed in vain."¹⁹ It is possible that Wedd's oratory had an abrasive rather than a stimulating effect upon his audience, but it is also possible that many young men did not want to feel that they were being dragooned into the Army. One Snowy River Man, H.J. (Bert) McDonald, still living in Cooma, joined the March in Goulburn, travelling there by train to enlist. Said ^{Mr.} McDonald, "I wanted to enlist, but I could see no point in walking to Goulburn to do it."²⁰ It is a reasonable assumption that many men enlisted irrespective of the March, and that Capt. Wedd was doing the cause in which he believed so strongly little good by trying to shame men into joining his March. Indeed much of Wedd's jingoistic rhetoric was wasted on many young country men. Many no doubt

16. The Cooma Express, 17. 1. 16

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. The Perkins Papers, A 3623 Vol. 8 (held by Cooma Monaro Historical Society)

20. Oral Tradition - Discussion with Mr. H.J. McDonald.

enlisted out of a sense of duty to King, Empire, Country as was the case with Mr. Eric Pattrick, who joined the March on its last day before Goulburn.²¹ But many, according to Bert McDonald, joined the army because they believed it would be an adventure, an opportunity to travel overseas, and that the war would not be of long duration. Once in the trenches of the Somme they changed their minds. Capt. Wedd might have attracted more men had he used his oratory to appeal to a sense of adventure rather than to hammer his audiences with demands upon duty and patriotism.

When the March left Cooma on Monday, January 17, 44 more recruits joined. The route to Queanbeyan was via Bunyan, Umeralla, Billylingera, Bredbo, Colinton, Michelago, and Williamsdale (all of which provided receptions and speeches), reaching Queanbeyan on Saturday, January 22. A severe dust storm had hit the group near Umeralla but the discomfort of this was washed away in a swim in the Numeralla River. At Umeralla a telescope was presented to the men which it was hoped would be "useful when they reached the firing line." One resident of this district also hoped that the men would return with some of the Kaiser's scalp (an appeal to adventure more enticing than Capt. Wedd's speeches).

As in Cooma, so in Queanbeyan, the arrival of the March had been heralded well before by an appeal in the press for donations from local residents for food, chaff, oats, vegetables, firewood and cash.²² This appeal indicates an expectation that some or all the marchers would be on horses. Capt. Wedd was reported as stating that (a) his marchers would be a "happy band of singing pilgrims," (b) men would be paid 5/- per day from the time they were declared medically fit and were sworn in, and (c) the March would be a red letter epoch in the lives of those who participated.²³

The men arrived in Queanbeyan on January 22. The town was 'en fete' in their honour. Banners reading 'Australia will be there', "We are Australians", and "Welcome to the Snowies" greeted the March, and the by now familiar round of receptions and speeches ensued. A lavish garden party luncheon was given at 'Glenrock', the home of the Hayes family. Mr. A. Chapman, MP, was again present, and the Mayor, Ald. F. P. Woodward spoke candidly when he said "If the March had been organised earlier he felt certain that it would have been one of the most successful in New South Wales. The glamour and novelty of route marches were now

21. Oral Tradition - Discussion with Mr. E.E. Pattrick.

22. The Queanbeyan Age, 4. 1. 16

23. The Queanbeyan Age, 7. 1. 16

24. Ibid.

on the wane and were deprived of the booming of the daily press which at first had been such a great factor in the success of earlier marches. "²⁴ Had the Mayor caught some of Capt. Wedd's fretful disappointment, or was he reflecting a more widely held doubt from the Army on the value of these recruiting marches? Ernest Scott claims that by the end of January, these marches had become an expensive form of publicity rather than an effective recruiting device,²⁵ and 'The Call to Arms' spoke of the cost of the Marches as being 'inordinately high'.²⁶ Capt. Wedd repeated his disappointment at the response from young men, and again paid a high tribute to the women folk for their generous support. He said he had tried every means to induce men to come out of their 'dug-outs' and not hide behind the skirts of their women folk.²⁷ Then Mr. Austin Chapman, MHR gave his views - he believed that eligible single men with small responsibilities should go first: he believed in the voluntary system, but if that failed and they had to choose between conscription and German domination, he would choose conscription; and finally, the men in the cities who were producing nothing and could best be spared should be taken first. One wonders what Capt. Wedd would have thought of this last remark, seeming to imply that there was no urgency about the enlistment of country men until after the cities had been drained of their numerous, unproductive youth. Sunday in Queanbeyan was another church parade day as it had been in Cooma. The Marchers left the Queanbeyan 110 strong. Mr. Chapman had described the Snowy River Men as " the best conducted lot of men who had joined in marches which had taken place in different parts of the State,"²⁸ and Wedd was reported in the Cooma press as saying, " Nowhere had they experienced anything so hearty and generous as their reception and entertainment in the town of Queanbeyan," to which the Cooma paper added, " the men secretly agreed that for receptions, Cooma 'took the cake.' "²⁹

Once clear of the town, the men enjoyed themselves with a swim in the river, which they voted to be 'the best yet'. They were now on the final leg of their journey to Goulburn. The Chaplain, the Rev. R. Elliott was proving to be a cheerful companion, who saw to

24. The Queanbeyan Age , 25. 1. 16

25. Bean, C.E.W. Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918. Vol. XI - Australia During The War, E.Scott, Melbourne (1936) 1938 p. 316.

26. The Call To Arms, March 3, 1916 Sydney, p.8.

27. The Queanbeyan Age, 25. 1. 16

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

it daily that an early morning parade with prayers was held. At Bungendore a local grazier made the offer of £100 to the first Bungendore man to win a Victoria Cross, and Bungendore also produced some additional irregular verse inspired by the March. (see Appendix 4). The route followed from Bungendore was via Deep Creek, Tarago, Inveralochy, Tiranna to Goulburn. At Tiranna the men were joined by the Anglican Bishop of Goulburn, the Right Reverend L.B. Radford, who marched with them the remaining 6 miles to Goulburn.

The Snowy River March reached Goulburn on January 29, 1916. Another lavish reception and round of speeches were showered on the men. As the March had begun in Delegate, so it ended in Goulburnⁱⁿ heavy rain. The Marchers numbered 142 men. (see Appendix 3) Captain Wedd expressed disappointment in the numbers, but not in the quality. The men, after the reception speeches were over, settled into the Goulburn Training Camp, and the Snowy River March passed into local history.

3. THE 55th. BATTALION AT THE WESTERN FRONT -

The Snowy River Men joined hundreds of others in preparing for the war overseas. Their training lasted until September, 1916 when they were taken by train to Sydney and embarked upon the "Port Sydney" en route to England via South Africa. When the Snowy River Men left Australia they carried the colour patch of the 55th. Battalion which had already been formed in Egypt and was then in France. This Battalion was part of the 14th. Brigade, 5th Division, A.I.F. The boredom of the long sea voyage was relieved by two-up schools, which, according to Bert McDonald were in operation as the ship passed out of Sydney Heads. The officers turned a blind eye to these practices. In the Bay of Biscay the "Port Sydney" encountered very rough seas, causing one Australian army officer to be washed overboard from the top deck. The ship's captain had the ship turned about, had a boat lowered, and the man was eventually rescued. Bert McDonald reports that after arriving in England the men heard that the captain had been court-martialled for risking the lives of 1,500 men to save 1 man.

A period of further training followed at Hurdcott on Salisbury Plain in November, and then in December the Snowy River Men were merged into the 55th. Battalion. Their arrival at Buire on the Somme on December 24, 1916 is noted in the Battalion's War Diary as " 130 reinforcements marched in and were taken on strength today."³⁰ Further training continued in platoon drill, bayonet

30. War Diary, 55th. Battalion, February, 1916 - December, 1917

fighting and bombing and the men were introduced to the practice of rubbing their feet with whale oil to prevent the disease of trench foot. On January 27 the Battalion moved to Trones Wood Camp and each man was issued with 2 sandbags, 2 bombs and 120 rounds of ammunition prior to going into the front line.

Much of February and March was spent in the front line; the War Diary records that artillery on both sides was active and that heavy rain was making trenches muddy. On April 2 the Snowy River Men were engaged in their first major assault on German positions at Doignies and suffered their first heavy casualties. The historian, C.E.W. Bean observes that the Australians used in this attack had not been sufficiently rested and were therefore not fresh, although they were in high spirits.³¹ The infantry attack was to rely on surprise, and was to be unsupported by the usual artillery barrage. At 5.20 a.m. as 'D' Company of 55th Battalion moved close to the German positions, " a small dog resembling an Australian kelpie jumped up from the stubble barking and then trotted along beside the leading officer, Lt. Duprez." ³² The barking alerted the Germans and rifle and machine gun fire followed. The 55th. Battalion moved into Doignies from the North East. The Australians rolled bombs into a number of German dugouts, and as the surprise had been only partial, many Germans escaped to the South, leaving their uneaten breakfasts behind. The capture of Doignies was complete by 5.45 a.m. Very heavy German shelling of Doignies and Beaumetz later in the morning cost the Australians many casualties. The capture and holding of Doignies moved the Allied front line forward by approximately 300 yards and cost the 55th. Battalion 34 men killed, 2 missing, and 145 wounded.

If Doignies had been savage, much worse was to follow. A period of rest was enjoyed in April, the War Diary recording that Anzac Day, 1917 saw an all-day Sports Carnival.³³ During this month the prolonged, costly and futile battles of Bullencourt began. In both battles, ranging over one month, the 4th. and 5th. Australian Divisions were employed as part of the British 3rd. Army's attempt to break the German line. The 55th. Battalion entered the second Battle of Bullecourt on May 8. The heavy artillery fire from both sides was intense and the Germans used gas shells, trench mortars, machine gun fire, and seven times

31. Bean, C.E.W. Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol. 4 - The A.I.F. in France, 1917. Sydney, (1933) 1937 p.2

32. Ibid. p. 225.

33. War Diary, Op. Cit.

launched strong infantry counter attacks. This bombardment, according to Bean, was the heaviest that the troops of the 5th. Australian Division had yet experienced.³⁴ During this engagement, the Snowy River Man, Private Ernie Corey won his Military Medal to which by November, 1918 was to be added 3 bars, making him the only soldier in the A.I.F. to be so decorated (see Appendix 6). Pte. Corey was a volunteer stretcher bearer, and according to Bert McDonald, his fearlessness was such that he should have been awarded a Victoria Cross. There was however a rule which stated that mere saving of life was not to constitute grounds for the award of the V.C. Bean, commenting on this rule, says that it " should not have been applied to stretcher - bearers, but, probably through a mistaken application of it by some higher authority, that reward was not granted."³⁵ The 55th. Battalion casualties of 63 men seems light compared with a total Australian loss of over 10,000 men. Says Bean again, " The Second Battle of Bullecourt was in some ways the stoutest achievement of the Australian soldier in France, carried through against the stubbornest enemy that ever faced him there."³⁶ "Bullecourt," continues Bean, " more than any other battle, shook the confidence of Australian soldiers in the capacity of the British Command..... such successes as they had achieved had been won by troops persisting, through the sheer quality of their mettle, in the face of errors. "³⁷

In July, 1917 a unique opportunity was afforded the Australian troops to express their feelings towards the British High Command. Both the 4th. and 5th. Divisions were resting, but continuing their training. The 55th. Battalion was at Maillet. On July 12, King George V reviewed his Australian soldiers. Bert McDonald recalls how the men of the 55th. Battalion were given new boots and marched nine miles to the review area at Henencourt where the whole 5th. Division was paraded. The King completed his inspection and the call was made, "Now men, three cheers for His Majesty." Not a soldier responded; only a feeble cheer came from senior officers. Many of the 55th. Battalion men were incapacitated by the new boots and had to be returned to camp by truck.

34. Bean, C.E.W. Op. Cit. p. 535.

35. Ibid. p. 498.

36. Ibid. p. 545.

37. Ibid. p. 544.

38. War Diary, 55th. Battalion, January 1918 - April 1918.

The 5th. Division rested until mid-September. Then, fresh and reinforced, they launched the attack on Polygon Wood on September 26. The 55th. Battalion was in the spearhead of this battle and again casualties were severe. The Australian advance was protected by a massive barrage which roared and deafened "like a Gippsland bushfire." Eighteen German machine gun posts were bayoneted into silence and fierce hand-to-hand fighting took place at 2 pillboxes on the South West corner of the Wood and at the 'racecourse' which the 55th. Battalion captured. The 'racecourse' had been a driving track of a former Belgian artillery school. The German counter-attack came as a tremendous bombardment and gassing on the next day, but the Australians held their position. The 55th. Battalion suffered the loss of 49 killed and 164 wounded for the advance of approximately one mile.

The remainder of 1917 and early 1918 were spent between the front line in the Ypres sector and resting. Throughout this time aircraft on both sides were increasingly active, and rain, especially in November had made the ground a quagmire and filled all shell holes with water. In March 1918 the Allies became aware that the Germans were 'up to something.' The War Diary at this time records "enemy holding front line are imbued with more of the offensive spirit."

On April 6 the 55th. Battalion was in the front line near Villers Bretonneux on the Somme. That the Germans were about to launch a major offensive became clearer every day. Artillery and aerial bombardment increased in intensity especially in the Ypres and Amiens sectors. The area around Villers Bretonneux was drenched with gas shells on April 17 and 18. These shells, containing mustard, sneezing or phosgene gas fell on the 55th. Battalion at the rate of 1 every 2 seconds between 4 and 7 a.m. on both days. The Battalion was seriously affected and had to withdraw. While resting at Aubigny on April 21 news reached the men that on that day the 53rd. Battery of the Australian Field Artillery had fatally shot down the German air ace, Baron Von Richtofen. (see Appendix 7) The 55th. Battalion was back in the front line by 24th. and again suffered heavy casualties from gas shelling. On this day the Germans took Villers Bretonneux. The total Battalion casualties for April were 31 killed and 159 wounded.

By early August the Allies were ready to launch their offensive which they believed would end the War. The Australian, 38. War Diary, 55th. Battalion, January 1918 - April 1919.

General John Monash was one of the architects of the plan to launch an all-out attack upon the Germans. All five Australian Divisions were to be used. This attack, which proved to be decisive for Allied victory and German defeat began on August 8, 1918. Prior to this attack Monash sent a Nelson-style message to all troops under his command - " I entertain no sort of doubt that every Australian soldier will worthily rise to so great an occasion ... and be animated by no other resolve than a grim determination to see through to a clean finish whatever the task may be for the sake of Australia, the Empire and our cause."³⁹ For the Germans, August 8 was the black day (Der S^hwarze Tag) of the war. The 55th. Battalion was North East of Villers Bretonneux and shared in the excitement of this massive push forward which resulted in an advance of eight miles in one day. The Germans, by now demoralised, fell back in disorder towards the Hindenburg Line.

Yet another major engagement was ahead for the 55th. Battalion before the War finally ended. This was the Battle of Mont St. Quentin. On August 29 the attack on Mont St. Quentin and Peronne began. The German bombardment was at times as intense as that at Polygon Wood. Many Germans were sniped out of surrounding cottages and many prisoners were taken. During this fighting Bert McDonald received a shrapnel wound in his leg. Two German prisoners were detailed to carry him back by stretcher to the Casualty Clearing Station. On the way the Germans stopped, put down the stretcher, and shared their rations of black bread and wine with Pte. McDonald. The capture of Mont St. Quentin and Peronne cost the 55th. Battalion 164 casualties, and according to Bean, " is held by many Australian soldiers to be the most brilliant achievement of the A.I.F."⁴⁰ A list of awards made to men of the 55th. Battalion between August 1918 and the end of hostilities is included as Appendix 8.

On September 28 the Battalion was told that it was to join with American troops in an offensive against the Hindenburg Line. This attack began on October 2 near Bellicourt and continued through out that month. On November 11, 1918 an entry in the War Diary reads simply, " News of the signing of an Armistice received about 10.00."⁴¹ The War Diary's final entry is on April 12, 1919 with some of the 55th. Battalion still encamped at Marchienne - Au-Pont awaiting their return home. Demobilization and repatriation

39. Bean, C.E.W. Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 Vol. 6 -The A.I.F. in France, 1918 Sydney 1942 p. 525.

40. Ibid. p. 873.

41. War Diary , Op. Cit.

of Australian forces proceeded according to the plan drawn up by General Monash whereby men were returned to Australia in priority based on (1) length of service, (2) family responsibilities, and (3) assured employment.

4. REMEMBERING THE SNOWY RIVER MEN (AND OTHERS)

The Snowy River Men, then, did not return to their Monaro homes in one body as they had left in January, 1916. Those who had survived returned as Officialdom determined their priority. Once home it was a case of return to the family property, or to one's former employment, or to the task of finding work. For some, like Bert McDonald and Ernie Corey, still recovering from injuries, this latter was not easy. The War was over, and, according to Mr. McDonald and Mr. C. Jamieson no one seemed to be interested in hearing about returned men's experiences. When stories were told they were met with disinterest or disbelief. It was not long before returned soldiers stopped talking. This phenomenon, implied by Bean,⁴² was experienced not only on the Monaro, but throughout the nation, and helped to deprive Australian society of learning at first hand the full horror of the War. Australians had to rely on written accounts of the War which did not begin to appear for another generation. This Australian 'insomnia' towards World War I helps to account in part, for the minimal objections to Australian involvement in World War II. Considering that the Australian casualty rates of 64.8% in the Great War was the highest per head of the armed services of any British country (60,000 killed, 159,000 wounded), one would think that our nation would have developed in the 1920's and 30's a most vigorous anti-war rationale. That Australians did not do so, is cause for searching thought on the political, economic, and social pressures of the inter-wars period.

The difficulty of finding work was real for many returned men. Eric Pattrick, whose injuries in the Battle for Polygon Wood resulted in the loss of one leg, was not considered as a worthy purchaser of a small Monaro property by the vendor. A partly disabled war hero like Ernie Corey survived on earnings from rabbiting (see Appendix 6). Bert McDonald's experiences were similar to Corey's. One prospective employer, looking at Bert's injury said, " Well with that leg you won't be much good, so I won't have to pay you a full wage." Experiences such as these, while pointing to an immediate need for government subsidies either

42. Bean, C.E.W. Anzac to Amiens, Sydney, (1946) 1968 p.536.

to employers of partly disabled men, or to the men directly, did not tally with the ebullient speeches, flag-waving, and fêting of the farewells given to men such as the Snowy River Marchers, just as in the 1920's the building of war memorials did nothing to help the economic plight of those ex-servicemen or their families who needed help. While being a noble gesture of commemoration of the dead, consolation towards the dead's relatives, and memorial of those who had served and survived, the memorials could never be anything more than gestures. Names immortalised in stone or bronze reminded the living that a war had taken place but told nothing of the horror of that war (only the National War Memorial in Canberra does that in a muted way). Memorials have had a subtle cultural impact in Australia. Professor Ken Inglis claims they have conveyed to children an earnestness to remember, honour and be ready to repay.⁴³

As in other districts of the nation, the Monaro enshrined in its memorials all who had served their country in the Great War, including of course, the Snowy River Marchers. Memorials were built in all the main communities of the district during the 1920's. One of the nation's most unique memorials was built at Berridale, where⁴⁴ a more conventional style was used for the Monaro's main memorial in Cooma.

In January 1922 the Berridale Fallen Soldiers' Memorial Movement requested the Dalgety Shire (renamed the Snowy River Shire in 1939) to set aside a site opposite the Berridale Hotel for the erection of a memorial.⁴⁴ The executive committee of the Movement comprised the Shire Clerk, David O'Rourke, the Policeman Bill Jennings, and the Anglican Rector, Rev'd. Mr. K.L. McKeown. Suggestions for the memorial included a horse trough, the purchase of an old hall, and a cottage hospital, but that of a Wayside Calvary made by Mr. McKeown was the one most enthusiastically agreed upon. On February 15 the Southern Churchman reported that hopefully work on the memorial would begin soon and that its form was to be a Wayside Calvary.⁴⁵ However when tenders were received, the cost of a full Calvary was seen to be prohibitive. The plan was amended to a Crucifix.

The Shire Council, at its meeting of March 8 granted permission for the Memorial's erection on the site requested on

43. Inglis, K., *The Great War and the Australian Landscape - Public Lecture*, A.N.U. May 23, 1979.

44. Dalgety Shire Council Meeting Minutes, Berridale, January 11, 1922

45. The Southern Churchman, Goulburn, February 15, 1922.

condition that the Committee accept responsibility for any accident which might happen in connection with the Memorial and that the Committee provide for the adequate up-keep and maintenance of the structure.⁴⁶ The then State Minister for Home Affairs refused his sanction for the design and intense lobbying was necessary before permission was obtained.⁴⁷ The work went ahead to the satisfaction of some and to the disquiet of others. The design worried some people. It was felt to be too Roman Catholic in expression, and therefore not representative of all the community. However Mr. Mc Keown's view was right - a Crucified Christ was not exclusively Roman Catholic but fully Christian, and in a Christian country a most appropriate memorial to enshrine the sacrifice of the Great War's dead was the Christian symbol of sacrifice, the Crucified Christ.

The unveiling of the Memorial took place on November 15, 1922. The Council had generously granted a holiday to any employees wishing to attend the function, on condition that the holiday was taken only for that specific purpose.⁴⁸ A member of Parliament was asked to unveil the Memorial but because of the controversial design, thought it politic to decline. Several invited guests failed to appear on the day. The Memorial was unveiled by Dr. F.N. Rodda, President of the Cooma Returned Soldiers' League.

The Berridale Memorial, as a full Crucifix, is rare among Australian War Memorials (see Appendix 9). There are many Crosses but the Crucifix stands unique. Since its unveiling, to the present day, World War I veteran Mr. Charlie Jamieson has made the Memorial's maintenance and preservation his special interest. When one notices that this Memorial has 45 men's names inscribed, of whom 15 were killed, one wonders whether this rate of sacrifice is also, like the Memorial itself, unique in Australia.

On Anzac Day, 1924 the foundation stone of Cooma's Memorial was placed in position by Mrs. George Rolfe, who had had 7 sons enlist in the War, of whom 5 saw active service. Said the Express, the Memorial was " the outward and visible sign that Cooma preserves in memory the sacrifices - consummated or proffered of her own men."⁴⁹ Some embarrassment existed that smaller centres like Berridale, Nimmitabel, Adaminaby and Bombala had already

46. Dalgety Shire Council Minutes, Berridale, March 8, 1922

47. Reveille , Vol 7, No. 4 Sydney, December 1, 1933 p. 36.

48. Dalgety Shire Council Meeting Minutes, Berridale, November 2, 1922

49. The Cooma Express, April 28, 1924.

erected their memorials. Mr. J.A. Perkins, MLA, said that he "felt a little ashamed that Cooma was dilatory in the matter of a memorial."⁵⁰ The Rev'd. Canon Hirst, Anglican Rector of Cooma spoke on the theme of the memorial's inspiring the younger generation with the great deeds done by their brothers between 1914 and 1919.⁵¹ The design chosen was to be a solid four-sided column of Monaro granite, 15 feet high, mounted on a base, the whole to be landscaped by lawns and enclosed by an iron railing fence. The Memorial was to be simple and dignified. At this short ceremony a collection of £ 180.12.6 was taken towards the Memorial's cost.

On April 26, 1926 Mr. J.A. Perkins, MLA unveiled the completed Cooma War Memorial, saying as he did so that although the Memorial was belated, it only showed that Cooma people had long memories. Mr. R.A. Mc Killop, President of the Monaro branch of the R.S.S.I.L.A. reminded those present that the Memorial to the dead was also a reminder to the survivors to keep the dead in memory. Mr. F. Blaxland, the Chairman of the Memorial Committee made another collection which brought the total subscription up to £ 554.15.2. An amount of £ 491.0.2 remained to be raised.⁵²

This Memorial stands in front of the Post Office. The grey granite is set off by the white iron railing fence, making for Cooma an attractive memorial, and which like its Berridale counterpart, shows its careful maintenance and preservation.

The Snowy River Marchers added a chapter to the social history of the Monaro which can not be forgotten. Their names, along with their fellow servicemen, are carved on the Monaro's memorials. As the poet Geoff Page has observed, the Second World War bequeathed Australia parks and pools as memorials, but there was something in that first World War which demanded its memorials in stone.⁵³

50. The Cooma Express, April 28, 1924.

51. Ibid.

52. The Cooma Express, April 30, 1926.

53. Quoted by Prof.K. Inglis, The Great War and the Australian Landscape, Public Lecture, A.N.U. May 23, 1979.

THE SINKING OF THE RMS " LUSITANIA "

The Cunard Liner, " Lusitania ", bound for Liverpool from New York, was torpedoed and sunk by a German U-Boat off the southern coast of Ireland on May 7, 1915. 1201 lives were lost, including 100 Americans. The Admiralty and British and American Press denounced this sinking of an 'innocent' passenger ship as violating all codes of civilized behaviour.

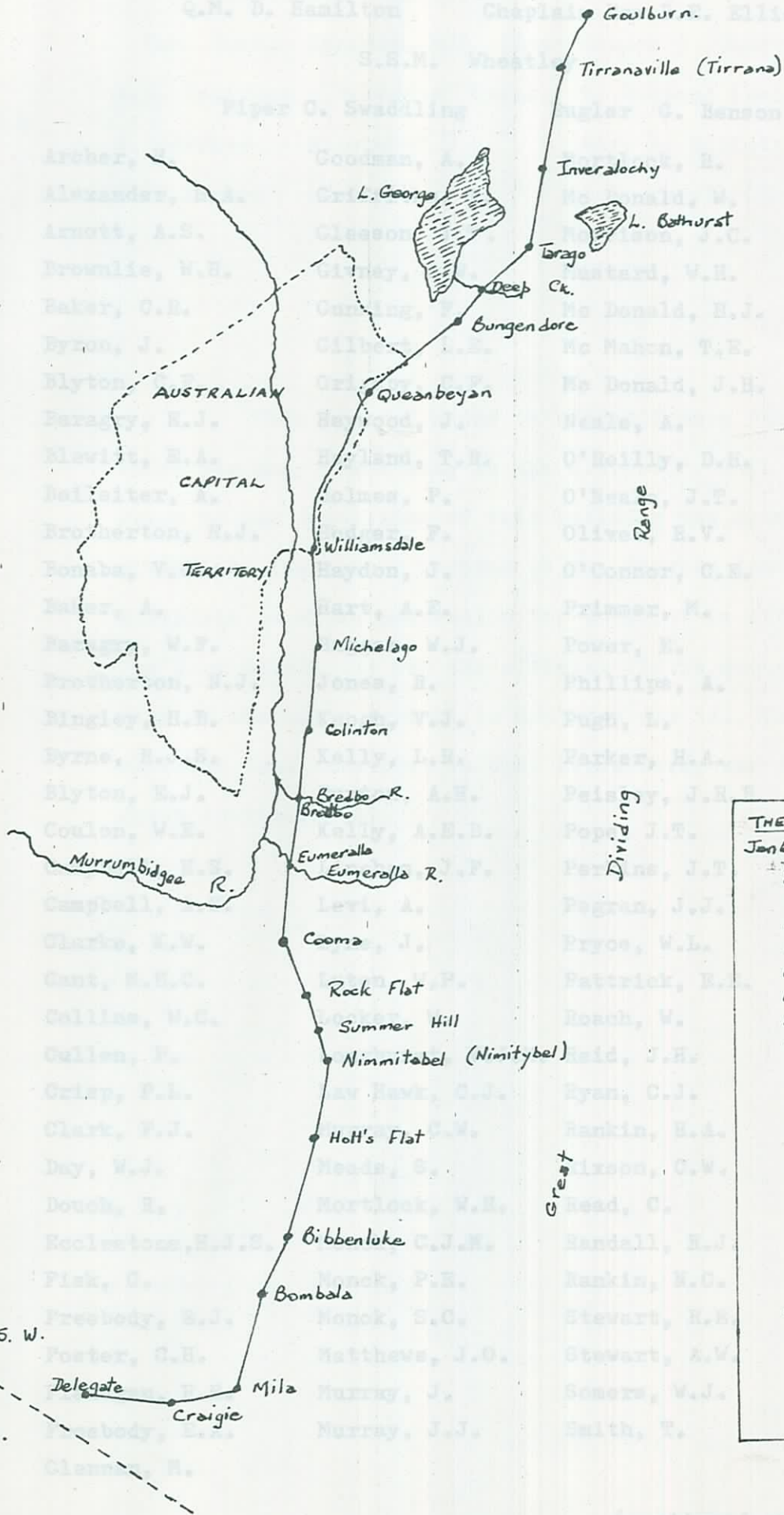
Australian author, Colin Simpson has carefully researched the details of the "Lusitania's" last voyage and his findings are published in a remarkable book entitled, simply, Lusitania. Far from being an 'innocent' passenger ship, the "Lusitania" was carrying 6,000,000 rounds of ammunition and other massively volatile cargo, the nature of which is still kept secret in Admiralty and American files. The tragedy of the "Lusitania" was that the one torpedo fired at her, hit a storage compartment packed with explosive material. The blast which sent the 45,000 ton ship to the sea bed within 18 minutes came from within the ship, outwards.

The Swoy River March 1916

1. Craigie - Craigie	9 mi.
2. Craigie - Mils	9 "
3. Mils - Bambala	13 "
4. Bambala	
5. Bambala - Bibberlaka	8 mi.
6. Bibberlaka - Mils Flat	12 "
7. Mils Flat - Mils Flat	10 "
8. Mils Flat - Sunny Hill	4 "
9. Sunny Hill - Mils Flat	13 "
10. Mils Flat - Cooma	7 "
11. Cooma	
12. Cooma - Amaralla	17 "
13. Amaralla - Cradock	10 "
14. Cradock - Callahan	7 "
15. Callahan - Mils Flat	10 "
16. Mils Flat - Williamsdale	17 "
17. Williamsdale - Mils Flat	10 "
18. Mils Flat	
19. Williamsdale - Bongardah	10 "
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24. Cooma - Amaralla	17 "
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449. Williamsdale - Mils Flat	10 "
450. Mils Flat	
451. Williamsdale - Bongardah	10 "
452. Bongardah - Sunny Hill	4 "
453. Sunny Hill - Mils Flat	13 "
454. Mils Flat - Cooma	7 "
455. Cooma	
456. Cooma - Amaralla	17 "
457. Amaralla - Cradock	10 "
458. Cradock - Callahan	7 "
459. Callahan - Mils Flat	10 "
460. Mils Flat - Williamsdale	17 "
461. Williamsdale - Mils Flat	10 "
462. Mils Flat	
463. Williamsdale - Bongardah	10 "
464. Bongardah - Sunny Hill	4 "
465. Sunny Hill - Mils Flat	13 "
466. Mils Flat - Cooma	7 "
467. Cooma	
468. Cooma - Amaralla	17 "
469. Amaralla - Cradock	10 "
470. Cradock - Callahan	

APPENDIX No. 2. ROUTE MARCH

ROUTE OF SNOWY RIVER MARCH, 1916.



THE SNOWY RIVER MARCH, 1916

Jan 6.	Delegate - Craigie	8 mls.
7.	Craigie - Mila	9 "
8.	Mila - Bombala	13 "
9.	Bombala.	
10.	Bombala - Bibbenluke	8 mls.
11.	Bibbenluke - Holt's Flat	12 "
12.	Holt's Flat - Nimmitabel	10 "
13.	Nimmitabel - Summer Hill	4 "
14.	Summer Hill - Rock Flat	13 "
15.	Rock Flat - Cooma	7 "
16.	Cooma.	
17.	Cooma - Umeralla	10 "
18.	Umeralla - Bredbo	10 "
19.	Bredbo - Colinton	7 "
20.	Colinton - Michelago	10 "
21.	Michelago - Williamsdale	17 "
22.	Williamsdale - Queanbeyan	18 "
23.	Queanbeyan.	
24.	Queanbeyan - Bungendore	16 "
25.	Bungendore - Deep Creek	10 "
26.	Deep Creek - Tarago	15 "
27.	Tarago - Inverloch	9 "
28.	Inverloch - Tirrana	8 "
29.	Tirrana - Goulburn	6 "
		Total Distance - 220

(continued over page)

Staff Capt. F.R. Wedd

Q.M. D. Hamilton Chaplain Rev.R.E. Elliott, B.A.

S.S.M. Wheatley

Piper C. Swaddling

Bugler G. Benson

Archer, H.	Goodman, A.	Mortlock, H.	Sharpe, T.J.
Alexander, H.A.	Griffiths, T.	Mc Donald, W.	Sorrell, A.W.
Arnott, A.S.	Gleeson, J.T.	Morrison, J.C.	Stone, A.E.
Brownlie, W.H.	Givney, J.W.	Mustard, W.H.	Stevenson, R.
Baker, C.R.	Gunning, F.	Mc Donald, H.J.	Stokes, C.H.
Byron, J.	Gilbert, L.E.	Mc Mahon, T.E.	Shiels, J.C.
Blyton, C.F.	Grigsby, C.F.	Mc Donald, J.H.	Shiels, J.W.P.
Baragry, E.J.	Heywood, J.	Neale, A.	Stroud, T.
Blewitt, E.A.	Hayland, T.R.	O'Reilly, D.H.	Smith, H.N.
Beileiter, A.	Holmes, P.	O'Neale, J.T.	Smith, F.
Brotherton, H.J.	Hedger, F.	Oliver, R.V.	Smith, J.W.
Bonaba, V.C.	Haydon, J.	O'Connor, C.E.	Stalker, R.
Baker, A.	Hart, A.E.	Primmer, M.	Stalker, C.E.C.
Baragry, W.F.	Haggar, W.J.	Power, E.	Sloan, W.W.
Brotherton, N.J.	Jones, R.	Phillips, A.	Tozer, A.
Bingley, H.B.	Keogh, V.J.	Pugh, L.	Triggell, H.
Byrne, R.J.S.	Kelly, L.R.	Parker, H.A.	Turner, S.
Blyton, E.J.	Burton, A.H.	Peisley, J.R.B.	Thomson, A.
Coulon, W.E.	Kelly, A.E.B.	Pope, J.T.	Thompson, P.D.
Campbell, H.S.	Lineham, J.F.	Perkins, J.T.	Venables, E.C.W.
Campbell, A.E.	Levi, A.	Pegran, J.J.	Warren, T.
Clarke, K.W.	Lyne, J.	Pryce, W.L.	Woodger, J.R.
Cant, M.H.C.	Luton, W.P.	Patrick, E.E.	Ward, J.E.
Collins, W.C.	Locker, W.	Roach, W.	Winner, A.J.
Cullen, P.	Longhurst, V.J.M.	Reid, J.H.	White, N.
Crisp, P.L.	Law Hawk, C.J.	Ryan, C.J.	Whealey, J.
Clark, F.J.	Murray, C.W.	Rankin, H.A.	Ware, A.
Day, W.J.	Meads, S.	Rixson, C.W.	Woodhouse, T.H.
Douch, R.	Mortlock, W.H.	Read, C.	Woodhouse, C.J.
Ecclestone, H.J.S.	Monck, C.J.M.	Randall, R.J.	Whiteman, V.J.
Fisk, G.	Monck, P.E.	Rankin, N.C.	Yelds, S.D.
Freebody, E.J.	Monck, S.C.	Stewart, R.E.	Thomas, T.
Foster, C.H.	Matthews, J.O.	Stewart, A.W.	Linnegar, C.A.
Flanagan, H.E.	Murray, J.	Somers, W.J.	Bourke, T.
Freebody, E.A.	Murray, J.J.	Smith, T.	Leonard, U.J.
Glennan, M.			

(continued over page)

APPENDIX No 3 continued.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Hon. Austin Chapman, MHR (Eden Monaro) Chairman
- A.H. Jeffreys (Delegate) Treas. T. Redmond (Delegate) Sec.
- J. Jardine (Nimmetabel) Rev. R. Elliott (Bombala)
- D.F. Parker (Cooma) A.H. Nevell (Queanbeyan)

That leads to splendid glory for the Sturdy Boys Outback.
 They are 'Stralians, sturdy 'Stralians who will graft for Love or Fight
 They're the men who hold our Nationhood - set out a Pristine Right
 They're the chaps who've heard the far-off cry of "Cobbers, Cross the Sea
 They're the Men from Snowy River, who will die for liberty!

This list of names is copied from a framed document which for many years hung in the G.U.O.O.F. Hall in Berridale. Prior to the demolition of this building the document was given into the safe - keeping of Mr. Charlie Jamieson, Berridale in whose possession the document is still.

The list totals 141 yet the official figure quoted at the time of the men's arrival in Goulburn was 142. The notable omission from this list is Cpl. Ernie Corey who joined the March in Nimmitibel.

To a place among earth's nations, boys, your country now had sprung;
 It's men of lion and British Bulldog breed;
 Henceforth in history's pages shall its name be writ and sung;
 We lift our hats and bid you all God-speed.

You are soldiers of the Empire, and you bear our honour, too,
 Where're your duty's calling voice shall lead;
 But, boys, we know your honest hearts are faithful, brave and true,
 And we ask for you God's blessing and God-speed.

To our dear lads in Egypt we send this greeting too,
 For our heartfelt message fits all faiths and creeds;
 And that carriage of our salutation, boys, we trust to you
 Which is, just to wish them from us all, God-speed.

Our memories of you, Soldiers, shall bright and green remain;
 May honour crown your every act and deed;
 And till that glad and happy day, which brings you home again,
 Good-bye, boys, and on sea and land, God-speed.

Anon.
 ("Queanbeyan Age", January 28, 1916)

(continued over page)

EXAMPLES OF LOCAL POETRY INSPIRED BY SNOWY RIVER
RECRUITING MARCH

The Chaps From Snowy River

From the regions of the River that Banjo sang to fame;
From the far-off winding Snowy, which oft belies its name -
There's a valiant army moving a-down the new made track
That leads to splendid glory for the Sturdy Boys Outback.
They are 'Stralians , sturdy 'Stralians who will graft for Love or Fight
They're the men who made our Nationhood -set out a Pristine Might
They're the chaps who've heard the far-off cry of "Cobbers,Cross the Sea
They're the Men From Snowy River, who will die for liberty!
So, we hail you- Men from Snowy- and cheer you on the track
As all-wool true Australians, and the Breed that's bred Outback!

W.E. Vincent

"Cooma Express", January 14, 1916.

AT THE LEAVE - TAKING FROM BUNGENDORE

Austral's sons,we hear the bugle notes,we hear the drum taps beat
That call you forth to help our Empire's need;
Ere echoing cheers are sounding to the tramp of marching feet
We now most heartily wish you all God- speed.

Ere our last farewells are shouted,
Ere the troopers leave the bay
Ere the mooring ropes are from the shackles freed-
With its best and oldest meaning and with loving hearts today
We wish you one and all, dear boys, God-speed.

To a place among earth's nations,boys,your country now has sprung;
It's men of lion and British Bulldog breed;
Henceforth in history's pages shall its name be writ and sung;
We lift our hats and bid you all God-speed.

You are soldiers of the Empire, and you bear our honour, too,
Where'ere your duty's calling voice shall lead;
But, boys, we know your honest hearts are faithful, brave and true,
And we ask for you God's blessing and God-speed.

To our dear lads in Egypt we send this greeting too,
For our heartfelt message fits all faiths and creeds;
And that carriage of our salutation, boys, we trust to you
Which is, just to wish them from us all, God-speed.

Our memories of you, Soldiers, shall bright and green remain;
May honour crown your every act and deed;
And till that glad and happy day, which brings you home again,
Good-bye, boys, and on sea and land, God-speed.

Anon.

("Queanbeyan Age", January 28, 1916)

(continued over page)

THE MEN FROM SNOWY RIVER

They're marching from the mountains- from Snowy River side,
 Heard the call of Empire one and all;
 Kosciusko sent the message far and wide,
 And the Men from Snowy River are responding to the call.

Not like the old crusaders who fought Saracen and Turk
 With lance and shield and shining coat of mail;
 Today we teach the heathen some modern bayonet work,
 There we know the Snowy River men will not fail.

Wiry, like the horses from your mountains
 Who are famed in verse and song;
 Cool as the gushing crystal fountains
 Of your river bright and strong.

From the mountains and the gullies,
 Station hands and men from mine
 See that no dishonour ever sullies
 This bright heritage of thine.

The brothers who have gone before you
 Kept all traditions bright and true;
 Whilst Australia's flag floats o'er you
 We expect the same from you.

It's a game of death and glory
 God help him who gets off-side;
 When you return to tell your story
 We shall list to you with pride.

Now farewell, ye Men from Snowy River,
 May God's blessings rest on you;
 And success attend your arms for ever
 But above all to yourselves be true.

Robert Mc Jannett

(This poem was presented at Bungendore,
 "Queanbeyan Age" January 28, 1916.)

STAND-TO

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Vol. 2, No. 1

CANBERRA

January-March, 1951

MILITARY MEDAL AND THREE BARS

UNKNOWN to the vast majority of Canberra's citizens, there lives at Westridge a veteran of the First A.I.F., now in his 60th year, who has the proud distinction of wearing the Military Medal and three bars, which he won as a stretcher-bearer in France in 1917-18 while serving with the 55th Battalion. His name — Ernest Albert Corey.

Many of Corey's friends claim for him that he is the only man of the Empire forces who has been awarded three bars to a decoration for gallantry. As regards the A.I.F. in the two world wars this is certainly true, but we are not in a position at the present time, to substantiate or disprove their claim. In any case, what matters if there are others who can share this distinction with Corey.* He, for his part, would be the first to congratulate them.

Ernie Corey was born on 20th December, 1891, in the tiny settlement of Numeralla in New South Wales, on the slopes of the southern alps. Educated at Thirbegal Public School, then a "half time" school, about twenty miles from Cooma, he was a blacksmith's striker at Martin's smithy in Cooma when war broke out in 1914.

In the early months of the war recruiting presented no problems, for men came forward in sufficient numbers to fulfil the Government's requirements. By the end of January, 1915, the enlistments had totalled 62,786, an average of 10,464 a month. During the next three months the figure was 23,523, an average of 7,844; but after the news of the landing in Gallipoli the figures jumped to 10,526 in May, 12,505 in June, and 36,575 in July, the highest total recorded in any one month during the war. In August 25,714 enlisted, but in September there was a drop to 16,571, and in October the figures slumped to 9914.

At the end of October, 1915, W. M. Hughes succeeded Andrew Fisher as Prime Minister. Shortly afterwards the new Government decided to increase the A.I.F. by an additional force of 50,000

over and above reinforcements. This decision called for an intensive campaign in every State to secure the numbers required; and among the special devices adopted were the "snowball" marches from country centres to the larger cities or training camps, picking up recruits as they proceeded. During the next five months the total enlistments were: November, 1915, 11,230; December, 9,119; January, 1916, 22,101; February, 18,508; March, 15,597.

Of the recruiting marches in New South Wales, the best known at that time were the "Coo ces," which set out from Gilgandra in October, 1915, the "Waratahs" from Nowra, the "Kangaroos" from Wagga, the "Wallabies" from Narrabri, the "Kurrajongs" from Inverell, the "Kookaburras" from Terooweenah, the "North Coast Boomerangs" from Grafton, and the "Men from Snowy River" from Delegate.

When they left Delegate for Goulburn in January, 1916, the Men from Snowy River numbered 30; by the time they had covered the 220-mile march, by way of Nimmitabel, Cooma, Bredbo, Michelago, Queanbeyan, Bungendore, and Tarago, their strength had increased to 144. Corey joined them at Nimmitabel.

After training at Goulburn camp for some months, Corey left Australia in September as a fully-fledged infantryman, sailing in the "Port Sydney" for England with the 4th reinforcements for the 55th Battalion (5th Division). Three months at Hurdcott with the 14th Training Battalion and he left for France, to join the 55th at Montauban, on the desolate moorland of the old Somme battlefield, on 8th February, 1917. He was posted to the grenade section of "C" Company, and his first introduction to the front line was in the Gueudecourt sector shortly before the Germans withdrew from their winter positions in front of Bapaume.

On April 2nd Ernie took part in his first battle, the capture of Doignies, one of the villages held by the Germans in front of the Hindenburg Line. Shortly afterwards the 55th and other units of the 5th Division were withdrawn for a well-earned rest, but a few weeks later the division was recalled to the front to relieve the 1st Division in the Hinden-

* Some months ago it was stated in an Australian newspaper that a wing commander in the R.A.F. — his name was given in the report — had won the D.F.C. and three bars.

burg Line near Bullecourt, where heavy fighting had been proceeding since the 2nd Division stormed and captured a section of these formidable defences on May 3rd. In the early hours of May 15th the Germans launched their seventh and final counter-attack of the battle in an attempt to drive out the Australians and the British on their left. The attack, preceded by a shattering bombardment by heavy and light trench mortars, reinforced later by guns of all calibres, was repulsed by one of the 55th's sister battalions, the 54th, which was holding the right flank of the Australian position in the Hindenburg Line.

The losses on both sides were heavy, and during the morning Lieut. - Colonel P. W. Woods, the commander of the 55th, then in support, called for volunteers with a knowledge of first-aid, to assist the stretcher-bearers to clear the wounded. Thirty men, including Corey, Jack Buckley (of Nimmitabel, N.S.W.), mortally wounded as a machine-gunner in the attack on Peronne in September, 1918, and Corporal Franks, an Englishman, responded and went out into No - Man's Land, working up to the German wire, and carrying the wounded back about three kilometres to the dressing station. For seventeen hours they laboured without rest; later the C.O. of the 54th wrote to Colonel Woods expressing his appreciation of their splendid work. For their courage and devotion to duty, Corey and Buckley, and three of the other volunteers, Frank Groutsch, Leslie Jackson and Alex. Thompson, were awarded the Military Medal — all immediate awards granted by General Birdwood — and four others were mentioned in 1st Anzac routine orders.

After Bullecourt the 1st, 2nd and 5th Australian Divisions enjoyed a long rest, of four months duration, in the back areas preparing for the Ypres offensive. Corey now decided to become a regular stretcher-bearer, and when the battalion moved up to take part in the Battle of Polygon Wood at the end of September he was a member of the bearer section, under Lance-Corporal Dawson, along with Bill Muir (now a sergeant of police in Sydney), Rube Taper (of Braidwood), "Scotty" McCluskey (of Sydney), and Peter Murray. After the battle Ernie was recommended for, and received, a bar to his Military Medal for his untiring energy and for the fine example of coolness and bravery that he



ERNIE COREY
Photographed during World
War II.

had shown throughout the operation. Working steadily over the battlefield by the Butte and around the pillboxes of the Flanders I. Line, he had tended the wounded and carried them to safety, often under heavy artillery and machine-gun fire.

During the winter of 1917-18 Corey served in the Messines sector, and at the beginning of April, 1918 went south with his battalion to the Villers-Bretonneux plateau, where the Australian Corps barred the way to Amiens. In August and September he took part in the victorious advance along the Somme, and it was at Peronne on September 1st-2nd that he won the second bar to his M.M. Threading his way through shell and machine-gun fire with characteristic determination, he dressed and cheered the wounded of several units and got them to safety. Never sparing himself, he worked continuously until all the wounded in his sector were cleared; the medical officer reported that, by his careful handling of them and his knowledge of first aid, Ernie saved the lives of many men.

Three weeks later Corey was promoted to the rank of corporal and put in charge of the regimental stretcher-bearers. The battalion's next fight — at the Hindenburg Line, north of Bellicourt on September 30th — was its last operation of the war, and it was here that Ernie, who had some unscathed through every battle of his unit in the past eighteen months, received his first and only wound, and added yet another bar to his M.M. His gallantry had long since become a by-word in the battalion and in this action it was again very much in evidence. According to the official record, he was untiring in his efforts among the wounded, seeking them out in exposed positions and getting them back to safety.

At one stage he noticed two German stretcher-bearers about seventy yards off, preparing to take a wounded Digger away on a wheeled stretcher. They beckoned to Corey, who went forty yards towards them and called out: "Can you speak English?" One of the Germans replied: "We have Australia. You take him. Too heavy." Corey told them to leave the stretcher and when they walked off he made his way to it and found that the man was Private Randall of the 55th, who had lain out all night with a wound in the back, and had been bandaged by the Germans. Corey picked him up in his arms, carried him back 40-50 yards and placed him in a shell-hole, telling him that he would return for him later. Meanwhile the Germans came back for their stretcher and waved good-bye to Corey.

Ernie then went on dressing wounded — there were many of them lying about — for another two hours, after which he got his stretcher-bearers together and they began carrying the wounded back. At about 11 a.m. when on his way to bring in Captain R. A. Goldrick, whom he had bandaged earlier, he was blown up by a high-explosive shell, receiving wounds in the right groin and thigh. Crawling five or six yards to his Red Cross bag, the

and of which had been cut by the explosion, he took out a tourniquet and placed it over the femoral artery to stop the bleeding. He then started to crawl back and had covered some 300 yards when Lieutenant Luther Chadwick and Sergeant Clark of his own battalion found him and carried him to a dressing station a mile away. It thus happened that Forey did not see Randall again, and has often wondered how he fared.

From the dressing station Ernie was sent to a casualty clearing station, where he was operated on, and thence to a general hospital at Le Havre, to be operated on again, by an American surgeon, after which he crossed to England and found himself in a hospital in Bristol. He came home in the "Plassy" in April, 1919, and was discharged medically unfit at the end of June. Returning to Cooma he took on the job of digging out rabbits by contract, but, after two years of that work, came to Canberra in 1922. For five years during the early

building of the capital he was employed as a camp caretaker, and from 1927 to 1940 as an office cleaner in the Department of the Interior. During the Second World War he joined the 13th Garrison Battalion, which was sent to Port Kembla, and there served for more than two years in the medical section. On his return to Canberra, Ernie resumed duty in the cleaning branch, but resigned after twelve months to become caretaker of the Services Hut at Manuka. Later he went as a cook to the Northern Territory and Pimber (Woomera) with a party of departmental surveyors, and in 1948 took six months long-service leave.

To-day Ernie is a leading band operator at the Canberra incinerator and, despite his years, is still a hard worker. And he has not lost that dry wit which amused his Digger pals of the old 55th Battalion in France in the eighteen months of 1917-18 during which he collected four Military Medals.

A.W.B.

JOHN BASKIN APPOINTED TO GOULBURN

THE Rev. John Evett D'Acre Baskin, of Canberra, who in February became Rector of the parish of St. Nicholas, Goulburn, N.S.W., had a colourful career as a padre in the A.I.F. from 1940 to 1944, and after that spent three years in India, most of the time on the north-west frontier.

Born at Blackwood, Victoria, on 18th December, 1908, John was educated at Ashfield Public School and Petersham High School, in Sydney, and read for holy orders under Bishop Burgmann. Before the war he was on the staff of St. Saviour's Cathedral, Goulburn. His war service with the Army began in March, 1940, when he was appointed chaplain at Goulburn camp. In August he joined the A.I.F. as chaplain to the 3rd Casualty Clearing Station, embarked in the "Aquitania" at the end of December, and served with it in Palestine, Greece and Crete. While with the C.C.S. he was trained as an anaesthetist, and acted as such on the north of Greece in addition to his normal chaplaincy duties.



A fortnight after leaving Crete, Baskin was posted to the 2/32nd Battalion at Tobruk. At Amiyria, the O.C. of the staging camp was indifferent to the forward movement of chaplains, so John, in company with the Rev. Pitt-Owen, stowed away in a tank landing craft going to Tobruk. On the trip they served as "ack-ack" runners, and on arrival expected disciplinary action to be taken against them, but instead they were commended. Baskin was with the 2/32nd (commanded by

that great leader, Lieut.-Colonel "Torpy" Whitehead) during the remainder of the siege at Tobruk, after which he spent three months with the battalion in Palestine, six months in Syria, and five months (June-November, 1942) at El Alamein. In the final phase of the Alamein battle, he and the R.A.P. staff of the battalion lived and worked with German medics and medical staff in a captured German dressing station. "For twenty-four hours," says John, "we did not know who were the prisoners — ourselves or the Germans."

After the battle of El Alamein, Baskin was sent to the 2/4th Convalescent Depot to recuperate. Later he was taken on strength of this unit, which returned to Australia in February, 1943, and went to the Atherton Tablelands. A few weeks there and he was transferred to the 102nd C.C.S. at Woodford, Queensland, where he remained until November, 1943. Then, leaving for New Guinea with the idea of rejoining the 2/32nd Battalion, he found himself sidetracked to the 2/5th General Hospital at Port Moresby.

While serving in Palestine in 1941, Baskin had been talked into going to India by the Assistant Chaplain-General of the Tenth British Army. It was not until 1944, however, that he finally decided to join the Indian Ecclesiastical Establishment, and, leaving New Guinea in May, received his discharge from the A.I.F. From November, 1944, to August, 1947, he served with the Indian Army at Abbottabad and Nowshera in the North West Frontier Province, and later at Rawalpindi. Among the units to which he ministered were the 2/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, the 6th Gurkha Rifles, the 13th Frontier Force Rifles, 11th Sikh Regiment, Poona Horse, 3rd Dragoon Guards, 21st Cavalry, 6th Medium Regiment, and the 9th Field Regiment.

After Pakistan received its independence in 1948, John's services were terminated by the Pakistan Government. On his return to Australia he became Commissioner of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, an appointment that he gave up on receiving the rectorship of St. Nicholas. While in Canberra he was a member of the North Canberra Sub-Branch of the R.S.L.

THE DEATH OF CAVALRY CAPTAIN BARON MANFRED VON RICHTOFEN

Much controversy surrounds to whom credit should be given for the death of the German air-ace, Capt. Von Richtofen. The bald facts of the matter are, that at about 11.00 am on April 21, 1918, the red triplane flown by Von Richtofen crashed after an encounter with 2 aircraft of No. 209 Squadron, R.A.F. Richtofen, while chasing Canadian airman, Capt. W.R. May, was himself attacked by fellow Canadian airman Capt. A.R. Brown. After a burst of fire from Brown's aircraft the German machine flew for approximately one mile over Australian artillery emplacements and then crashed. No doubt existed with the Canadians that it was Capt. Brown's attack which downed Von Richtofen. This encounter took place a few hundred feet above the Australian lines at Vaux - sur - Somme, and was witnessed by hundreds of Allied and German troops.

Australian observers are in two groups - those who saw the Canadian aircraft attack the German considered Brown as being too high above and too far behind Von Richtofen to have been able to inflict the fatal burst of gunfire. The other group did not see Capt. Brown's machine at all, but saw only Von Richtofen chasing Capt. May. German written accounts of their hero's death make no mention of a third aircraft.

Major L.E. Beavis of 53rd. and Lt. J. Quinlan of 55th. Batteries, Australian Field Artillery both attest to the fact that Australian Lewis guns were fired rapidly and solidly at Von Richtofen as he came within close range. No doubt existed with the Australians that it was one of their guns which ended the German's career. C.E.W. Bean does his best to present all the evidence impartially, and includes the findings of the Australian Medical Officers who examined Von Richtofen's body. The air ace had been killed by one bullet passing through his chest. Bean's evidence favours the rightness of the Australian claim over that of the Canadians.

By November, 1918 Cpl. Conroy had been awarded a third Bar to his Military Medal.

This list copied from the 55th. Battalion's War Diary.

GALLANTRY AWARDS TO 55th. BATTALION, AUGUST - NOVEMBER, 1918.

Bar to Distinguished Service Order - Lt.Col. P.W. Woods, D.S.O., M.C.

Military Cross -

Capt. K.R. Wylie
 Capt. S.A. Pinkstone
 Lt. M.S. Hourn
 Lt. R. Ellsmore

Distinguished Conduct Medal -

3093 Sgt. F.B. Mackenzie
 2535 Cpl. R.E. Stewart *
 1676 Sgt. A.A. Kearns

Second Bar to Military Medal -

2413 Pte.(now Cpl.) E.A. Corey M.M. and Bar * ϕ

Military Medal -

3860	Sgt. Marshal, B.	2605	Pte. Muir, W.
2698	Pte. Mc Mahon, S.L.	1940	Pte. Lemon, H.M.
1188	Pte. Mc Donald, W. *	2535	Cpl. Stewart, R.E. (D.C.M.) *
5067	Pte. Diversi, S.L.	3822	Cpl. Hodges, H.
1738	Pte. Schwind, B.	2546	Cpl. Woodhart, E.G.
1756	Pte. Woods, E.G.	3347	L.Cpl. Auckland, A.
2704	Pte. Nicholls, W.G.	2151	Pte. Freebody, L.E.
1690	Pte. Marshall, J.P.	3188	Pte. Mc Innes, J.A.
3762	Pte. Bishop, W.H.	1168	Pte. Lewis, A.
2138	Pte. Cant, M.H.C. *	3030	L.Cpl. Campbell, G.M.
3736	Pte. Christie, W.N.	2849	L.Cpl. Nield, E.
2743	Pte. Sharpe, T.J. *	1681	Pte. Klein, H.C.
1695	Pte. Mc Alister, J.P.	2181	Pte. Olive, A.
2258	Pte. Yelds, S.D. *	2846	Pte. Murray, S.C.
1635	Pte. Cadd, A.E.	3604	Sgt. Peters, G.L.A. (D.C.M.)
1570	Pte. Street, E.H.		

"*" - Snowy River Marchers.

ϕ - By November, 1918 Cpl. Corey had been awarded a third Bar to his Military Medal.

This list copied from the 55th. Battalion's War Diary.



WAR MEMORIAL,
BERRIDALE, N.S.W.



WAR MEMORIAL,
COOMA, N.S.W.

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