



# *They Served With Honour*

Untold Stories of Western Australian Aboriginal Servicemen at Gallipoli




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Scattered across the Gallipoli Peninsula, the olive tree is a source of sustenance and a symbol of purity and peace. Prior to the outbreak of World War I, olive groves covered much of the landscape where battles would later rage. In the momentary lulls between the carnage, they not only provided shelter but also a place to rest and regain strength. Uprooted and misshapen, the trees that survived stand as a stark symbol to those who left their own country and were similarly disfigured. Only a small portion of the once plentiful olive groves remain, hidden beneath them and across the peninsula rest the stories of a different time.



A decorative graphic on the left side of the page, featuring a dark green leaf at the top left and a large, textured watercolor splash in shades of grey and white at the bottom left.

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Researched and written by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs Community Development Directorate, Aboriginal History Research Unit with contributions from staff and the families of the soldiers.

## Disclaimer

Whilst all reasonable care has been taken in compiling this publication, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs disclaims any liability for any errors or omissions in the publication. Readers are advised to carefully evaluate the accuracy, completeness and relevance of the publication for their purposes.

# The thirteen Western Australian Aboriginal Servicemen

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James Dickerson  
Lawrence Farmer  
Lewis Farmer  
Charles Hutchins  
William John Jackson  
Fred Lockyer  
Randell Mason  
William Mason  
Arthur McCallum  
James Melbourne  
Gordon Charles Naley  
Frederick Leslie Sayers  
Claude Shaw

*... They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them ...*

Laurence Binyon, Ode of Remembrance

## Cultural Protocols

The Western Australian Department of Aboriginal Affairs acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of this land. We pay our respect to Elders past and present, their descendants who are with us today, and those who will follow in their footsteps.

Aboriginal people are advised that this publication contains the names and images of deceased people.

The inclusion of words, terms or descriptions from historical records reflects the social attitudes of the period in which they were written. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs wishes to apologise for any distress that may occur.

# Contents

Introduction	8	Historical Context	38
Servicemen Biographies	10	Western Australia in 1914	38
James Dickerson	10	Where the Servicemen Came From (map)	39
Larry Farmer	12	Enlistment Process	40
Lewis Farmer	14	Training	40
Charles Hutchins	16	Western Australian Battalions	41
William John Jackson	18	The Journey to Egypt	41
Fred Lockyer	20	The Voyage (map)	42
Randell Mason	22	From Egypt to Gallipoli	43
William Mason	24	Treating the Sick and Wounded	44
Arthur McCallum	26	Hospital Ships	44
James Melbourne	28	To the Western Front	44
Gordon Charles Naley	30	Where the Servicemen Rest (map)	45
Frederick Leslie Sayers	32	Nominal Roll	46
Claude Shaw	34	Glossary	47-49
		Acknowledgements	50

# Introduction

*The death is reported from the Dardanelles of Private James Dickerson, who enlisted from this district. He was wounded, and while being conveyed to hospital for treatment died and was buried at sea.*

*Eastern Districts Chronicle (York, WA)  
1 October 1915*

Over the last decade, there has been a growing interest in Australia about the contribution made by Aboriginal men and women in times of war. Whilst their involvement in our nation's more recent conflicts is featured in many contemporary publications, little is known about Aboriginal service in World War I (1914-1918), and even less about their role at Gallipoli. It is estimated around fifty Aboriginal men fought during this Campaign. The stories of those who served have to a large extent remained untold or, in some cases, known only to the immediate families. Faced with the

prospect of losing these stories forever, comprehensive research has been undertaken to provide an insight into the lives of thirteen Aboriginal Western Australian servicemen who fought at Gallipoli.

Within days of the outbreak of World War I, recruiting places emerged across the country to accept volunteers eager to serve overseas. Men and women from all walks of life came to join the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) from towns and distant places. Western Australia was no different, contributing 32,231 men in total to the war effort. On a population basis, this number was proportionally greater than that of any other Australian state.

The reasons for enlisting are varied. Many of those who volunteered simply saw it as an opportunity to earn a regular wage and a way to make ends meet. Others looked at it as an event not to be missed, rallied on by the press that portrayed war service as fulfilling a sense of duty and patriotism. Some were caught up in the excitement of the moment, while others simply followed their 'mates'; light-hearted, confident, curious, and not easily discouraged. The training on Australian soil, on the journey over, and in the Mediterranean only strengthened their resolve to succeed and to return home. Their hopes were dashed upon stepping ashore at Gallipoli, where over

the ensuing nine months 8,700 Australian men had lost their lives, 19,000 were wounded and 700 were missing. Gallipoli had become part of the nation's vernacular and the ANZAC legend was born.

The opportunity to serve in the AIF gave Aboriginal people throughout the country the means to achieve a degree of equality never experienced before. At the time, Western Australian Aboriginal men had to contend with the restrictive *Aborigines Act of 1905* and the 1909 amendment to the *Defence Act 1903*, which exempted them from service on the basis of being 'persons who are not substantially of European origin or descent'. Although some initially enlisted when compliance with the Act was not so rigorously enforced, records reveal that a number of Aboriginal men were rejected from February 1916 through to May 1917 when the restrictions were relaxed to address the appalling loss of lives on the Western Front.

Gathering materials for the biographies through archival and genealogical research led to a number of unexpected surprises. Some of the families discovered their Aboriginal ancestry, while others were reunited, sharing cherished memories of the past with one another and with us. Stories range from a glimpse into the life of James Dickerson, the only Aboriginal serviceman who died during the Gallipoli campaign, to

a love story bridging two continents and two cultures, to the family who lost two of their four sons during World War I. The biographies provide a snapshot of an era that to a large extent has been overshadowed by the greater story of Gallipoli.

The experiences of the thirteen Western Australian Aboriginal servicemen at Gallipoli were similar to those of all others who served. They embarked with all the bravado of boys on an adventure, returning as broken men. Their shared sufferings of war were indelibly etched within them. For those who survived the horror and returned home, the equality experienced from the point of enlistment, to fighting shoulder to shoulder with their non-Aboriginal mates, was not accorded to them on discharge. Denied equal rights, their transition to civilian life was doubly traumatic, for military service had done little to enhance their ability to obtain full-time work and access the privileges available to wider society. As with the majority of those who served, Aboriginal soldiers also experienced significant health issues for the rest of their lives.

*They Served With Honour* is dedicated to the lives of those Western Australian Aboriginal men whose contributions at Gallipoli have never been fully known or acknowledged.



## James Dickerson

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Rank: Private 392  
Born: 10 November 1883, Gingin, Western Australia  
Service: 19 October 1914 to 30 August 1915  
Died: 30 August 1915 aboard HMHS Devanha,  
Mediterranean Sea

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**James Dickerson**, who was christened George James Dickerson, was born in the town of Gingin, Western Australia on 10 November 1883. He was the son of Mary Elizabeth Benyup [Banyup] and a labourer named George Dickerson. Prior to her marriage to George, Mary had been a domestic servant in the employ of John Parker, her first husband and father of three of her children. Mary was the daughter of a shepherd, Charles Brazley and Caroline whose Aboriginal name was Banyap.

Shortly after James was born, his father passed away in the Government Hospital in Perth, leaving Mary widowed for the second time in three years. Within one month of the event, James's three older half-siblings were admitted to the Swan Orphanage at Middle Swan (now Swanleigh) where they remained until their early teens when, having acquired basic domestic and labouring skills, they were sent out to work. Being only a child, James continued to be raised by his mother in the Gingin area and then the York district, where Mary had more children.

In 1892 the Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Board in Perth wrote to Bishop Salvado at New Norcia Mission about the possibility of placing James and his younger half-siblings. This, however, did not eventuate and he continued to reside in the York area, where in 1905 he won the District Handicap race in the annual sports meeting. On 25 September 1914 at the age of thirty, James was charged with having no visible means of support. At this time his property consisted of a knife, matches and an Art Union Ticket. The case was dismissed three days later.

James enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) at Guildford on 19 October, stating his occupation as a labourer. He joined the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment on 9 December, which, at the time had been in existence for less than two weeks. Following a short period of training, James embarked from Fremantle on 17 February 1915 aboard the HMAT *Surada* A52 along with approximately 200 other Western Australian troops who joined the 1,200 troops from the Eastern States already on board.

The ship reached the port of Suez on the evening of 21 March, and the troops disembarked the following day. A full day was then spent unloading the supplies prior to boarding a train to Cairo in Egypt. Upon arrival, the contingent walked ten miles to the camp at Mena leading their horses, which, having being corralled throughout the entire journey from Australia, were not fit to be ridden. Whilst in camp the troops were involved in additional training including physical exercise, stable duties, rifle work and marching.

On 16 May 1915, James sailed with the regiment from Alexandria, disembarking at Gallipoli six days later. During the next four weeks he was involved in front line action where 'plenty of bullets and shells were flying about'. A friend of his from York, writing from Gallipoli on 16 June, described James as 'a hard case and the life of our troop, liked by officers and men'.

James's Regiment, the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse, was involved in other action including the renowned battle at 'The Nek' on 7 August 1915, where thirty-six men from the Regiment died. Three weeks later, during the assault on Hill 60, James sustained a broken leg and life-threatening gunshot wounds. He was initially treated at the British 16<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station on the Peninsula before being evacuated on the HMHS *Devanha*, a troop carrier that had previously been utilised to transport soldiers from the island of Mudros to Gallipoli.

The following day on 30 August 1915, James Dickerson died from his wounds. Like many others who passed away on board a vessel, he was buried at sea, his resting place being eighty kilometres west of Cape Matapan, off the southern coast of Greece. At the time of his death his personal effects consisted of an identification disk, a fountain pen and a pair of scissors.

In early September the military authorities informed his mother by telegram that her son had passed away. Mary accordingly received a pension of £10 per year from 2 November for the loss of her son. In April 1916 she wrote to the Defence Department in Melbourne seeking a death certificate to settle his estate, and in January 1921 wrote another letter asking for her son's medals, which she duly received.

Three years after James's death, his mother, sisters and brother Harry, who was at the time on active service on the Western Front, placed the following notice in the 'In Memoriam' column of *The West Australian* newspaper:

*May the heavenly winds blow softly. O'er the sweet and hallowed spot. Though the sea divides his grave from us. He'll never be forgotten.*

On Mary's passing, *The Northam Advertiser* 16 February 1927 acknowledged the 'supreme sacrifice' of two of her sons who died in World War I as well as a third son invalided home.

Never to be forgotten, James's name appears on the York Methodist Church Honour Board and the York War Memorial, the Western Australian State War Memorial, Lone Pine Memorial on the Gallipoli Peninsula, and the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial.

Private James Dickerson was awarded the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal for his military service.

James Dickerson was the only Western Australian Aboriginal serviceman to die during the Gallipoli Campaign.

## Larry Farmer

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Rank: Private 621  
Born: March 1894, Katanning, Western Australia  
Service: 13 March 1915 to 6 August 1916  
Died: Between 4 and 6 August 1916, France

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**Larry Farmer**, who was also known as 'Pincher', was born in Katanning, Western Australia in March 1894. He was the third of eight sons born to William Pegg Farmer and Emily Coyne who were of Aboriginal descent. Larry's father was a highly respected land guide in the Katanning area whose mother was linked to the Beverley district, whilst his mother's family came from the Bremer Bay area.

Larry was raised and educated in Katanning where he gained a reputation as a talented footballer, winning a gold medal in the 1911 football season. He was voted second best on the ground in the final match between the town's north and south teams the following year.

As a teenager Larry served an apprenticeship of three-and-a-half years with Katanning coachbuilders Mouritz Brothers, acquiring a wide range of mechanical, upholstering and painting skills. When he enlisted in Australian Imperial Force (AIF) on 13 March 1915 in Bridgetown, some 140 kilometres south west of his birthplace, Larry had been working in the timber industry and described himself as a labourer. On proceeding to Perth, Larry obtained a letter signed by his father in Katanning agreeing to let his son 'go on active service'.

Following a period of training at Blackboy Hill, Larry joined the 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 16 April 1915. Along with his fellow troopers, Larry embarked from Fremantle on 9 June aboard the HMAT *Ascanius* A11 bound for Egypt. His younger brother Lewis, along with Randell Mason and Charles Hutchins, whose life stories also appear in this book, travelled with him. The voyage was devoid of incident until they reached the Gulf of Suez, where on 29 June 1915, they encountered the HMAT *Ballarat* A70 carrying wounded soldiers returning home to Australia.

*The sight of the injured troops alerted them to the daunting situation ahead.*

The 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion disembarked at the port of Suez after a voyage of twenty days and journeyed on to Cairo by train where they commenced two months of training at nearby Abbassia. On 4 September, Larry embarked aboard SS *Ivernia* from Alexandria and arrived at Gallipoli four days later. Over the next three months, in addition to losing men during the fighting, the Battalion lost more than one third of its troops from sickness including typhoid, jaundice, pneumonia and rheumatism. Following the Allied evacuation of Gallipoli in December 1915, the 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion proceeded to the Greek island of Lemnos where they remained until 10 January 1916, when they were transported back to Alexandria on the *HT Ansonia*.

Following two month's rest, Larry sailed for Marseille in France with the 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion, arriving on 16 March. While engaged in the Battle of Pozieres, Larry Farmer was killed in action. His brother Lewis was wounded in the same location and was evacuated to the Wandsworth Military Hospital in London. Prior to his untimely passing, Larry had not experienced any illness or hospital admission, suggesting he remained fit throughout his military career.

Little detail exists regarding the specific circumstances of Larry's death, other than that he was killed in action. In September 1916 the Katanning *Great Southern Herald* newspaper reported that his parents had 'received the sad intelligence' that their son, whom the paper described as a 'prominent member of Katanning South Football Club', had been killed. The following week, a note of thanks from his parents and family was published for the 'cards, letters and expressions of sympathy received on their sad bereavement at the loss of their son Larry killed in action in France'. Two months later the newspaper also published a letter it had received from a Katanning correspondent situated at the front, which mentioned Larry's passing along with other news about the local 'lads'.

On 23 October 1916, Larry's mother Emily received a military pension of 40s per fortnight for the loss of her son. In January 1919, she also received a package of his personal effects, namely, a tin containing cigarette cards, a pipe, a belt, collapsible cup and a piece of a comb. A memorial scroll was received in September 1921.

Larry Farmer's name is on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial in France, the National War Memorial, Western Australian State War Memorial, and the Katanning State School Honour Board alongside his brothers Lewis, Kenneth, and Augustus; who was also killed in action in France.

Private Larry Farmer was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal for his military service.

## Lewis Farmer

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Rank: Private 421  
Born: February 1896, Katanning Western Australia  
Service: 9 March 1915 to 10 June 1919  
Died: 23 August 1946, Katanning, Western Australia

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**Lewis Farmer** was born in Katanning, Western Australia in February 1896. He was the fourth son of William Pegg Farmer and Emily Coyne who were of Aboriginal descent. Lewis's father William was a highly respected land guide in the Katanning area, whose mother was linked to the Beverley district; whilst his mother's family came from the Bremer Bay area.

Lewis was raised and educated in Katanning where he was an active member of the Senior Cadets and the Katanning Football Club. On 28 December 1914, Lewis enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) at Katanning. He joined the 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion at Blackboy Hill in March the following year, and trained with the 11<sup>th</sup> Company Australian Garrison Artillery at Arthur's Head in Fremantle. On 9 June Lewis embarked at Fremantle on the HMAT *Ascanius* A11 for Egypt along with his older brother Larry, Randell Mason and Charles Hutchins, whose life stories also appear in this book.

Following another period of training, the Battalion journeyed to Gallipoli aboard the transport SS *Ivernia* on 4 September. Over the next three months, sickness including typhoid, jaundice, pneumonia and rheumatisms accounted for more than one-third of the Battalion's casualties. After the evacuation of Gallipoli in December 1915, the 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion proceeded to the Greek island of Lemnos where they remained until 10 January 1916 when they were transported back to Alexandria.

On 21 January, Lewis was admitted to the No. 2 Australian General Hospital in Cairo with a severe arm infection and re-admitted to the No. 4 Auxiliary Hospital in nearby Abbassia one month later. Upon re-joining his Battalion, Lewis departed from Alexandria for Marseille in France with the British Expeditionary Force on 16 March. While engaged in the Battle of Pozieres in early August he received a gunshot wound to the leg and was 'evacuated sick' to Wandsworth Military Hospital in London for treatment. His brother Larry was killed in the same battle.

Lewis returned to France and re-joined his Battalion on 18 December, only to be re-admitted to hospital one month later with trench feet. He was evacuated to the War Hospital in Reading, England, where he remained for almost three months. While in hospital Lewis was recommended for the Distinguished Combat Medal for 'good work in France.'

From 3 April to 18 September 1917, Lewis was with the 70<sup>th</sup> Battalion at Wareham in England alongside other Western Australians. In October he returned to the 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion in France where he was engaged in further action. On 6 April 1918 Lewis was again hospitalised with influenza. After a period of convalescence, Lewis returned to serve at the front through to 19 October when he took two weeks leave in England. He then returned to France where he remained until 20 January 1919, when he returned to England.

Lewis embarked for Australia on the HMAT *Anchises* A68 on 28 February 1919 and berthed in Albany on 7 April. The troopship brought home the largest single contingent of returning soldiers to Western Australia. On arrival they were admitted to the local quarantine station for three days as a precautionary measure against Spanish influenza. Lewis returned to Katanning by train on 10 April where he and his fellow servicemen received a warm welcome by the 'Troop Train Entertainment Committee'.

Within two months of landing, Lewis was playing football again and scored two goals in his first match with the Katanning Wanderers club against Broomehill. On 10 June 1919 he was discharged from the AIF. Lewis remained in the district where over the next fifteen years he was employed in a variety of positions ranging from a linesman for the Telegraph Postal Department to an assistant with the local butcher.

*Like many Aboriginal servicemen who fought during World War I, Lewis encountered great difficulty in attaining equal rights, including access to the local Returned and Services League (RSL) club.*

In May 1938, Lewis wrote to Alec Thomson MLC seeking his assistance to enable him and his brother, Kenneth, access to licensed premises and not 'to be treated generally as an Aborigine'. Lewis stated he was prepared to return his medals in protest if the request was denied. Harold Piesse, his local Member of Parliament, and W.P. Bird (JP), provided letters of support. In September 1938 Lewis was issued with an Exemption Certificate.

By mid-1939 Lewis was living with his mother in Katanning where he received an invalid pension. On 23 August 1946, Lewis Farmer, aged 50 years, passed away at the Katanning District Hospital from kidney failure. He was buried with full military honours at the Katanning cemetery with the RSL executives and ex-servicemen from both World Wars in attendance.

Two years after his passing, the Commissioner for Native Affairs, S.G. Middleton, wrote to the Farmer family requesting the return of their Exemption Certificates deeming they were no longer recognised as Aboriginal under the prevailing legislation.

Never to be forgotten, Lewis Farmer's name appears on the National War Memorial in Canberra, the Western Australian War Memorial, and the Katanning State School Honour Board alongside his brothers Larry and Augustus who were killed in action in France, and Kenneth who returned home.

Private Lewis Farmer was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal for his military service.

## Charles Hutchins

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Rank: Private 307  
Born: Circa 1892, Busselton Area, Western Australia  
Service: 6 March 1915 to 9 March 1921  
Died: 16 August 1952, Kogarah, New South Wales

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**Charles Hutchins** was born in the Busselton area of Western Australia around 1892. He was the son of Annie Harris and a bush worker Charles Hutchins. Annie was the daughter of a highly respected stock-hunter and farm hand Timothy Harris and Caroline Mulaney who were both of Aboriginal descent.

By the age of three Charles had been placed in the Vasse Native and Half Caste Mission under the care of Charles Layman and his wife, Catherine (nee Guerin). Following the death of Charles Layman in 1900, Charles was fostered by Catherine's sister - Eleanor Guerin, a teacher and boarding house keeper in Busselton. The Chief Protector of Aborigines in Perth provided Eleanor 4p a day for maintenance, as well as a suit of clothes and a blanket each year.

Charles attended the Busselton State School from around 1902 through to 1907 along with Frederick Leslie Sayers, whose story also appears in this book. Later on, the two were both members of the Busselton Scout Troop.

Prior to enlisting with the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in Bunbury on 5 March 1915, Charles had been working as a mill hand at Kirup, some 50 kilometres to the east of Busselton. On his application form he listed Lucy Pries, another sister of Catherine and Eleanor, as his guardian. Within 24 hours Charles had made his way to Blackboy Hill where he commenced training, and on 2 June 1915 was assigned to the 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

On 9 June 1915, Charles embarked on the HMAT *Ascanius A11* at Fremantle, along with Larry and Lewis Farmer and James Dickerson, whose life stories also appear in this book. Following a voyage of twenty days, during which time some forty to fifty soldiers contracted measles or influenza, the contingent arrived at the port of Suez in Egypt and then travelled by train through to Cairo on 2 July. While camped at nearby Abbassia, the Battalion underwent further training before moving on to Gallipoli from Alexandria on the SS *Ivernia* on 4 September. Some seven weeks after landing, Charles was admitted to hospital at Anzac Cove suffering from debility, which developed into enteric fever (typhoid). On 7 November, he was evacuated to Alexandria and then on to Netley Hospital in England.

Charles remained in England for the next twelve months during which time he was attached to the AIF Headquarters and then the 7<sup>th</sup> Tunnelling Battalion prior to returning to action. On 26 May 1917, Charles was admitted to hospital with trench fever. Upon being discharged he returned to the front line in Belgium, where on 20 September Charles sustained near fatal gunshot wounds to his thigh, leg and arm and was severely affected by mustard gas.

He was immediately admitted to the No. 3 General Hospital in Boulogne, France in a serious condition, where, with his life in the balance, he received Holy Communion. On 19 December, Charles was transferred to England to the No. 2 London General Hospital in Chelsea where he remained

until 21 December the following year. Prior to being discharged, Charles received an invitation from Lord Chamberlain to attend a function in the State Apartments at Windsor Castle.

During his time convalescing, Charles met Rose Edith Elsley, a voluntary worker whom he married on 19 March 1919 whilst absent from leave from his base at Weymouth. As a consequence, he was charged for 'evading embarkation' and penalised a total of forty-eight days pay.

On 19 April 1919, Charles left England as an 'invalid' aboard the HMAT *Marathon A74* and disembarked at Fremantle at the end of May. His wife, Rose, arrived six months later on board the HMAT *Mahana*. Upon settling in Perth, Charles continued to receive medical treatment until at least November 1920, and was discharged from the AIF on 9 March 1921.

The couple remained in Perth until 1945 when they moved to New South Wales to reside close to their daughter Marjorie Doreen, who had married a returned serviceman the previous year. Crippled by the wounds to his leg and the effects of mustard gas, Charles struggled with work, and in the later years of his life, survived on a small war pension from the Repatriation Department.

Charles Hutchins passed away at St George Hospital at Kogarah, New South Wales, on 16 August 1952 aged 59 years.

*His ashes were returned to  
Western Australia and are  
scattered along with those  
of his wife in the Swan River  
in Perth.*

Private Charles Hutchins was awarded the 1914-1915 Star, British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal for his military service.



## William John Jackson

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Rank: Private 1952  
Born: Circa 1884, Bunbury area, Western Australia  
Service: 24 June 1915 to 18 November 1916  
Died: Between 16 and 18 November 1916, France

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**William 'Bill' John Jackson** was born in the Bunbury area of Western Australia around 1884. He was the son of Matthew Jackson, a member of a pioneering family, and Louisa White who was also known as Corbecan. Louisa was the daughter of William White, a sawyer, and an Aboriginal woman named Mary Cabelgan.

Bill was initially raised by his mother in Western Australia's South West region and later in the Fremantle area, where in March 1895, Louisa was cautioned by the police for a minor misdemeanour. Nine months after this event, Bill was taken from Subiaco to New Norcia Mission, approximately 110 kilometres north of Perth, by Bishop Rosendo Salvado where he remained for two years before being reunited with his mother. Over the next two years, Bill and his mother lived at various locations including Fremantle, York and Bayswater.

In February 1899, Bill was placed in a home or individual school, while a decision was being made on his future well-being. Seven years later Bill returned to New Norcia where he married Matilda Newman, the daughter of a station worker Alfred Newman and Mary Cubin (or Bibin) of the Israelite Bay area. Matilda had been admitted to the Mission in 1902 at the age of twelve, under the name of Lucy Wear-Newman.

The couple moved from one location to another over the next eight years in search of work, during which time they had four children. Immediately prior to enlisting in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) Perth on 24 June 1915, Bill was employed in the brickworks at Limestone House in Fremantle. Following a period of routine training at Blackboy Hill he was appointed to the 3rd Reinforcements of the 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion and on 21 August, a little under a fortnight later, departed for Egypt aboard the HMAT *Anchises*.

On 12 October, Bill proceeded on to Gallipoli with his fellow troopers. Shortly after their arrival, the weather became bitterly cold with the onset of winter. During the month of October five men were killed, four died of wounds, twenty-seven were wounded and 137 suffered from various illnesses. Snow fell for the first time in late November which proved to be a new experience for many of the Western Australians.

In early December the 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion was evacuated to the Greek island of Lemnos as part of the allied exodus from the Peninsula. Following a period of two months convalescence whilst the troops regained their health and strength, the Battalion returned to Egypt where they spent the next two months training and holding positions in the Suez Canal defence line. On 16 March 1916, Bill embarked for France and arrived at Marseilles five days later as a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Division. Upon disembarking, the troops travelled north by train where they were involved in action at Armentieres in early April, and then at Pozieres in late July and early August. The 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion sustained 370 casualties in this campaign, including Larry Farmer who's story also appears in this book.

On 7 November, Bill was admitted to the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance Hospital near Mametz with trench feet as a result of his prolonged exposure to the damp and unsanitary conditions. Extracts from Bill's diary describe the perilous situation in which the soldiers found themselves, with his last entry being, 'It is bad here - the conditions are dreadful, I think we will be lucky to see tomorrow'.

Upon being discharged from hospital, Bill Jackson returned to the front line where the conditions were described as atrocious and was killed in action less than one week later between 16 and 18 November 1916. He was thirty-two years old.

A year after Bill's death, his widow and cousins the Newell family of Roelands and Guildford placed articles in the In Memorium column of the *West Australian newspaper*. The more poignant of these reads:

*He said goodbye to his comrades,  
Friends and relative too;  
He proudly put on the khaki;  
And crossed the ocean blue.  
He heard the great guns roaring.  
The scream of shot and shell;  
Like many a bravely Australian,  
Somewhere in France he fell.*

In August 1919, Matilda received her husband's personal effects from the military authorities, which included a lock of hair. One year later she was asked to provide a 'personal inscription' for his headstone. In reply Matilda wrote:

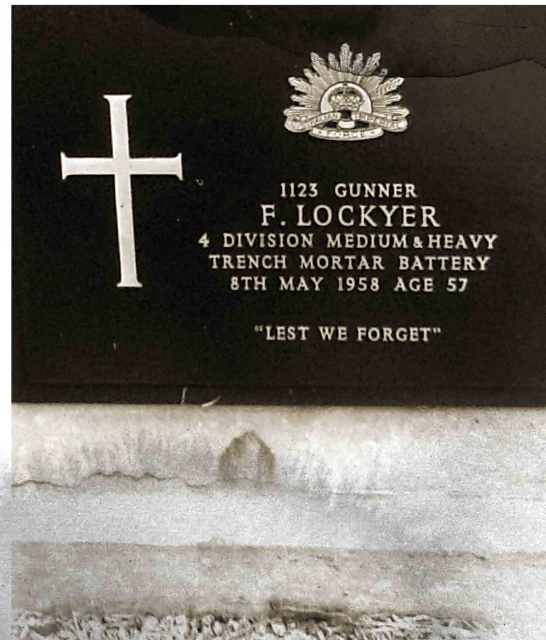
*Loved in life, Honoured in Death,  
and Cherished in memory.*

William 'Bill' John Jackson is remembered with inscriptions at Villers-Bretonneux, the Australian War Memorial, the Western Australian State War Memorial, ANZAC Way in Albany and a memorial plaque at Point Walter, Perth.

Private William John Jackson was awarded with the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal for his service, and his family received a Memorial Scroll.

## Fred Lockyer

Rank: Private 1123  
Born: Circa 1896, Perth, Western Australia  
Service: 4 May 1915 to 10 March 1920  
Died: 8 May 1958, Redfern, New South Wales



**Fred Lockyer** was born in Perth, Western Australia, around 1896 to Winifred 'Winnie' Lockyer and a man whose identity has not been established. Winnie was the daughter of a well-known pioneering pastoralist George Joseph Lockyer and an Aboriginal woman Ina Maddahan from the Roebourne area.

At the age of three Fred was placed in the Swan Native and Half Caste Mission (now Swanleigh) in Middle Swan by his mother, who was working at the time as a domestic for the Strickland family on St Georges Terrace. Fred remained in the care of the Mission until he was sixteen years of age when he was sent out to work. In June 1914 he was found guilty of a minor offence at the Narrogin Children's Court and committed to an Industrial School in Perth until he was eighteen years old.

On 4 May 1915, Fred enlisted with the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in Perth giving his occupation as a labourer, and stated J.W. Armstrong, the manager of the Swan Native and Half Case Mission and nearby Redhill Industrial School, as his next of kin. Following a period of seven weeks routine training he was appointed to the 7<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements of the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment.

On 2 July, Fred embarked from Fremantle on board the HMAT *Kanowna* A61, and arrived in Egypt at the end of the month. Following further training, Fred proceeded to Gallipoli on 2 October where he was involved in action from the beginning of October through to early December, when he was evacuated to Alexandria on the HMAT *Karoo* with other Allied troops.

Fred remained in Egypt for the next six months during which time he served with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Horse Reserve Regiment at Heliopolis prior to being transferred to the 4<sup>th</sup> Australian Division Heavy Trench Mortar Battery at Serepeum on 1 April 1916. On 13 July, Fred embarked on the HMAT *Oriana* and proceeded to Marseilles, France, arriving six days later. Along with other sections of the Artillery Divisions, Fred travelled north by train to Ypres on the border of France and Belgium. Over the next three months the Battery was engaged in action at Pozieres and Mouquet Farm, followed by Flers later that year. On Easter Monday, 9 April 1917, the Battery was involved in the breaching of the Hindenburg Line that led to the capture of Bullecourt.

On 3 May 1917, Fred suffered extensive bruising as result of a shell explosion at Boulogne and was briefly hospitalised at the Australian General Base Depot at Rouelles. Upon discharge he joined the ANZAC Salvage Corps Company and remained with them until 29 July when he was evacuated to England where he was attached to the Australian ANZAC Ordinance Corps Depots at Millwall and Weymouth. On 23 February 1918, Fred was admitted to Harefield 1st Auxiliary Hospital with influenza, re-joining his unit for a short period before being admitted to the Hill End Military Hospital in June.

Fred remained with the Ordinance Corps through to November 1919 when he was granted indefinite leave. In December he wrote to the Australian Defence Department seeking to be discharged from the AIF whilst in England rather than upon return to Australia, as his wife Lily (nee Harris), who he had married four months earlier in Stepney, London, was unfit to travel. As further qualification he added:

*'I have no parents in Australia  
being an orphan'.*

His request was accepted and Fred was formally discharged, having served for four years and 311 days.

Following his return to Australia in May 1930, Fred wrote to the Defence Department from Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, in order to obtain a copy of his discharge certificate. He was to repeat the request some eight years later while residing in nearby Wellington.

Fred Lockyer passed away in the Sydney suburb of Redfern on 8 May 1958, approximately 62 years of age, unaware that he had three younger half-siblings who were raised in Western Australia. He was buried at the Macquarie Park Cemetery and a Commonwealth Memorial Plaque has been placed where he rests.

Fred's name appears on the Swan Native and Half Caste Mission (now Swanleigh) Honour Board where he has the distinction of being the first of the fourteen 'old boys' of Aboriginal descent to have enlisted to serve in World War I, and the only one to have served at Gallipoli.

Private Fred Lockyer was awarded with the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal for his military service.

## Randell Mason

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Rank: Private 897  
Born: 18 September 1876, Mortigallup, Western Australia  
Service: 15 March 1915 to 8 March 1917  
Died: 27 July 1954, Perth, Western Australia

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**Randell Mason** was born at Mortigallup, 80 kilometres north-west of Albany in Western Australia, on 18 September 1876. He was the third of eight children born to Fanny Harris and a Cambridge-educated shepherd William Bonworth Mason, who were married in 1872. Fanny was the daughter of a sealer John Harris and Towser, an Aboriginal woman from the Portland Bay area in Victoria. Born at sea near Kangaroo Island, South Australia, Fanny was educated at the Annesfield School for Aboriginal children in Albany from 1852 through to 1859.

Randell and his siblings were raised on Mollialup Station in the Mortigallup area, which their father leased from his employer, the well-known Hassell family. As they were growing up, the children assisted their parents in maintaining and developing the property. In addition to this, the Mason brothers were also involved in a range of ventures throughout the district, including the shooting of kangaroos for their hides. A capable athlete, Randell competed locally and was amongst those who ran in the Sheffield Handicap race at the Mount Barker sports day in 1912.

Randell and his older brother Henry enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) at Katanning on 4 January 1915. On his application, Randell stated that he was a labourer by trade. On 15 March the two brothers joined the 13th Depot Company at Blackboy Hill and one month later were assigned to the 1st Reinforcements of the 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion. During this period they were involved in routine training and acquiring a thorough knowledge of the use of the rifle, bayonet and spade. Physical exercises and short marches were also undertaken.

On 29 June 1915, Randell sailed from Fremantle bound for Alexandria, Egypt, aboard the HMAT *Ascanius* A11 with fellow Aboriginal servicemen Larry and Lewis Farmer, and Charles Hutchins; whose stories are also featured in this book. After a journey of twenty days the Battalion arrived at the port of Suez and then travelled by train through to Cairo on 2 July 1915.

Upon arrival they proceeded to nearby Abbassia to undergo further physical and military manoeuvres training with other troops from Western Australia. On 4 September, Randell boarded the SS *Ivernia* at Alexandria along with about 2,000 others and upon berthing at Lemnos boarded a smaller landing craft to complete their journey to Gallipoli. Within 24 hours they had moved to the front where the Battalion came under direct artillery fire. By the end of the month thirteen men had been killed, nine died of wounds, forty-six were wounded and thirty-five evacuated sick during their defence of the Apex. In October the Battalion was involved in further defensive work in the Cheshire Ridge area during which time a further four men were killed, four dying of wounds, twenty-seven wounded and 137 evacuated due to illness.

On 7 November, Randell was hospitalised at ANZAC Cove Hospital with diarrhoea and evacuated to Lemnos six days later where he was admitted to the 24<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance with dysentery. In early December, he was discharged to the convalescent camp where he remained for a fortnight before spending time at the Overseas Base on the island. On 7 January 1916, Randell was transferred to the Australian Overseas Base in Ghezireh near Cairo where more than 1,000 Australian troops were assembled as their

units were reorganised and built up to strength. In March 1916, Randell was diagnosed with influenza and was admitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian General Hospital at Heliopolis for treatment.

Upon recuperating, Randell departed from Alexandria on the HMHS *Tunisian* on 29 May and disembarked at Marseilles, France, six days later. At the time, the 28th Battalion was serving in the Bois Grenier area in northern France and the Messines area in southern Belgium. In late July the Battalion moved south to the Somme area where it was involved in a series of attacks on German trenches north of the village of Pozières. The troops also provided support to other battalions of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade prior to being relieved on 6 August.

Randell experienced subsequent illnesses and was hospitalised at the 26<sup>th</sup> General Hospital at Etaples France. On 7 August he was evacuated to England where he was diagnosed with tachycardia, an elevated heart rate. On 17 October, Randell embarked from England on the HMAT *Ajana* A31 and arrived at Fremantle on 8 December 1916. Three months later he was medically discharged from the AIF suffering from neurasthenia, a nervous condition related to his war service.

Randell returned to the Tenterden area of Western Australia, and in 1919 married local girl Stella Kathleen Herbert who went on to become the first female motor cycle license holder in the State. The couple had two children: Daniel and Lillian, before separating two years later. Randell remained in the area where he was employed as a farm hand and fencer and an odd-jobs

man for the local council. An accomplished musician, Randell often performed in Mortigallup, including events in support of Australia's effort in World War II.

Around 1950, Randell moved to Perth to reside with his sister and her husband in Mount Hawthorn. Living off his service pension of 45s per fortnight, Randell shared a room with his nephew Phillip Jnr, the son of his youngest brother. In recalling memories of his uncle, Phillip described Randell as a good-hearted man who was full of character and as 'tough as old nails'. Phillip also recalled that Randell was affected both physically and mentally from his military service, most noticeably as a result of his exposure to mustard gas. Phillip's recollections of Randell playing the accordion as well as the violin are vivid, equally is revelling in the fact that;

*'wherever we went, we had music'.*

On 14 July 1954, Randell Mason was struck by a motor vehicle whilst crossing Scarborough Beach Road in Mount Hawthorn and passed away thirteen days later at Royal Perth Hospital. An enquiry into the accident later established that his death was due to bronchial pneumonia brought on by the injuries he had sustained. He is buried at Karrakatta Cemetery in the same grave as his brother William.

Private Randell Mason was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal in recognition of his military career.

## William Mason

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Rank: Private 810  
Born: 22 December 1880, Mortigallup, Western Australia  
Service: 4 January 1915 to 10 October 1918  
Died: 30 November 1956, Perth, Western Australia

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**William 'Bill' Mason** was born at Mortigallup, Western Australia on 22 December 1880. He was the fifth of eight children born to an Aboriginal woman Fanny Harris and a Cambridge-educated shepherd William Bonworth Mason, who were married in 1872. Fanny was the daughter of sealer John Harris and Towser, an Aboriginal woman from the Portland Bay area in Victoria. Born at sea near Kangaroo Island South Australia, Fanny was educated at the Annesfield School for Aboriginal children in Albany from 1852 through to 1859.

Bill and his siblings were raised on Mollialup Station in the Mortigallup area which their father leased from his employer - the well-known Hassell family. As they were growing up, the children assisted their parents in maintaining and developing the property. In addition to this, Bill and his brothers were also involved in a range of ventures throughout the district including shooting kangaroos for their hides. Between 1908 and 1912, Bill acquired 1,835 acres in the Plantagenet area while residing in nearby Tenterden.

Prior to enlisting in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in Albany on 31 December 1914, Bill spent £189 on fencing his property; presumably to keep stock of the wild brumbies that he tamed in his spare time. His nephew Phillip recalls 'Uncle Bill' as a man who exhibited all of the patience in the world, and was known as the horse whisperer of the family for his ability to 'speak to' the wild horses, and in particular, the brumby that he named Kondinin. On his application papers Bill stated that he had served an apprenticeship as a blacksmith in Cunderdin 130 kilometres east of Perth and almost 300 kilometres to the north of the remainder of the family.

Within a week of enlisting, Bill had arrived at the Blackboy Hill camp where he commenced his training. On 11 February he was appointed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reinforcements of 10<sup>th</sup> Australian Light Horse Regiment at Guildford, where he received specialist training including bayonet exercises, horse master ship, scouting, reconnaissance tactics, advanced flank and rear-guard work and field firing right up to the day of departing on the HMAT *Itonus* A50 from Fremantle on the 22 February. Also on board was fellow Western Australian, Lieutenant Hugo Throssell, who was later awarded a Victoria Cross for his effort during battle at Gallipoli.

After disembarking at the port of Suez on 17 March, Bill boarded the train to Cairo, Egypt, and onto Abbassia, where he underwent additional training. On 15 May he travelled through to Alexandria and the following day departed for Gallipoli on board the Lutzow, which had been captured from the Germans. The 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse commenced disembarkation at ANZAC Cove six days later and made their way through to Monash Gully. On 25 May they made their way through to Quinn's Post where they were involved in action.

Bill was at Gallipoli for two days when, due to the poor conditions, his eyes were plugged up with dirt and he was evacuated to Heliopolis in Egypt where he remained for seven weeks. On 1 August, Bill returned to Gallipoli to re-join his unit participating in the assault on Walker's Ridge, which he graphically described in a poem that was published in the *Sunday Times* on 9 January 1916. On 20 September, Bill was hospitalised with influenza, and on being discharged was involved in the assault on Hill 60 where another Western Australian Aboriginal serviceman, James Dickerson, was seriously wounded and died the next

day. On 23 October, as the weather deteriorated, Bill again contracted influenza and was evacuated the following day to the Greek island of Lemnos. Two days later he was transferred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian General Hospital at Ghezirah in Cairo where he was diagnosed with debility and then colitis, an inflammation of the lining of the colon.

Bill was discharged in late November, and spent a number of weeks at the Ras el-Tin convalescence home in Alexandria, before being transferred to the Overseas Base in Cairo in December. Whilst there, he contracted tonsillitis and was admitted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian General Hospital on 6 February 1916. Eight days later, Bill was admitted to the Red Cross Convalescence Hospital at the Montazah Palace in Alexandria, from where he returned to the base the following month. In late July he was admitted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian General Hospital in Cairo with debility for the second time.

On 10 August 1916, Bill was again transferred to the Red Cross Convalescence Hospital for one month. His medical case sheet reads:

*'looks as though he has had a rough time - only fit for work in base stores. Needs building up.'*

On 3 September, Bill returned to duty only to be admitted to the same hospital nine days later with Nile fever, which caused back and leg pain, headaches and tiredness. On 26 October Bill was admitted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian General Hospital with a septic wound to the leg before being discharged in November to Australian Depot Stores in Cairo, where he remained until the end of January 1917.

Bill was hospitalised on six more occasions throughout 1917 and 1918 with various ailments including septic sores and debility. When not in hospital he continued to serve at the Australian Depot Stores until he embarked on the HMAT *Wiltshire* A18 at Port Said on 30 August 1918. On 24 September, Bill disembarked at Fremantle and on 10 October 1918, was discharged from the AIF.

Bill returned to his property which he held until September 1923 when the Agricultural Bank repossessed them. At the time improvements to the properties consisted of 170 chains of fencing, the building of two dams, and an iron humpy with a jarrah weatherboard lean-to. It is presumed that Bill resided here whilst carrying out the improvements.

Bill spent most of the next fifteen years in the South West region where he continued to work with horses; however, as his health deteriorated he was no longer able to pursue an active interest. From the mid-1940s onward, Bill spent time living in Perth with relatives and passed away in November 1956 aged 76 years. Bill Mason is buried at Karrakatta Cemetery in the same grave as his brother Randell.

Private William Mason was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal for his military service.



## Arthur Edward McCallum

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Rank: Private 165  
Born: March 1889, Albany, Western Australia  
Service: 9 September 1914 to 17 February 1919  
Died: 1 April 1930, Morawa, Western Australia

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**Arthur Edward McCallum** was born in Albany, Western Australia in March 1889. He was the eldest son of Arthur Edward McCallum, a council worker, and Mary-Ann Colefax, the daughter of an Aboriginal woman named Phoebe Youngetshan and an expirée John Colefax. Phoebe was educated at the Annesfield School for Aboriginal children in Albany established by Henry and Anne Camfield.

Prior to enlisting in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) at Blackboy Hill on 9 September 1914, Arthur had been employed by the Public Works Department at Goomalling. Following a period of routine training, including squad drilling and rifle exercises, he was appointed to the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion in October. Along with his fellow troopers, Arthur was given a leave break prior to embarking to Melbourne the following month. The troops were transported to the Broadmeadows Camp upon arrival, to complete their organisation and advanced training.

Following a march through the city on 17 December, which was reviewed by the Governor General Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, 1,011 men from the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion boarded the HMAT *Ceramic A40* five days later, bound for Egypt. After a journey of six weeks they arrived in Alexandria and travelled on to Heliopolis near Cairo where the Battalion underwent further training. On 11 April 1915 they returned to Alexandria where they boarded the troopship *Haidar Pasha* for Gallipoli. Prior to reaching their intended destination, the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion spent ten days on the Greek island of Lemnos practicing landing procedures in preparation for the assault on Gallipoli.

At about 6.00pm on 25 April, 995 men from the Battalion landed at Anzac Cove. Within seven days 346 men had been killed in action. By roll call on 3 May only nine officers and 298 non-commissioned officers remained of the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion. During their time at Gallipoli, the soldiers were engaged in heavy fighting at Bloody Angle, Deadman's Gully, Pope's Hill, Quinn' Post and Suvla Bay.

Arthur survived the initial assault at Gallipoli only to be evacuated to the No. 2 Stationary Hospital at Mudros on 16 June with bronchitis and ulcerations to the mouth, and upon recovering he returned to his unit. In August, the Battalion sustained further casualties at Hill 971 and Hill 60 where the condition of many of the troops was described as being 'at the limits of their endurance'. On 19 October, Arthur was re-admitted to hospital at Mudros with jaundice, where he remained until late December, before being evacuated to the 1<sup>st</sup> Auxiliary Hospital in Alexandria suffering from influenza. In early January 1916, Arthur was transferred to Cairo where, over the next four months, he was again hospitalised a number of times.

On 26 April Arthur joined the 48<sup>th</sup> Battalion and travelled to France in June from Alexandria. Whilst in France he fought in a number of battles including those at Pozieres and Mouquet Farm. In August, Arthur was admitted to hospital with nasal haemorrhaging and deafness, and upon recovering he re-joined the Battalion. He remained in the field for the next four months before taking leave in England in December and a month later he returned to France.

On 28 March 1918 while fighting in France, Arthur received gunshot wounds to his head, left thigh and left hand. He received treatment and was initially admitted to the 18<sup>th</sup> General Hospital in Camiers before being transferred to the Kitchener Military Hospital in Brighton, England where he remained for six weeks. When discharged on 17 May, he took two weeks leave before proceeding to Sutton Venny for training and then on to Deverill where he transferred to the Machine Gun Training Depot.

Arthur returned to France on 12 September, where he joined the 4<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Battalion. One month later he returned to England on HMS *Prince George* left for Fremantle aboard SS *Port Lyttelton* where he disembarked on 12 December 1918. Upon arrival, Arthur was placed under quarantine at Woodman's Point due to an outbreak of the deadly Spanish Influenza on the voyage. Once he was cleared, Arthur received Special Leave 1914, reserved for servicemen who had served at Gallipoli.

Arthur was discharged from the AIF on 17 February 1919. His medical records state he did not have any illnesses while on service, and that his heart, lungs and other organs were normal. In May, Arthur found sixteen days' work with the Roads Board at Kirup near Donnybrook, and the following month he applied for sustenance support from the Department of Repatriation to find further employment. In October 1919 he again applied for assistance to enable him to purchase a horse and spring cart, but his request was deemed ineligible as he did not own a business. Instead, Arthur was assisted in gaining a position

as a road worker and labourer at Narrogin and then Manjimup where he was supplied with a tent, rug and cooking utensils. Arthur remained there until 1929 when he moved to Morawa and was employed at the Morawa Hotel as a yardman.

Arthur McCallum died in his sleep on 1 April 1930, after failing to arrive for work. He was 41 years of age. An examination by the town doctor concluded he had died from heart failure, despite the assertion of the military doctors upon his discharge that he was in good health. The engraving on Arthur's headstone reads that he died from

*'heart trouble and war gas effects'.*

As a mark of respect, a good muster of the Morawa Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL) accompanied the draped motor truck that carried Arthur's coffin to the old Morawa cemetery where the graveside service was conducted by Reverend Davis an ex-service man.

Private Arthur Edward McCallum was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal for his military service.

## James Melbourne

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Rank: Private 2515  
Born: Circa 1876, York, Western Australia  
Service: 21 March 1915 to 22 September 1916.  
Died: 13 December 1937, Melbourne, Victoria

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**James 'Jimmy' Edward Melbourne** was born in the York area of Western Australia in 1876. Jimmy was the son of an Aboriginal woman called Sarah, and Charles Melbourne, a labourer and orderly at the York Hospital.

In the early 1880s Jimmy was placed in the Native and Half Caste Mission in Perth where he remained for several years prior to returning to York where he was employed by a well-known businessman. From the mid-1890s, Jimmy gained prominence in a number of sports including horse racing (obtaining his jockey's license in 1896), Australian Rules football, athletics, boxing and cricket.

Most notably, he was the first Aboriginal person to play Australian Rules football at a State level representing West Perth in June 1900. Jimmy was a member of West Perth's 1901 premiership side before moving to South Fremantle in 1902 and on to Subiaco, playing in the 1903 and 1904 seasons. Jimmy continued to play football and box until 1908 when he competed in both these fields in the Bunbury region.

In 1912 Jimmy moved to Melbourne with his wife Florence Jones, whom he married in Perth in 1903. On 21 March 1915, Jimmy enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) stating that he was a 'groom' by profession. He travelled by train to the Seymour Camp where he was appointed to the Australian Light Horse Regiment. On 13 July Jimmy joined the 7<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, and three days later embarked on the HMAT *Demosthenes* A64 from Melbourne, arriving at the port of Suez on 14 August. On arrival the troops were subject to fumigation to kill any parasites they may have acquired on board.

Following a six-hour train journey to Cairo, Egypt, the Battalion moved to nearby Abbassia where they were involved in further training. On 13 September they moved to the Greek island of Lemnos aboard the RMS *Ionian* and then onto Gallipoli.

During this period, Jimmy was admitted to the 24<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station with a sprained hand. Once he recovered, Jimmy returned to his unit and remained with them until 29 November when he was transferred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian General Hospital in Cairo with a fractured hand. Whilst in hospital Jimmy informed the staff that he had previously been wounded on two other occasions but had not reported the incidents.

On 30 December 1915, Jimmy returned to active duty at the Overseas Base at Ghezereh, Egypt, where he remained until early March 1916. He was then admitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Stationary Hospital in Ismailia with influenza and tuberculosis. Jimmy was subsequently transferred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian

General Hospital in Cairo where he was found to have developed a chronic cough. In May, suffering from severe deafness and asthma, Jimmy was discharged to return to Australia on the HMAT *Armada* A26 and arrived in Melbourne on 26 July 1917.

Jimmy was discharged from the AIF on 9 September 1917, and granted a war pension of £3 per fortnight, while his wife received half that amount. In December 1917, the payments were reduced to 20s and 10s per fortnight respectively. Little information on Jimmy exists for the next fifteen years, other than that he and his wife separated and he subsequently re-married an ex-army nurse Marie Edith MacWilliams in 1936. After his marriage, Jimmy worked on the wharves and occasionally received food coupons to maintain the family. Neighbours described him at this time as a quiet, well-spoken man.

On 13 December 1937, Jimmy Melbourne was killed at his home in Tope Street, South Melbourne, where he lived with his wife. Jimmy's landlord was convicted of his manslaughter and sentenced to five years in prison. The viciousness of the attack and subsequent trial made front page news across the nation.

Of all the newspapers, Perth's *Mirror* was the most forthcoming, reflecting upon Jimmy's athleticism: [his] 'amazing swiftness as a great rover' in Australian Rules football, his success as a jockey, he had served his country after enlisting in the AIF on the outbreak of war. These sentiments were also echoed by The York Chronicle as a mark of respect to one of their former noteworthy residents.

Jimmy Melbourne is buried in an unmarked grave at the Springvale Botanical Cemetery in Melbourne. He was the only Aboriginal person from Perth's Native and Half Caste Mission to have served at Gallipoli.

*In 2007, the Western Australian Football league paid tribute to Jimmy's legacy and his contribution to the football history of the State by creating the Jimmy Melbourne Cup.*

Each year the Cup is awarded to the winner of the South Fremantle and Claremont football game that is played during the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee Week.

Private James Edward Melbourne was awarded with the 1914-15 Star in 1920, the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal for his military service.

## Gordon Charles Naley

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Rank: Private 1310  
Born: 1884 Eucla district, Western Australia  
Service: 17 September 1914 to 21 September 1919  
Died: 28 August 1928, Adelaide, South Australia

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**Gordon Charles Naley** was born in 1884 in the scrub on Mandra Balae Station (now Mundrabilla) in Western Australia, 110 kilometres west of the South Australian border. He was the son of an Aboriginal woman (name unknown) and a European man, identified as William, a station manager.

As a child he was raised by his Aboriginal family and then by Ellen A. McGill who lived on the station from 1889 with her husband William. She was to become his unofficial adoptive mother and was described as a caring and compassionate person. Gordon was later to name one of his daughters after Ellen.

By late 1909, Gordon was living at Taylorville on the Murray River in South Australia where he was employed as a farm labourer and shearer and was engaged in droving between Wentworth and Morgan. Whilst in the area he was also an active member of the Riverland community where he competed in a range of athletic events including sprinting, cycling, throwing and shooting. In 1910 Gordon also contributed to the improvement of the Gillen East Methodist Church.

On 17 September 1914, Gordon enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) at Morphettville, South Australia and made his way to the Broadmeadows military training ground near Melbourne where he was accepted for service four days later. Following a period of training, he was appointed to the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion which were reviewed by the Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, in a march through the city on 17 December. Five days later, the Battalion boarded the HMAT *Ceramic A40* for Egypt joining another forty officers and 1,653 other ranks already on

board. During the voyage a program of training was undertaken on board the vessel and stops were made at Albany, Aden and Port Said.

On 1 February 1915, the Ceramic berthed at Alexandria where the troops disembarked and felt solid ground for the first time in six weeks. The 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion then travelled on to Zeiton near Cairo by train before marching to their camp at Heliopolis where they continued their routine training. On 11 April the battalion was divided into three parties and returned to Alexandria where they boarded the *Haida Pasha* for Gallipoli. Prior to reaching their intended destination the troops spent three days on the Greek island of Lemnos practicing landing procedures.

On the afternoon of 25 April 1915, the first party from the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion stepped ashore at Gallipoli and made their way inland to what would become known as 'Popes Hill'. The eight days following saw many lives lost. The Battalion was under constant fire and sustained around 200 casualties, including fifty-one men who were killed in battle and a further fifty who were killed by sniper fire while they were resting. The Battalion was later involved in the attack on 'Bloody Angle' where 338 more men lost their lives and in the defence of Quinn's Post.

Late in May, Gordon contracted enteric fever and was evacuated from Gallipoli on board the hospital ship *HS Soudan* to the Military Hospital in Malta where he remained for two months. It was reported in a number of Australian newspapers that he had died of his wounds. These articles were later corrected. On 8 September 1915, Gordon embarked on the hospital

ship *HS Italia* from Malta to Fulham, England. During this trip he was declared 'out of danger'. Gordon was admitted to the Military Hospital in Fulham but did not fully recover until July 1916.

Following his recovery Gordon was sent to Ètaples, France. He spent several weeks in the 4<sup>th</sup> Australian Division Base, before re-joining his battalion on 19 August 1916, where they were involved in the Battle of Mouquet Farm later that month. During the next few months, the division spent its time in trench warfare on the Western Front. On 11 April 1917, the 16th Battalion assaulted the Hindenburg line at Bullecourt in France. The assault was unsuccessful, and Gordon was captured along with approximately 1,170 Australian soldiers. He was wounded in action suffering shrapnel wounds to the left hip.

Gordon spent the next twenty one months as a prisoner of war at Limburg and Zerbst in Germany, arriving back in England on 6 January 1919. Two weeks later he married Cecilia Karsh, a baker's assistant from Fulham, whom he reportedly met whilst recovering from enteric fever.

On 4 June 1919, Gordon and his wife departed from England aboard the *SS Bremen* and disembarked in Adelaide on 23 July 1919. The couple made their way to Boggy Flat a small settlement not far from Waikerie area where they attended a 'welcome home social and supper' along with four other servicemen at the Gillen school on 17 September. A warm welcome was extended to his wife at the event. Four days later, Gordon was discharged from the AIF as Corporal Gordon Naley.

Within a year the family was residing on a Soldier Settlement block at Winkie in the Berri district where he established a fruit block, and broke-in and sold horses to the local community. Gordon was also regarded as a 'gun' shearer. Prior to the move, he was one of eleven soldiers who received two payments from the Waikerie North Soldiers' Fund adding to the income he had earlier acquired from the sale of horses.

Gordon returned to the sporting arena on several occasions in the Riverland area playing cricket with the Winkie A and B teams and scoring the highest number of runs in his last game in November of 1926. At one event, Gordon even won a tossing the caber competition. In addition to his athletic prowess, he continued his involvement with the Church and was credited with the invention of a primitive snare that he used to cull the kangaroo population feeding on his lucerne patch.

By late 1927, due to Gordon's failing health, the Naley family had moved to the suburb of Brooklyn Park in Adelaide. Gordon Naley had been suffering from respiratory complications from his time in the war when he passed away at the veterans' hospital in nearby Myrtle Bank on 28 August 1928. He was 41 years of age.

Private Gordon Charles Naley was awarded with the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal for his military service.

## Frederick Leslie Sayers

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Rank: Sergeant 1042  
Born: 13 December 1896, Busselton, Western Australia  
Service: 17 February 1915 to 5 October 1919  
Died: 1 November 1974, Subiaco, Western Australia

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**Frederick Leslie 'Les' Sayers** was born in Busselton, Western Australia on 13 December 1896. Les was the second of four sons born to Carinia Sayers who was also known as Carlo, and Flora Hasseldon Thompson. Carlo was the son of George Sayers, an expirée, and Jenny, an Aboriginal woman from Western Australia's Vasse region.

Throughout his early schooling years Les proved to be an eager student. In December 1904 and 1905 he was presented with the Department of Education book award for exceptional attendance at the Busselton State School at the end of year 'breaking-up day'.

On 13 February 1915, Les enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) at Busselton and four days later joined the No. 8 Depot Company at the Blackboy Hill Camp. At the time of enlisting he was working as a bread carter. Following four months training, Les embarked on the HMAT *Karoola* A63 with the 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcement of the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment from Fremantle for Cairo, Egypt, on 25 June 1915.

In his recollections, he described the first night aboard the ship as being 'very rough' compared to the rest of the voyage. Whilst on board, Les and his fellow servicemen occupied their time reading books, playing

music and organising sporting events. On 17 July the *Karoola* berthed at the port of Suez and the Regiment travelled through to Cairo by train the following day. Whilst not involved in routing training, Les spent time sightseeing and acquainting himself with Egyptian culture and the 'rather puzzling' currency. On 25 September 1915, he left Alexandria for the Greek island of Lemnos, arriving five days later. Les described it as having a fine harbour with a large quantity of ships of all descriptions. The following day he left for Gallipoli landing at Anzac Cove. In recalling the event Les later wrote:

*We landed at Anzac Cove about 1.00pm and while pulling into the landing, bullets fell amongst us like so many stones but only a few got wounded. We arrived at the trenches, our regiment was holding, and I can assure you the firing did not affect our sleeping. We started work the following afternoon at sapping and I can tell you we stuck at it a week, only having twelve hours sleep... We could see the trenches quite plain as the searchlights played on them constantly while the guns played havoc among them.*

Les and his unit were evacuated from Gallipoli along with the remainder of the Allied troops on 13 December 1915. Being unable to walk, he was carried across the beach by his mates to the *Sicilian Prince* for Lemnos. Upon reflection Les wrote it was 'A day I shall never forget, it being my nineteenth birthday'. He was not only saying farewell to the horrors of war, but to the conditions that accounted for so many of the illnesses experienced.

On 20 December 1915, Les disembarked at Alexandria having arrived from Lemnos on the HMAT *Karoo* A10. He then continued on to Heliopolis where he spent Christmas and New Year's before undergoing additional training at Serepeum. In March 1916 Les was admitted to 1<sup>st</sup> Australian General Hospital at Abbassia for three weeks with inflamed glands. He was discharged on 1 April and was attached to the Training Regiment at Tel el-Kebir for six weeks before transferring to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Horse Machine Gun Squadron, where he was involved in a number of minor battles. In late December 1916, Les participated in the capture of El Arish, where the ANZAC Mounted Division and the Imperial Camel Corps overwhelmed the enemy taking 1,200 prisoners along with a quantity of horses, mules, camels, guns and ammunition.

Les was with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Horse Machine Gun Squadron throughout 1917, during which time he undertook horse shoeing training with the 21st Veterinary Hospital at Belbeis in Egypt. On 10 October Les entered the 2nd Australian Stationary Hospital in Moascar where he remained until early 1918, re-joining his unit. In June Les was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal, and was involved in escort

duties for the next six weeks before being admitted to the 47 Stationary Hospital in Gaza where he was re-diagnosed with debility and admitted to the No. 2 Australian Stationary Hospital in Moascar on 28 September. Upon being discharged in January 1919, Les was attached to the administration section of the Central Training depot until mid-May when he returned to his former unit the 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Horse Australian Machine Gun Squadron.

Les embarked for Western Australia aboard the hospital ship the *SS Oxfordshire* on 10 July 1919, and arrived in Fremantle on 4 August. His return to Australia was acknowledged in the *South-Western Times* on 19 August 1919: 'Les put in a very strenuous period in Gallipoli and Palestine with General Allenby's troops and was in the thick of all the biggest stunts.' In addition, Les returned with half a dozen trophies for boxing and other athletic events, the most noteworthy being a fine china plate awarded to him as the best all-round athlete of the transport *Oxfordshire*. While on active duty, Les lost his eldest brother, Albert Henry, who passed away at Woodman Point from pneumonic influenza on his return from active service from the Western Front in December 1918.



After being discharged from the AIF on 5 October 1919, Les competed in a number of athletic events in the Perth metropolitan area. Les married Alberta 'Berta' Gertrude Bickford in November 1920, and by October 1921 the couple were living in the Mount Barker area, south of Perth. He was employed by the de Garis family of Kendenup in the construction of soldier settlement houses and continued his association with athletics, captaining the Kendenup Football team.

In 1926 Les returned to the Busselton area where he became a veritable 'jack of all trades', picking up work whenever he could. Whilst in the Busselton area, Les took up 238 acres of land and maintained his interest in football, captaining the 'Pastimes' team (now known as the Carey Park Football Club) in 1926, and umpiring from 1931 until 1939.

Despite the trauma Les witnessed during World War I, he re-enlisted to serve his country during World War II. In 1940 Les and his family moved to Perth where he enlisted in the Australian Military Forces (AMF) at Karrakatta in November. He was initially attached to the 7<sup>th</sup> Workshop and Park Company at Rottneest and then Northam, during which time he was promoted from Lance Corporal to Sergeant. On 15 December 1943, Les embarked on the SS *Marella* for Victoria, where he served with the 24<sup>th</sup> Employment Company

through to August 1944, when he returned to Western Australia. Following a brief period of hospitalisation, Les joined the 26<sup>th</sup> Works Company at the Davilak Depot near Rockingham before serving at the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Royal Australian Army Ordinance Depots at Ardath, Nungarin and Spring Hill near Northam, through to the cessation of hostilities. Les returned to Karrakatta for demobilisation and was discharged from the AMF on 18 October 1945 aged 48 years.

Les held a number of positions including employment at the Fremantle Wool Stores and the Australian Glass Works factory in East Perth before retiring.

Les Sayers passed away at the Home of Peace, Subiaco, on 1 November 1974 aged 77 years. Les's name can be found on the Busselton War Memorial along with two of his brothers. His eldest brother, Charles Hector, was rejected for service on 2 August 1916 as he 'was not substantially of European origin or descent'.

Sergeant Frederick Leslie Sayers was awarded with the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal for his military service.



Frederick Leslie Sayers  
training with the  
10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment  
in 1915

## Claude Shaw

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Rank: Lance Sergeant 2413  
Born: 27 February 1895, Gingin, Western Australia  
Service: 5 May 1915 to 3 June 1919  
Died: 17 February 1970, Perth, Western Australia

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**Claude Shaw** was born in the town of Gingin in Western Australia on 27 February 1895. Claude was the fourth son of ten children to William Shaw and Mary Ann Hill. William was the son of Mary Ann Ballapon, an Aboriginal woman from the Perth area and George Shaw, a grazier and landowner.

As a teenager, Claude was a keen sportsman winning a number of local events including obstacle races in 1909 and 1914, and the high jump competition in 1915. The family was also active in social events in the local community.

On 5 May 1915, Claude enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in Moora stating he was a farmer, and following a period of training at Blackboy Hill camp, joined the 7<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements of the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 14 June. Claude and his fellow troopers, along with those of the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion, departed from Fremantle on HMAT *Chilka* A51 on 19 June for Egypt, landing at Port Said after thirty-three days at sea.

The contingent then travelled by train to Cairo where they underwent a further ten days instruction prior to proceeding to Gallipoli. Shortly after landing on 5 August, the Battalion was involved in the Battle of Lone Pine where they were engaged in heavy trench warfare and subjected to regular enemy shelling, resulting in the loss of many Western Australian lives.

On 28 August Claude contracted conjunctivitis and was evacuated to St Patrick's Hospital in Malta. Upon recovery, he returned to Alexandria one month later where he joined the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion Transport Section and in late November Claude returned to Gallipoli.

Following the withdrawal of the Allied troops in December, Claude spent time recuperating on the Greek island of Lemnos before proceeding to the Australian Overseas Base at Cairo. For the next two months Claude remained in Egypt where he was transferred to the 13<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Battalion at Tel el-Kebir.

On 5 June 1916, Claude proceeded to Marseilles in France on the HMT *Ivernia*, arriving one week later, and then travelled by train to northern France where he was involved in gas training. In mid-August the Battalion was involved in the early fighting at Mouquet Farm, losing fifty per cent of its fighting strength within a matter of weeks. Over the next two months the troops underwent further training whilst labouring behind the front line, before being involved in defensive action near the Ancre River and Dernacourt through the winter period.

Upon regaining strength, the 52<sup>nd</sup> Battalion advanced to the front where they were involved in further action at Noreuil, France, and then at Messines in Belgium, during which time Claude was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal. On 7 June he was briefly admitted to the New Zealand Field Hospital with minor wounds

and re-admitted in late August to the 4<sup>th</sup> Australian Field Ambulance Hospital where he remained for a little over five weeks.

One month after returning to his unit, Claude was once again promoted in rank to Corporal. In January 1918, he was transferred to England where he was attached to the 13<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion and gained 1st Class qualifications at the Australian School of Musketry at Tidworth in Wiltshire. Claude remained in England until August when he returned to France with the 51<sup>st</sup> Battalion to serve at the Australian Infantry Base Depot at Le Havre.

Following the cessation of hostilities, Claude remained in France, and in January of 1919 was transferred back to England to return to Australia. On 28 February he departed from Devonport aboard HMAT *Anchises* A68 and arrived in Albany, Western Australia, on 7 April. One month before being discharged from the AIF on 3 June 1919, Claude received a welcome home function at the Gingin Town Hall along with his brother Roland and other returned servicemen. Being the highest ranked officer,

*Claude led the party in to be  
greeted with ringing cheers  
and the singing of Australia's  
national anthem.*

On 24 September 1940, undaunted by his past experiences, Claude re-enlisted in the Australian Armed Forces at Claremont giving his occupation as a railway repairman. He served with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Training Battalion in Northam for five months before transferring to the Royal Australian Navy at the Naval Base facility near Fremantle on 4 June 1941, where on the same day he was promoted to the rank of Lance Sergeant. Claude returned to Northam the following month and served with the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Battalions, remaining there until 2 October 1942, when he returned to Claremont and was discharged later that month.

Claude Shaw passed away on 17 February 1970, aged 74 years and is buried at Karrakatta Cemetery. He was one of three brothers who served in World War I. Lance Sergeant Claude Shaw was awarded with the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal for his military service.

# Historical Context

## Western Australia in 1914

Western Australia was still a relatively young state when war broke out in August 1914. At the time, the population was estimated to be 321,910 (exclusive of Aboriginal people) with the vast majority living in the metropolitan area and in larger regional towns such as Kalgoorlie/Boulder, Albany, Bunbury and Geraldton. The remainder of the population were located throughout the outlying agricultural and pastoral districts. The main areas of employment were in mining, particularly gold mining, construction, pastoral and agricultural industries, with a smaller number employed in the public service. The unemployment rate was increasing due to a rise in job losses in the mining and clothing trade industries. The cost of living was also rising.

The Aboriginal population, estimated to be around 13,000, was subjected to the restrictive provisions of *The Aborigines Act 1905* (the Act). This Act categorised Aboriginal people as 'full-blood' and 'half-castes', with limited rights. Aboriginal people could however, apply for an exemption under the provisions of the Act that the *Chief Protector of Aborigines* was authorised to grant. By September 1912 only twenty-two Exemption Certificates (Certificates) had been issued, enabling the recipient to attain a degree of freedom denied to others. Although the number of applications for Certificates steadily increased throughout the war years, very few were granted. Aboriginal servicemen returning from war were required to apply for a Certificate even though they had served their country, and while doing so had been treated as equals.

The health of the general population in 1914 was reasonable with no major sickness in the metropolitan area, and the health of Aboriginal people under the care of the Department of Aborigines and Fisheries at the time was said to be satisfactory. Access to primary health care though, was far from adequate. A number of hospitals had separate arrangements for Aboriginal people in the south west of the State, including the establishment of separate wings with enclosed verandas where Aboriginal people were treated. At Bridgetown, Narrogin and Carnarvon separate 'Aborigines' wards were established.

In 1914, access to education was improving but only 327 Aboriginal children were receiving an education at church schools as well as a native school in Beverley, while others were attending state schools such as *James Street*, Perth and other locations in Geraldton and Busselton. This number was significantly lower than that of the wider population. *Under the Education Act 1893* it was not compulsory for Aboriginal children to attend school. Their admission and exclusion to schooling was at the discretion of the headmaster. Aboriginal children were excluded from some state schools despite the fact that their parents had been educated and strongly advocated for their children's inclusion. At the Great Southern Inter-District Conference held in Albany in February 1914 a motion was moved:

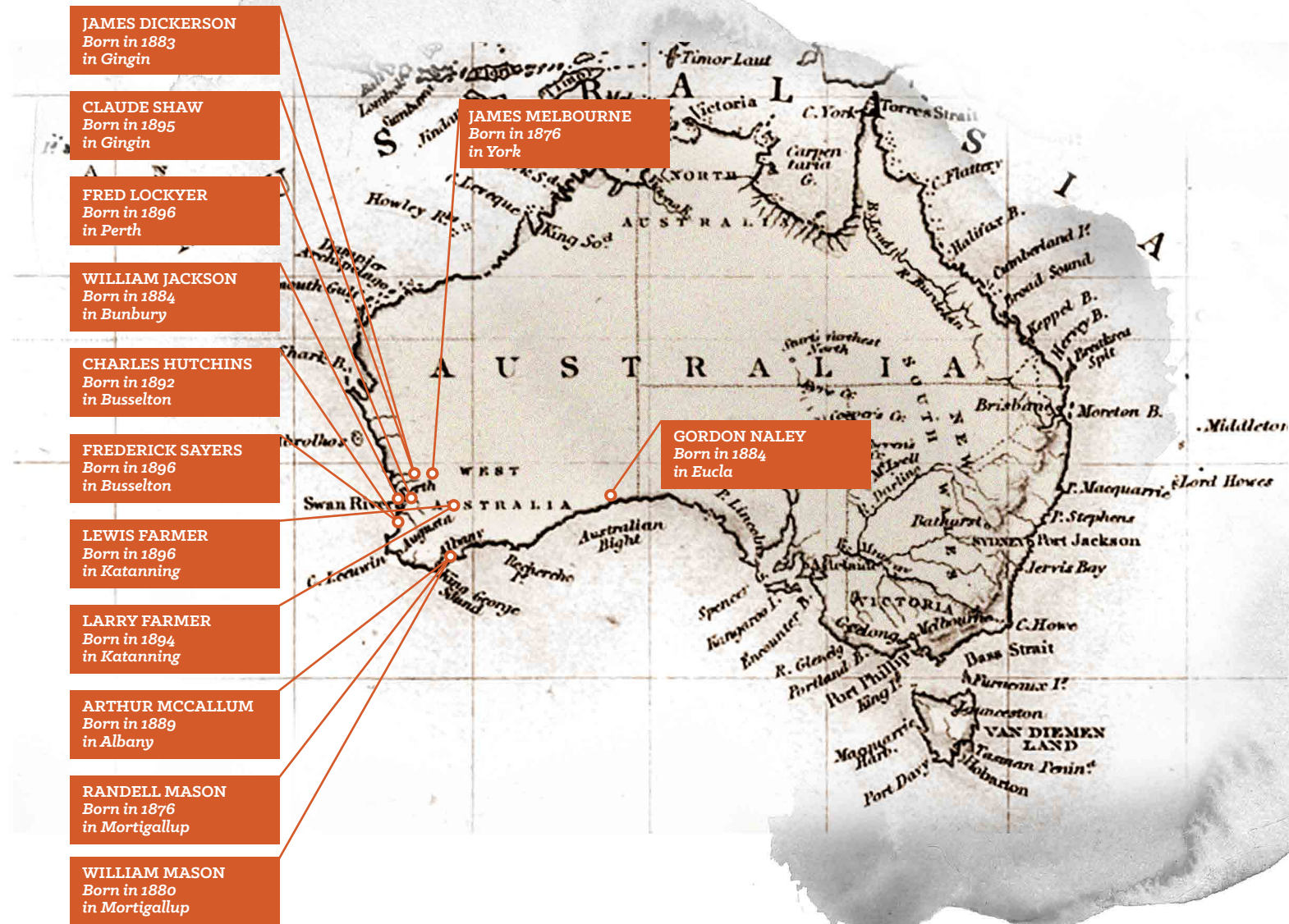
*'That this conference forward a resolution to the Minister for Education: that aboriginal [sic] children be not permitted to attend the same school as white children, and that where half-caste children are in the district separate schools should be provided.'*

The motion was carried.

Many Aboriginal families lived in makeshift accommodation on the outskirts of towns, or on reserves located away from the main facilities and municipal services such as on-line water, toilets and rubbish disposal. Several reserves were created by the State government in response to petitions from pressure groups advocating for the segregation of the local Aboriginal people who they described as troublesome and a menace to the health of the local community. This position was strongly supported by a number of town councils.

Most of those living in the South West were engaged in clearing land, fence contracting, general labouring and domestic duties, whilst in the north of the state Aboriginal people were mainly employed under contract. The provisions of the Act required those wishing to employ Aboriginal people to obtain a permit from a protector, police officer, justice of the peace or other person authorised by the Minister. In 1914 there were 3,606 Aboriginal people employed under permits in Western Australia. Not all of those employed received even the basic wage.

# Where the Servicemen Came From



## Enlistment Process

The day prior to the outbreak of World War I on 4 August 1914, Australia offered Great Britain 20,000 men. Australian Imperial Force (AIF) recruitment offices were immediately opened in Perth, Fremantle and at various regional centres in the state, including Bunbury, Katanning and Kalgoorlie. Within days, officers commenced the enrolment of volunteers. The men were then examined by medical officers to determine their suitability. Those who passed the medical assessment were provided with a railway warrant and instructed to proceed to the camp at Helena Vale (Blackboy Hill) with identification signed by the enrolling officer. There were no formal training schools and volunteers proceeded straight from recruiting stations to their assigned units, which were still in the process of being established. Some men had received preliminary military training while others had not. They were requested to bring a change of clothing, knife, fork, spoon and towel. Enrolling officers were instructed to discharge anyone found to be unsuitable at any time.

Such was the strength and quality of the men, that only one in fourteen were rejected. Advertisements were placed in almost all newspapers across the State outlining the requirement for enlistment and rates of pay. Soldiers were paid 6s (\$1.20) per day for carrying out duties of a gunner, sapper, and private, who earned approximately half the average weekly wage at the time. Pay would commence from the date of reporting at Blackboy Hill. Dependents also received a minimal allowance. In a fortnight more than 1,100 men had enlisted with others turned away from recruiting centres across the state.

In early September 1914, orders were received from Melbourne to recruit another 1,200 Western Australians for service. The response was equal to, if not better than, the earlier appeal. A large proportion of these men sought to volunteer for the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment, bringing with them their own horses, which the government bought at £16 per head. It is estimated that 39,348 horses were shipped overseas for military service during World War I.

## Training

Just thirteen days after war was declared, the first volunteers arrived at the newly formed Blackboy Hill camp. Enlisted soldiers were initially trained on the military reserve at Karrakatta in Perth. When it became apparent that large numbers of soldiers would be volunteering, a new training site was sought. This site started off with pitched tents and marquees to shelter the troops. The men had very little in the way of equipment and were often only partially clothed in military garb. Despite this background, Blackboy Hill is now known as the birthplace of the AIF in Western Australia.

Aspects of the formative ANZAC legend originated in this early training period, with commentators noting the strong physiques and qualities of the men. They were also described as being resourceful and having initiative. The men underwent anything from two to eight weeks initial training that involved basic military tasks such as marching, often to the town of Guildford and back (a distance of 18 kilometres), drilling, riflery and infantry tactics.

The Light Horse Regiment commenced training at Guildford on the banks of the Helena River, which had previously been used as remount depot. The Regiment undertook horsemanship and more advanced work such as scouting, reconnaissance tactics, advanced flank and rear guard work, outpost duties, attack and defence and field firing.

Before the soldiers left for war, every man was entitled to four days' leave in order to give him a final chance to see his family and put his private affairs in order.

## Western Australian Battalions    The Journey to Egypt

The first Western Australian Infantry Battalion raised by September 1914 was the 11th Battalion which embarked for overseas two weeks after preliminary training. The other Infantry Battalions: the 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup>, 48<sup>th</sup>, and 51<sup>st</sup>; were formed later to provide additional recruits to maintain the strength of the units that were being depleted by death, injury and illness. These units were generally recruited on a state-by-state basis with the less populous states, such as Western Australia, often sharing units with other states.

At Blackboy Hill, 32,321 men trained with the AIF. Of this number, 6,233 died during World War I. The Victoria Cross, awarded for valour in the face of the enemy, was presented to sixty-three Australian members of the armed forces, ten of which were from Western Australia. Two Western Australian Aboriginal soldiers were awarded the Military Medal for bravery.

In recognition of the impending departure to Europe, a parade of forty-seven officers and 1,538 other ranks from various units of the AIF in Western Australia took place through Perth on Saturday 26 September 1914. Earlier in the day, mounted units set out from Blackboy Hill for the city to join other troops who would arrive by train. The streets were lined with thousands of people who cheered and applauded as they marched by. The parade was reviewed by His Excellency the Governor, Major General Sir Harry Barron, and other dignitaries. Photographs of the march were shown at theatres across the State later that year.

On the evening of 30 October 1914, the first contingent of Western Australian soldiers left Blackboy Hill for Fremantle where they boarded the troopships *Ascanius* and the *Medic*. As they made their way to Fremantle by rail from Helena Vale (now Helena Valley), those close to the line realised the troops were embarking, and were reported to have given them a fitting farewell. The 11th and 12th Battalions were beginning their journey to Europe.

The Western Australian Aboriginal servicemen commenced embarkation from Fremantle from 22 December 1914 onwards, on board one of the following nine troopships: *Ceramic*, *Surada*, *Itonus*, *Ascanius*, *Chilka*, *Karoola*, *Kanowna*, *Demosthenes* and the *Geelong*. In addition to the troops, a number of the ships carried supplies and upwards of 700 horses which occupied all other available space. The horses were stabled in narrow stalls and stood for up to eight weeks, not all surviving the journey. On arrival in Egypt, the horses were not fit to be ridden and required to be exercised to be build up their stamina.

Following embarkation the first day was taken up settling into cramped quarters and overcoming the seasickness many experienced, as they had never sailed before. Training continued throughout the journey to keep the men fit and to relieve the monotony. A range of activities were organised, including amateur boxing, musical performances, card games and athletics. Church services were held each Sunday. Food and drink purchases could be made on board at the AIF canteen. All ranks were vaccinated and inoculated against smallpox and typhoid, but cases of measles, influenza and pneumonia occurred. Those who died during the journey were buried at sea with full military honours. As the ships passed through the tropics, half of the troops were provided with deck accommodation to sleep on due to the intense heat and stuffy conditions below deck.

Upon arriving in Cairo, the soldiers marched out to the various camps established at Abbassia, Helipolis, Zeitoun, Maadi and Mena, the latter covering around 120 hectares (300 acres) and where close to 16,000 horses were prepared for war. A routine was established where the soldiers commenced their drill early in the morning and finished late in the evening. The troops took the opportunity to visit the historic sites of Cairo when they were on leave. Over 17,000 troops also attended church services each Sunday.



# The Voyage

From Melbourne and Fremantle to Alexandria



From Alexandria to Gallipoli



## From Egypt to Gallipoli

In February 1915, the Greek Government offered the Allied Forces the island of Lemnos (110 kilometres from the Gallipoli battlefields) as a base for a naval attack on Gallipoli. Lemnos became a vast and strategically important military camp for Allied troops, housing large hospitals and convalescent camps as well as training facilities. The island was the final stop prior to landing at Gallipoli.

Following an abortive attempt by the British and French to reopen the Black Sea route to Russia through the Dardanelles, a decision was made to launch a land assault involving 78,000 members of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. This included men from the AIF and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force who had been training in Cairo when a decision to invade Turkey was made. On 4 April 1915 they received orders to prepare to leave and seven days later were taken by train to Alexandria. A total of 821 servicemen departed on board the *Haida Pascha* on 15 April with eighty nine horses and equipment arriving at Lemnos the next day. For the next three days, further training was undertaken in preparation for the landing.

Very early in the morning of the 25 April 1915 the assault began. The initial attack was followed by successive waves of troops from Australia, New Zealand and other Allied Forces. Over the next eight months, the Allied Forces mounted a number of attacks against enemy positions in an attempt to secure the peninsula. Some of the major battles included Pope's Hill in April; Monash Valley, Bloody Angle and Quinn's Post in May; Lone Pine, The Nek and Hill 971 in early August. The assault on Hill 60 in late August was the last major Australian offensive on the peninsula. By the time the troops were evacuated in early December, more than 8,700 Australian soldiers had lost their lives on the battlefield, or from disease.

## Treating the Sick and Wounded

During World War I illness was a major problem from the point of embarkation, with soldiers suffering a number of ailments requiring hospitalisation. Infectious respiratory diseases such as influenza, tuberculosis, measles, pleurisy and pneumonia were rife, as were parasitic infestations such as scabies and lice, enteric fever (typhoid fever), mumps, dysentery, and cholera were very common communicable diseases. These serious illnesses were exacerbated by poor sanitation in the trenches and extreme weather conditions. Body lice spread trench fever, an infectious disease caused by prolonged exposure to wet and unsanitary conditions resulting in headaches, aching muscles, skin sores and high fever. Soldiers' feet would become numb, red, and swell, often developing blisters and open sores. If left untreated, it usually resulted in gangrene and required amputation.

Major military hospitals were established in Egypt, Lemnos, Malta and England as the war progressed. Initially, the hospitals in Egypt treated new arrivals suffering with influenza, measles or pneumonia on the journey over or while preparing for active service. In the first two weeks of the Gallipoli Campaign the Palace Hotel in Ghezireh, which became the Australian General Hospital No. 2, admitted 474 wounded troops. With the enormous number of wounded, sick and fatigued soldiers, space became scarce and further facilities were established including temporary hospital tents. Towards the end of May, the number of patients gradually decreased as men were discharged for duty or invalided back to Australia. At one point,

there were nine hospitals in Cairo, some of which had been converted from hotels. To enable members of the AIF wounded at Gallipoli to receive proper care and treatment, a further twenty-one improvised military hospitals were established. The Heliopolis Palace Hotel, occupied by the 1st Australian General Hospital, could accommodate 2,000 patients.

At Lemnos, two enormous tents cities were established around the harbour in 1915. The main Australian camp was at Mudros West. The British and French camps were located at Mudros East. The camps could hospitalise 3,000 to 6,000 casualties at one time. The doctors and nurses who treated the sick and wounded also suffered illness due the extremes of climate and plagues of flies. Like many other war hospital facilities, the conditions were fairly basic: limited water, mattresses on the ground, and intermittent electricity which made treating patients extremely difficult.

## Hospital Ships

Not more than half an hour after the first troops had stepped ashore at Gallipoli, the landing craft were being used to ferry the wounded back on to the ships that transported the troops across from Lemnos. In one instance, as many as 700 men were being treated by eight doctors and four nurses on one of these ships. The conditions on board were horrendous for both medical staff and patients. Hospital ships were mainly operated by the military and were intended to be located in or near war zones to provide emergency treatment. Many passenger liners were converted and used as hospital ships.

During the Gallipoli Campaign, hospital ships were used to evacuate more than 100,000 wounded soldiers. The less serious were transported to Lemnos. Those in need of expert medical attention went on to Alexandria, Cairo, Malta or England. Invalided troops were sent back to Australia on hospital ships. Soldiers who did not survive and died at sea were 'committed to the deep'.

## To the Western Front

Troops were progressively withdrawn from Gallipoli and stationed in Egypt from mid-December 1915. In early 1916, the AIF was restructured and expanded in Egypt, with the infantry units all progressively sent to the Western Front in the first half of 1916. The Light Horse remained in the Middle East.

# Where the Servicemen Rest



# Nominal Roll

Listed below are the names of those Western Australian Aboriginal men who enlisted to serve in World War I as well as those who were born in the Eastern States who enlisted in Western Australia. The list includes the names of seven individuals who were born in Western Australia and who enlisted in the Eastern States as well as two individuals who enlisted in Western Australia who were born in another State.

In addition to these the name of one person who enlisted and was rejected (despite the fact that his record has not been located at the National Archives of Australia) has been included, another who enlisted under an assumed name, another who wrote to the Department of Aborigines and Fisheries in order to ascertain whether he could enlist, and another who lived at the Remount Depot in Guildford in 1915.

The list is far from definitive, and given the loss of historical records, coupled with the difficulty of confirming Aboriginal descent, the exact number may never be determined.

**Anderson** Leslie Charles  
**Armstrong** Francis Edward  
**Blurton** John  
**Boota** Alexander Thomas  
**Brockman** Charles  
**Burns** Charles  
**Burridge** Charles Thomas  
**Burton** Lewis  
**Clatworthy** Joseph  
**Clatworthy** Robert  
**Coleman** Michael John  
**Collard** Harold  
**Collard** Lewis  
**Connor** Michael  
**Cooper** Tom  
**Corbitt** Frank  
**Cox** Henry  
**Cox** Robert  
**Crowley** Joseph  
**Davis** Barney  
**Davis** William  
**Dickerson** Harry  
**Dickerson** James  
**Dimer** Harry Keith

**Eggleston** Frank  
**Farmer** Augustus Pegg  
**Farmer** Kenneth  
**Farmer** Larry  
**Farmer** Lewis  
**Feehan** Matthias  
**Fitzgerald** John  
**Fitzgerald** Harold  
**Ford** Thomas Henry  
**Forrest** Alexander  
**Gale** Charles  
**Gascoyne** John Courthorpe  
**Gaunt** Arthur Charles  
**Gaunt** Bertie  
**Gillespie** Jack  
**Griffin** James  
**Harder** William  
**Harris** David Henry  
**Hedlam** Frank  
**Hedley** Stanley  
**Holland** Charles  
**Holland** Frederick  
**Holland** John Maitland  
**Holland** William

**Hong** Thomas  
**Hutchins** Charles  
**Isaacs** Henry (Harry)  
**Isaacs** James  
**Isaacs** Herbert James  
**Jackson** William John  
**Jackson** Sandy  
**Jennings** Fredrick William  
**Latwood** Charles  
**Lawrence** Frank  
**Lawrence** Hubert  
**Lawrence** Aubrey Malcolm  
**Lockyer** Fred  
**Lowe** Percy  
**Macpherson** Sandy  
**Maher** John  
**Maher** Frank (Francis)  
**Marsh** George  
**Mason** Arthur  
**Mason** Henry  
**Mason** John  
**Mason** Frederick  
**Mason** William  
**Massey** Thomas

**McBride** George  
**McBride** John Henry  
**McBride** Richard  
**McBride** Thomas Richard  
**McCallum** Arthur Edward  
**McCallum** George Henry  
**McKenzie** Jack  
**McMurray** Horace  
**McPhee** Roy  
**Mead** Frederick Carnat David  
**Melbourne** James  
**Michael** Patrick  
**Miller** William Charles  
**Morrison** Samuel  
**Morrison** Phillip  
**Murray** Clem  
**Naley** Gordon Charles  
**Nettup** Joseph William  
**Ninyett** John  
**Ogilvie** John  
**Parfitt** John Harold  
**Ralph** George  
**Ralph** Edward  
**Rawson** Edward Henry

**Rawson** Alfred Charles  
**Rawson** Alfred Ernest  
**Ring** Mark  
**Ring** William Manuel  
**Ring** George  
**Robertson** Larry  
**Ronan** George  
**Sayers** Albert Henry  
**Sayers** Frederick Leslie  
**Sayers** Laurence Allen  
**Sayers** Charles Hector  
**Searle** Henry Michael  
**Searle** Henry James  
**Searle** John Thomas  
**Shaw** Claude  
**Shaw** Roland Hugh  
**Shaw** William George  
**Simpson** Charles Arthur  
**Smith** Frank Herbert  
**Thompson** George  
**Thompson** Arthur  
**Urquhart** Edward  
**Urquhart** Phillip  
**Websdale** Leo Augustus

# Glossary

## Military

### AIF Ranks

**Private:** Basic military rank.

**Lance Corporal:** Intermediate appointment that recognizes a soldier's potential before promotion to Corporal.

**Corporal:** Commands a section of ten men in an Infantry Battalion.

**Sergeant:** Can be second in command of a platoon of Infantry soldiers.

**Staff Sergeant:** Is normally a unit's full time administration man.

**Lieutenant:** Junior commissioned officer and usually commands a platoon of Infantry.

**Captain:** Second in command of an Infantry Company.

**Major:** Commands an Infantry Company.

**Lieutenant Colonel:** Commands an Infantry Regiment.

**Colonel:** Commanding officer of an Infantry Battalion.

**Brigadier:** Commands an Infantry Brigade.

**Major General:** Commands an Infantry Division.

**Lieutenant General:** Commands an Infantry Corp.

**General:** Commands an Infantry Army.

**Field Marshall:** Commands many Infantry Armies.

**Commissioned Officers:** Highest ranking officers.

**Non-Commissioned Officers:** Junior officers that include corporals, sergeants and staff sergeants outranked by all commissioned officers.

## Acronyms

**AIF:** Australian Imperial Force

**AMF:** Australian Military Forces

**ANZAC:** Australian and New Zealand Army Corps

**ALH:** Australian Light Horse

**HMAHS:** His Majesty's Australian Hospital Ship

**HMAS:** His Majesty's Australian Ship

**HMAT:** His Majesty's Australian Transport

**JP:** Justice of the peace

**MLC:** Member of Legislative Council

**RAN:** Royal Australian Navy

**RMS:** Royal Mail Ship

**RSL:** Returned Services League

**SS:** Steam Ship

## Infantry Organisation

**Section:** 8 - 12 men

**Platoon:** 3 - 4 Sections, 24 - 48 men

**Company:** 3 - 4 Platoons, 120 men

**Battalion:** 3 - 4 Companies, 700 - 800 men

**Brigade:** 3 - 4 Battalions, 1,800 men

**Division:** 3 - 4 Brigades, 7,000-8,000 men

**Corps:** 3 - 4 Divisions, 20,000 men

## Medals and Awards

**The 1914-15 Star Medal:** Created in 1918 and awarded for service in specified 'theatres of war' including France, Belgium and Gallipoli between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915.

**The British War Medal 1914-20:** Instituted by King George V in 1919 to mark the end of World War I and record the service given.

**The Victory Medal:** The Victory Medal was created in 1919 to commemorate the victory of the Allied Forces over the Central Powers. Each of the Allied nations issued a 'Victory Medal' to their own nationals.

**Distinguished Conduct Medal:** Extremely high level award for bravery. The first official medal award to recognise an act of gallantry in the field by a member of the armed forces who was below the rank of officer.

**Memorial Scroll:** Presented to the next of kin of those soldiers, sailors, and nurses who died while serving in the AIF or RAN during World War I. Later they were presented with a Next of Kin Memorial Plaque. The Memorial Scroll bears the Royal Coat of Arms and a message paying tribute to the soldiers who gave up 'their own lives that others might live in freedom'.

# General

**Allied Forces:** Allied Forces or Powers in World War I were the British Empire (including Australia and New Zealand), France, and the Russian Empire.

**The Australian Imperial Force (AIF):** The AIF was first raised in August 1914 for overseas war service in World War I. It was a separate and purely volunteer army initially with strength of one infantry division and one light horse brigade.

**Aborigines Protection Board:** Established under the Aborigines Protection Act 1886 to oversee the welfare of Aboriginal people across the State. The board operated between 1887 and 1897 before being replaced by the Aborigines Department.

**Aborigines Department:** Established under the Aborigines Act 1897 replacing the Aborigines Protection Board. The Department was a sub-department of Treasury with a small staff under the supervision of the Chief Protector of Aborigines. Responsible for Aboriginal welfare from 1897-1909.

**Aborigines and Fisheries Department:** Replaced the Aborigines Department and operated from 1909-1920.

**Annesfield School:** Established in 1852 in Albany. The school was originally known as Annesfield Native Institution and Albany School for Aboriginal children. Children were taught reading, writing and arithmetic and later were placed with settler families as servants and labourers. The facility closed in 1872 with the death of its founder Henry Camfield and the children were transferred to the Perth Native and Half-caste mission.

**Casualty Clearing Station:** A military medical facility behind the front lines that was used to treat wounded soldiers. Its role was to treat a soldier sufficiently for his return to duty or to enable him to be evacuated to a base hospital.

**Chief Protector of Aborigines:** A statutory position created under the Aborigines Act 1897 responsibility for the administration of the Aborigines Department and the operation of the Act. The power of the Chief Protector increased significantly following the passing of the Aborigines Act 1905.

**Defence Act 1903:** The Defence Acts of 1903 and 1904, empowered the Australian Government to call up 'unexempted' males in time of war. An Amendment to the Defence Act in 1909 exempted persons who were not substantially of European origin or descent from serving, restricting Aboriginal people from enlisting in the war.

**Expiree:** Convict who had served the full length of their sentence.

**Industrial Schools:** Established as the first comprehensive attempt at child welfare legislation in Western Australia following the Industrial Schools Act 1874. The schools were designed for neglected, orphaned and abandoned children or those that had been convicted of a criminal offence.

**Mustard Gas:** A chemical weapon developed in the early stages of World War I that would become the most feared of all weapons, disabling entire units in a single bombardment. The gas remained as a pollutant in the environment so troops could not stay in the trenches. If not treated at once, blisters would develop into large burns and if broken and exposed, would promote blood poisoning. Many soldiers would die months later from after effects or suffer permanent lung damage leading to an early death.

**New Norcia Mission:** Founded by Benedictine missionaries Bishop Dom Rosendo Salvado and Dom José Benito Serra in 1846 in the Victoria Plains district north of Perth.

**Perth Native and Half-Caste Mission:** Established in 1871 in the grounds adjoining the Anglican Bishops' House in Adelaide Terrace, for the education and training of both male and female students who were placed in employment as they grew older. This facility was also known as Bishop Hale's Institution for Native and Half Caste Children. The male students were transferred to the Swan Orphanage in 1888.

**Soldier Settlement block:** A lease of land set aside for soldiers who had served overseas with the Australian Imperial Forces or with the British Defence Service. The blocks were available through application.

# Aboriginal Legislative Classification

**Swanleigh:** Established in Middle Swan in 1886 for the education and industrial training of boys. It was originally known as the Swan Orphanage. In October of 1888 the male and female inmates of the Half-Caste Mission in Perth were transferred to the location where a separate facility known as the Swan Native and Half-Caste Mission was established. The two institutions ran side by side until 1920 when the mission closed. The Orphanage continued through until 1959 when it was known as Swanleigh.

**Vasse Native and Half Caste Mission:** Established in the early 1880s on land set aside for Aboriginal people. It was situated in the Vasse region three miles from the town of Busselton and catered for Aboriginal children who received 'elementary religious teaching', and industrial training. The mission closed around 1897.

The **Aborigines Act 1905** refined the definition to include a 'half-caste' who lives with an Aboriginal wife or husband, 'half-caste' who 'habitually lives or associates with aborigines,' and, 'half-caste children' whose age apparently does not exceed sixteen years. Under the Act the Chief Protector became the legal guardian of every Aboriginal and 'half-caste' child under the age of sixteen. The Act also legalised the removal of Aboriginal children from their natural families; encouraged establishment of reserves and missions amongst other restrictive measures.

The **Native Administration Act 1936** broadened the definition even further and created the classification of quadroon ('one quarter Aboriginal blood') however they were not subject to legislation if they were under twenty one and 'did not associate and live in the manner of natives.' A non-native could be classified a native by a magistrate.

In 1954 an amendment to this Act granted Aboriginal people exemption from the Act for military service. 'Natives of the full or less blood who have served in New Guinea or outside the Commonwealth or have for at least six months served in the Commonwealth as a member of the armed forces and have received or are entitled to receive an honourable discharge, are deemed to be no longer a native for purposes of the Act' **Native Administration Act Amendment Act 1954 (No 60 of 1954).**

Prior to 1972 Aboriginal people were still categorised in legislation according to percentage of Aboriginal 'blood.' This subjected Aboriginal people to restrictive laws that excluded them from the wider non-Aboriginal society.

The classifications 'full blood', 'half-caste', 'quarter-caste', 'quadroon' and 'octroon' are outdated and considered inappropriate today.

## Measurements

1 mile = 1.6 kilometres

1 hectare = 2.5 acres

1 chain = 20.1 metres

1 pound (£) = 20 shillings (s)

1 shilling = 12 pence (p)

## Medical Terms

**Bubos:** Generic term for swelling, inflammatory glands or blisters from bubonic plague, gonorrhoea, tuberculosis, chancroid, venereal disease or syphilis.

**Debility:** A generic term for a range of conditions relating to fatigue and weakness which also included stress related symptoms such as shortness of breath, dizziness, tremor and rapid heartbeat.

**Enteric Fever:** (Typhoid Fever) a potentially fatal illness caused primarily by bacteria. It was passed by a human carrier and spread to other soldiers through unsanitary conditions.



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Hon Peter Collier MLC  
Minister for Education; Aboriginal Affairs; Electoral Affairs

## Family

Diane Brown  
Dickerson Family  
Ted Farmer  
Karen Hawley  
Denis Johnson  
Trevor Johnson  
Donna Johnstone  
Roberta Johnstone  
Michael Laing  
Kathy Louthean  
Bill Mason  
Daniel Mason  
Phillip Mason  
Michael Morris  
Lynn Murphy  
Trevor Naley  
Tony Neilson  
Beverley Ratcliffe  
Don Sayers  
Robert Sayers  
Bill Shaw  
Pat Shaw

## Organisation

Australian War Memorial  
Battye Library  
Benedictine Community of New Norcia  
Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA)  
DAA Aboriginal History Research Unit  
Department for Child Protection and Family Support Western Australia  
Honouring Indigenous War Graves  
West Australian Football Commission  
Katanning Historical Society  
Katanning Senior High School  
Landgate  
Macquarie Park Cemetery and Crematorium, North Ryde NSW  
National Archives of Australia – Canberra, Melbourne and Perth  
National Library of Australia – Trove  
The Shire of Morawa  
Returned Servicemen's League of Western Australia  
State Records Office of Western Australia  
Swanleigh

## Individuals

Mark Chambers  
Anna Wyatt  
Jade Balfour  
Dr Neville Green  
Gary Oakley  
Dr Chris Owen  
Beverley Rebbeck  
Philip Sullivan  
John Schnaars  
Greg Wardell-Johnson



*'It is bad here - the conditions are dreadful,  
I think we will be lucky to see tomorrow'*

Private **William John Jackson**

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Exploring the lives of thirteen Aboriginal Western  
Australians before and beyond the battlefields  
at Gallipoli, *They Served With Honour* provides  
a unique insight into an unknown aspect of  
Western Australian history.



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Aboriginal Affairs**