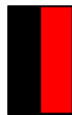


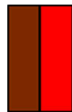
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**Headquarters**



**57<sup>th</sup> Battalion**



**58<sup>th</sup> Battalion**



**59<sup>th</sup> Battalion**



**60<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

q

**15<sup>th</sup> BRIGADE**

The 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the First AIF was formed in Egypt in 1916, and consisted of four Victorian Battalions (57<sup>th</sup>, 58<sup>th</sup>, 59<sup>th</sup> & 60<sup>th</sup>). It was part of the Fifth Division and was under the command of Brigadier-General H E 'Pompey' Elliott from 1916 to 1918.

**HONOURS**

EGYPT 1916  
FROMELLES 1916  
FRANCE & FLANDERS 1916-18  
SOMME 1916-18  
BULLECOURT  
YPRES 1917  
MENIN ROAD  
POLYGON WOOD  
POELCAPPELLE  
PASSCHENDAELE  
AVRE  
VILLERS-BRETONNEUX  
AMIENS  
ALBERT 1918  
MONT ST QUENTIN  
HINDENBURG LINE  
ST QUENTIN CANAL

# Friends of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade

The Friends of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade aim to share information, preserve memories, and arrange commemorations associated with the Brigade.

**Founding Executive Members**

Robin Corfield OAM (Dec.), Jacqueline Todd (Dec.), Lambis Englezos AM

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Lambis Englezos AM (03) 9690 1023 [lambis.englezos@gmail.com](mailto:lambis.englezos@gmail.com)  
Maria Baker (03) 9859 8508 [papbaker@bigpond.com](mailto:papbaker@bigpond.com)  
Graham Williams 0417 360 097 [graham.williams4@bigpond.com](mailto:graham.williams4@bigpond.com)

**POSTAL ADDRESS: Friends of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade  
C/O Maria Baker, 28 First Avenue, Kew VIC 3101 Australia**

Dear Friends,

March 2024

Welcome to the activities of the Friends of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade for 2024.

The key 'Friends' dates to mark in your diary are:

**Saturday 23 March '24 11 a.m. 'Pompey' Elliott Memorial Service at Burwood Cemetery** for the anniversary of the death of Brig-Gen Harold 'Pompey' Elliott. Entry is via the south-west corner, off Gilmour Street (Melway 60 H7). Our guest speaker to be advised. You are invited to a Pompey Elliott presentation and forum on Pompey Elliott with Ross McMullin to be held at the Camberwell Pompey RSL immediately after the ceremony. Hospitality provided.

**Wednesday 24 April '24 1:30 pm. Villers-Bretonneux Service, in the Shrine Sanctuary** to be followed by wreath laying at the 59<sup>th</sup> Battalion tree. The 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade, commanded by Brig-Gen 'Pompey' Elliott played a major part in retaking Villers-Bretonneux. Our guest speaker to be advised.

**Friday 19 July '24 1:30 p.m. The Fromelles Service at Cobbers.** This is a joint service hosted by The Shrine of Remembrance and the Friends of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade to remember the 5533 Australians killed, wounded or captured during this disastrous 18-hour battle. Our guest speaker to be advised.

**Thursday 26 Sept '24 1:30 p.m. Polygon Wood Service at the 57th Battalion tree.** The Battle of Polygon Wood (26 Sept 1917) was a pivotal battle that Australian troops participated in during the Passchendaele campaign. Our guest speaker to be advised.

**If you are on our mailing list, you will be notified of events.**

## From the Secretary

Maria Baker



In spite of the years between the events of World War one and today, interest in our soldiers appears to have increased. With access to digested records in the National Archives of Australia, the War Memorial, the Public Records of Victoria and TROVE from the National Library of Australia, we are able to view prime documents. Each day more and more documents are being found in homes, churches, civic centres, and schools. So it is up to all of us to ensure that these prime documents are preserved for generations to come.

The school children who attend our services have a keen interest in the history of their families and many schools use the documents above and attendance at The Shrine to ensure their knowledge of the contribution of those soldiers. In 2023, attendance at all the four services.. Pompey Elliott, Villers-Bretonneux, Fromelles and Polygon Wood was up on previous years. We thank our speakers: Dr Ross McMullin Historian, Ms Karen Wood from the Villers-Bretonneux Association, Mr Geoffrey Benn President Fromelles Association, Australia and Dr Ross Bastiaan AM RFD

### **Lest We Forget**

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## From the Editor

In this 2024 edition of the Newsletter we have two soldier stories thanks to the efforts of Fred Boland and Louise Ryan. Each had produced and excellent memory of their ancestors who made the supreme sacrifice. This brings the amount of Soldier Stories published by ***Friends of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade*** to 46 and I am pleased to advise that Mike O'Brien has agreed to archive these stories in the RUSIV Library for future access by "*Friends*". We are also happy to announce that the people of Fromelles have honoured Lambis by naming a street after him, so now he can proudly say "Je Suis Fromellois". I trust you enjoy this edition of our Newsletter and welcome your feed-back.

Graham Williams

### **Your Ancestor's Story**

We are always on the lookout for ancestor's stories and will try to publish all the stories. However, we may be forced to use selected extracts rather than the full transcript due to postal restrictions on envelope and weight. Stories that can be presented in one or two A4 typed pages, preferably with a relevant photo will receive priority for publication. Please do not send precious original photos – it is better to scan them and just send us an electronic digital version of the photo. We may also use the stories in our "commemorative service booklet" where appropriate, rather than the start of the year newsletter. .

### **Support - Friends of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade**

Our group grows stronger and our activities are recognized and supported by the Australian Army, the Returned Services League, the Shrine and a large number of private donors and other organizations. We appreciate the support from all.

### **Donations/Membership**

The "Friends of the 15th Brigade" do not charge annual membership. We function on acknowledged donations. Jacquie Todd kept excellent books as does Maria Baker. Funds go towards the cost of printing, postage, wreaths and administration. Donations can be made to Maria Baker at our services and functions or to her postal address 28 First Avenue, Kew VIC 3101. Direct Debit donations are also welcome.

The Account details are:

Friends of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade

BSB 633.000. Account number 121510697.

Bendigo Bank

We thank you for your on-going support

### **Contact List - Friends of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade**

If the details on the envelope containing this newsletter were incorrect in some way, we will gladly update your details on our database before the next correspondence. Please contact us with the correct details.

### **Editor Replacement**

It is time for me to retire as Editor of "Friends". If you feel you would enjoy this challenging and interesting role please contact [graham.williams4@bigpond.com](mailto:graham.williams4@bigpond.com).

### **E-Mail Addresses**

We would be grateful if you would provide us with your e-mail address to include in our contact list. Please send your details to

[graham.williams4@bigpond.com](mailto:graham.williams4@bigpond.com)

## A TALE of WILL and ARCHIE FLETCHER

### TWO BROTHERS WHO SERVED IN THE GREAT WAR

By Fred Boland



This is unfortunately an all too common tale of a family involved in the Great War. Many others would have similar tragic accounts of their lost loved ones. The fact that two brothers enlisted was also not uncommon, as there were families with up to 8 sons enlisted. As we look back now on the experience of these two brothers and others, who served their country, it does seem exceptional in the light of our lives today.

*William Fletcher*, the second of eight children of James and Jean Fletcher was born in 1880 in Dunedin New Zealand. The family had emigrated from Paisley Scotland in 1856.

William's occupation was listed as 'iron moulder'

*Archibald Fletcher* was born in 1892 in the Melbourne suburb of Fitzroy, the eighth child of James and Jean, the family having moved from New Zealand in 1887.

Archie was the first to enlist on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 1915 aged 22 and his occupation was noted as 'driver', most likely of the newly installed tram car in Fitzroy. (Another brother, James was employed as a conductor also on 'the car')



William (left) and Archibald Fletcher

On the 26<sup>th</sup> January 1915 William enlisted at the age of 34, two weeks after his younger brother.

William was married to Elizabeth Walsh and they had a 10 year old daughter, however at the time of his enlistment William and Elizabeth had parted some seven years earlier.

He was allotted to the 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion B Coy and embarked on "HMAT Ulysses" from Melbourne on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1915 to Egypt and then via Lemnos at the end of August to join the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force at Gallipoli.

A quote from AWM :

*"The 21st Battalion arrived in Egypt in June 1915. As part of the newly raised 2nd Australian Division, it proceeded to Gallipoli in late August. It was an eventful trip, the battalion's transport was torpedoed near the island of Lemnos and had to be abandoned. The battalion finally landed at ANZAC Cove on 7 September. It had a relatively quiet time at Gallipoli, as the last major Allied offensives had been defeated in August."*

Mid December saw William evacuated from Gallipoli to Egypt via Mudros and spent nearly 3 months in the Canal Zone, suffering variously from diarrhoea, laryngitis and influenza. He was taken on strength by the 57<sup>th</sup> Battalion and then transferred to the 60<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

At No. 1 Australian General Hospital he was found to have defective vision but re-joined his unit at Hog's Back and on the 18<sup>th</sup> June embarked from Alexandria on the "Kinfaun's Castle" to join the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), disembarking at Marseilles en-route to Armentieres arriving in early July 1916.

Meanwhile, his brother Archie was assigned to the 4<sup>th</sup> Reinforcement 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade as a private and had embarked from Melbourne on the "Wiltshire" on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1915. He joined his battalion on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May and arrived at Gallipoli peninsular some 4 days later. Three days after his arrival he sustained a shrapnel wound to the head.

Archie was admitted to the hospital ship "Newmarket" and then sent to Malta for

2 months at the St George's Hospital where he contracted rheumatic fever. Discharged from hospital he eventually embarked on the "Megantic" for the Dardanelles to re-join his battalion. Evacuated from Gallipoli in December he spent time in Egypt, leaving Alexandria to disembark at Marseilles joining the BEF at the end of March 1916. He travelled to the Western Front and was involved in the battle at Pozieres in late July 1916 and then again in mid-August.

\* \* \* \* \*

The battle of the Somme had begun in early July and was to last until November 2016 and as a diversionary tactic it was decided to attack the entrenched German positions at Fromelles with the hope of preventing German troop movement to the Somme.

It was to here that William was sent after his arrival at Armentieres in early July 1916.

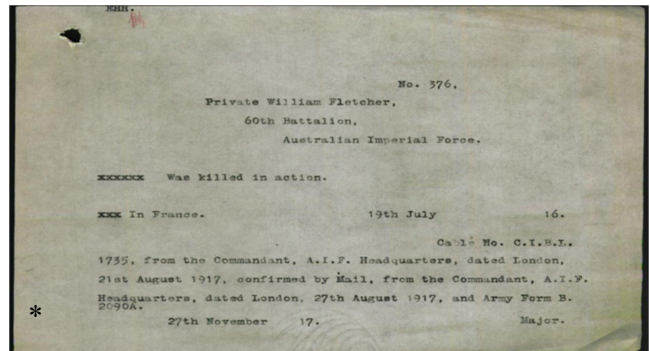
This was the second time the British High Command committed troops to Fromelles after the first British attempt was met with devastating resistance and slaughter. The second Battle of Fromelles started on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 1916 about 18.00 hours in broad daylight not withstanding vigorous protesting by General 'Pompey' Elliot to his superiors that his troops were facing almost certain death.

So it was that near the small French village of Fromelles, William Fletcher was involved in the late afternoon of the 19<sup>th</sup> July 1916 in an infantry charge over open ground towards concrete bunkers housing well entrenched German machine guns of the 6<sup>th</sup> Bavarian Reserve Division

William was wounded and lay in a shell hole alongside Private W. Pretty (4908) also wounded. They stayed together for most of the evening until William, some 20 hours after the battle had begun, attempted to crawl back to the Allied lines.

He did not make it and was listed on the 20<sup>th</sup> July as 'Missing in Action'. At a Court of Enquiry in the Field on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2016 he was declared 'Killed in Action' on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

The Fletcher family were officially notified on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 1916, that William was Killed in Action



In January 1917 our family was to receive a letter from the Red Cross, narrated by Private W Pretty while he was in hospital explaining how William had been wounded.

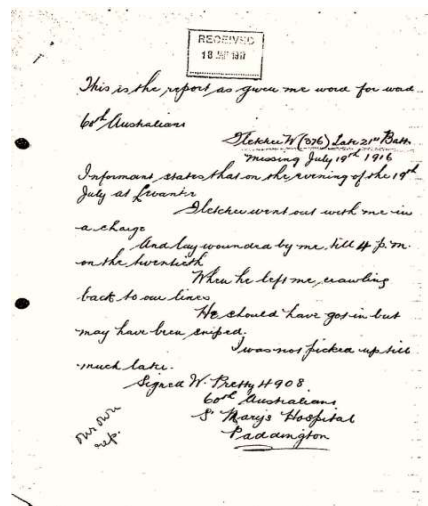
Statement, Red Cross File No 1071102

4908 Pte H. PRETTY, 60th Bn (patient, St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, England), 11 October 1916:

*'This is the report given to me word for word'*  
*'Informant states that:*

*"on the evening of July 19th at Levantie, Fletcher went out with me in a charge, and lay wounded by me till 4 p.m. on the 20th, when he left me, crawling back to our lines[.] He should have got in, but he may have been sniped. I was not picked up till much later".'*

Note on file: 'No trace Germany. Cert. by Capt. Mills. 10.10.19.'



William has no known grave but is memorialised by an inscription on the Memorial Wall at VC Corner Fromelles.



W. Fletcher- Memorial VC Corner Fromelles

*"You hear about men who were wounded and sent back to the frontline five or six times and when they got home, they were locked in a mental institution because they were shell-shocked,"*  
 Matt Rennie OAM Korean War veteran



Archibald Fletcher did not hear about his brother's death until later that year. His battalion was heavily involved in action at the Somme and later at Ypres but from October 2016 Archie's health and behaviour deteriorated.

He was in and out of field hospitals at St Omer Etaples and Rouen, suffering variously from severe neuritis, ruptured tympanum, herpes zoster and Vincent's Angina (trench mouth). He was eventually evacuated and admitted to University War Hospital in Southampton England in August 1917.

His brother-in-law, Jack Cooper, a popular Victorian Football League player and captain of Fitzroy Football Club before the war was killed on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1917 on the Menin Road Ridge during the battle of Passchendaele and is memorialized at the Menin Gate Memorial.

After spending time at various military hospitals, in early December 1917 Archie rejoined his unit in time for the 'German Spring Offensive' in early 1918.

Archie returned home to Australia on the "City of Poona", arriving in Melbourne in May 1919, but not without a brush with the law and the Old Bailey in London first ! It appears that he never recovered, physically or psychologically, from his head wound, the loss of his brother Will, his brother-in-law Jack , and the tragic events of the war.

His mental state deteriorated rapidly to such an extent he spent several years at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum on Stradbroke Island before discharging himself in 1946. He died some 7 months later at the age of 57 and is buried at Lutwyche Cemetery Brisbane.

**LEST WE FORGET**



Frederick Boland (writer)  
 (Grandmother-Isabella Fletcher, sister of Will and Archie)



Fromelles Battlefield as it appears today

## Je Suis Fromellois

In 2023 the people of Fromelles rewarded Lambis Englezos for his untiring work in giving their village international standing by naming a street in their village after him. Lambis now becomes a part of this community and can proudly claim - ----- **“Je Suis Fromellois”**.

The following is an attempt to record the occasion and recognise some of those who played a part in making this happen.



With Pierre, Fromelles Village maintenance



With Mme Collette Durand OAM in Hendecourt  
Colette was influential in promoting the commemoration of Bullecourt



(From L-R) Albert Huchette, former Mayor of Fromelles, Pierre Seillier, Martail Delebarre and Lambis



Jean Charlet friend of Lambis and landowner of the farmhouse near the Le Trou Post cemetery



At “Cobbers” with Martial Delebarre



A view of the streetscape,  
(with Murray Duckworth of Legacy)

## Lieutenant John Edward Turnour DSO

By Louise Ryan  
Grand Niece

John Edward Garth Turnour was the youngest of eight children born to Keppel and Margaret Turnour in 1893. John's early years were spent in the Ballan and Bacchus Marsh areas. His mother died when he was 8. After the death of an older sister in 1907 the family headed for the recently opened irrigated farmland near Cohuna to give dairy farming a go. But Jack did not follow his brothers into a farming career. The 1913 Year Book for the Church of England Diocese of Bendigo lists him as a Stipendiary Reader with responsibility for the district of Bagshot while he was a student at Theological Hall, Eaglehawk.



When war broke out Jack soon headed for Broadmeadows, enlisting on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1914, and was attached to G company of the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion. He was listed as a 21 year old, single Divinity student, born in Brighton. He was 5 feet, 8 inches tall (172 cm), weighing 170 pounds (77 kg), chest measuring 34/37 inches, of dark complexion with brown eyes and black hair.

In 20<sup>th</sup> October 1914 the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion embarked on the Hororato<sup>1</sup>. They arrived at Alexandria on 6<sup>th</sup> December and recommenced training at Mena Camp.

On 5<sup>th</sup> April he was listed as being aboard the Troop Ship "Galeka" and was wounded at the Gallipoli landing on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1915 (bullet to right shoulder). Of the officers and men of the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion 80 were killed, 385 were

wounded and 70 went missing on that day.<sup>2</sup> Jack arrived in Malta on the hospital ship "Clan McGillivray".

By 20<sup>th</sup> August he embarked for Egypt per "Southlands" and 10 days later was on his way back to Gallipoli on the 'Karoo'. From mid November until mid December Jack had another bout in hospital, this time in Lemnos, with icterus (i.e. jaundice) and a sore on the leg. He did not return to Gallipoli.

Jack began the new year with a promotion to corporal and a move to Alexandria. When he transferred to the 59<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 24<sup>th</sup> February his career received a further boost with promotion to Company Quartermaster Sergeant.

A new chapter opened when Jack headed to France on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1916 per 'Kinfauna Castle' and by 5<sup>th</sup> August he has received a gunshot wound to the head of sufficient severity to see him sent to hospital in England for a month. His actions must have been of enough merit to receive notice, because 9<sup>th</sup> August he is appointed 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. His brother Jim, who was also in France (24<sup>th</sup> Battalion), wrote home:

...I saw Jack he is a second Lieut. now & was here for a night to take a draft of troops to France so I was very lucky to see him he looks splendid & seems to of had exceptional lucky as his company has been terrible cut up all the officers killed or wounded. He was wounded in the head the wound is hardly healed up yet he tells me that he would of been killed only for the steel helmet that he was wearing turned the bullet & it only went through the side of his head....

<sup>1</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> is the date given in Jack's service record

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.awm.gov.au/cms\\_images/AWM4/23/AWM4-23-24-3.pdf](http://www.awm.gov.au/cms_images/AWM4/23/AWM4-23-24-3.pdf) (7 June 2009)

The Battalion invested training in its new officer with Jack attending Light Trench Mortar Battery School from 29<sup>th</sup> October to 5<sup>th</sup> November and later the 5<sup>th</sup> Divisional Infantry School from 21<sup>st</sup> January to 20<sup>th</sup> February 1917, with another promotion, to Lieutenant, listed 14<sup>th</sup> February.

On 6<sup>th</sup> March 1917 Jack was wounded in action, once again necessitating a return to England. This occurred when his Battalion was moving from Townsville Camp to the Intermediate Line.

A report of the Proceedings of a Medical Board on 29<sup>th</sup> March states that Jack received a gunshot wound to the right arm, upper third, with a foreign body entering soft tissue but not emerging. An X-ray showed the foreign body in the shoulder but the entrance wound had healed. There was no injury to bone or nerves. Another report dated 26<sup>th</sup> April recorded the decision not to operate to remove the foreign body. He was not discharged from hospital until 14<sup>th</sup> May and did not return to France until mid-June.

In late July Jack was one of three officers detached from his unit to attend Corps Intelligence School (Anzac Corps School) for a couple of weeks.<sup>3</sup>

On 16<sup>th</sup> September Jack's battalion was at Sercus. Church parade had been held that day and on the previous day there was a battalion dinner. Two days earlier all officers and NCO's had attended a demonstration 'Demolition of Pill Boxes'. On the 17<sup>th</sup> the battalion marched out to the Steenvoorde area and then onto the Devonshire Camp in preparation for action.<sup>4</sup>

Jack wrote to his sister

It is now 11.30pm yet I feel I must write to you even, only a few lines.

<sup>3</sup>

[http://www.awm.gov.au/cms\\_images/AWM4/23/AWM4-23-76-18.pdf](http://www.awm.gov.au/cms_images/AWM4/23/AWM4-23-76-18.pdf) (23 July 2009)

<sup>4</sup>

[http://www.awm.gov.au/cms\\_images/AWM4/23/AWM4-23-76-20.pdf](http://www.awm.gov.au/cms_images/AWM4/23/AWM4-23-76-20.pdf) (23rd July 2009)

We have been really up to our eyes in work & now that we are up to strength most of one's own time is taken up in censoring letters however I ought not to growl as they are a jolly fun lot of fellows & it is a pleasure to do any thing for them. ...Every minute is given to training & study, rightly so to (sic). There is every prospect of a stunt soon. All the fellows are very keen & fairly itching for a scrap. We have really had a full spell from the line. ...Well I am due for leave to England next month. 10 days in all. ... Don't worry too much about us all. We will be alright. ...

On the 26<sup>th</sup> September 1917 Jack was wounded in action (shell wounds to the abdomen and right arm, according to his medical records). He initially went to the 6<sup>th</sup> A. Field Ambulance and was transferred to the 17<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station. The War Diary of the 59<sup>th</sup> Battalion reported from Black Watch Corner,

Battalion attacked German positions in POLYGON WOOD – zero hour being 5.50am. The Barrage was put down at 5.50am and at 5.53 the Battalion advanced and captured its first objective in quick time.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> the War Diary reported the casualties of the battle:

The Battalion casualties were 5 Officers, 263 Ors, of these Lt. Francis, Battalion Intelligence Officer, was killed. CAPTAIN STOKFELD, Lieut. JS MANN, Lieut JE TURNOUR and Lieut McINTOSH were wounded. CAPTAIN STOKFELD, Lieut JE TURNOUR and Lieut McINTOSH have since died of wounds. 200 Other Ranks were wounded, 46 killed, while 17 still remain to be accounted for, and are reported



missing. The weather during the attack was fine and warm and a fog during the morning of the 26<sup>th</sup> enabled us to bring in our wounded. ... The Battalion went into the fight at a strength of 22 officers and 694 Ors, making the percentage of casualties 37% - 49%.

Colonel Mason's report on the battle was appended to the War Diary for that month. When he was told that the attack was to go ahead,

I at once told off two companies for the job. "B" (Captain Stockfield) on the right, and "C" (Lieut. Turnour) on the left, with "A" (Lieut. Burse) mopping up. ... We then proceeded to gather shovels, wire and cork screws from the dump. The quiet orderly way that the men filed past the dump and took up a bundle of wire or a shovel or a corkscrew was most impressive and I shall always remember the way in which the late Lieut. Turnour supervised the distribution of the material in the dark and under shell fire.<sup>5</sup>

Jack was buried by Rev. Sulman at Lijssenthoek Cemetery. (Plot 24, Row B, Grave 8).

Brigadier-General H.E. Elliot wrote to Jack's grandmother in England:

"He was one of my most valued and trusted officers. He had served with me from the time he joined the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion in Australia until his death. He was mortally wounded in the battle of Polygon Wood on Sept 27<sup>th</sup>. Before the battle, as he had been so often wounded, I proposed to detail him

for work in the rear, but he insisted on going into action with his men. During the battle, an advance was checked by an enemy machine eached, but his men captured the gun and men. He was taken to the hospital but died the next day. He had, I think, received 5 or 6 wounds in the body. He was most popular in his Battalion and we miss him greatly..."

Jack's older brother A.W. 'Tom' Turnour, was killed 3 weeks later when the 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion took part in the first Battle of Passchendaele, although it was months before this was confirmed to the family. A week later another brother, Keppel, was finally sent home after suffering asthma and illness during his time in the army. In late November a third brother, Jim, was sent home following the amputation of a leg. The last brother, Donald, had been rejected as medically unfit and stayed in Cohuna to manage the family farm.

In October 1930 Major-General H.E. Elliot wrote an article about Jack for the magazine 'The Reveille':

...By September 1917, he had achieved the rank of lieutenant, and had become a temporary commander of the 59<sup>th</sup> when they received orders for the battle. He wore at the time six wound stripes, souvenirs of the Landing, Gallipoli, Fleurbaix, the Somme, Bullecourt and other fields.

In fixing the nucleus, I especially detailed Turnour for some duty in connection with it. Immediately after the order was issued, Colonel Mason, C.O. of the 59<sup>th</sup>, stated that Lieut. Turnour wished him to obtain an interview with me, as Turnour desired to lead his company in the

5

[http://www.awm.gov.au/cms\\_images/AWM4/23/AWM4-23-76-20.pdf](http://www.awm.gov.au/cms_images/AWM4/23/AWM4-23-76-20.pdf) (as viewed 14th March 2009) AIF unit diaries 59<sup>th</sup> Battalion September 1917

forthcoming action. I replied that Turnour appeared to have exceptionally bad luck – that he seemed to be hit every time we had a major engagement, and sometimes in between, and quoted the proverb of the pitcher and the well, all to no purpose.

It appeared that Turnour said that he had served in every rank in the same company (as he regarded it) from the beginning; but this was the first time he had had the chance of commanding it in the temporary absence of his captain, and this it appeared was his chief ambition.

Somewhat reluctantly I gave my consent. As I more or less expected, however, I learnt in the course of the battle that he had been mortally wounded in a most heroic action. It appeared that the attack was held up by machine gun fire from a German pill box.<sup>6</sup> Turnour came on the scene and formed his leading wave roughly in the shape of an arc of a circle to cover among the shell holes facing the pill box.

His plan was to endeavour to rush the place, and he warned both flanks that their job was, while the men in front attracted the enemy's attention and fire, to get round at the back of the pill box, where the entrance was, and bomb the garrison; his men were warned that he himself would give the signal to advance.

Having got his men in position, he placed himself in the centre of the

arc, where all could see him and directly opposite the centre loophole from which the machine gun was firing. Suddenly springing to his feet, he waved the men forward, and led them on. Several times he seemed to stagger, but still kept his feet and hardly checked his forward rush; the enemy gun spurting flame at the loophole, and the bullets raising the dust all around him.

Just as he had almost reached the gun he fell forward, dying. But his work was done; already the men on both flanks had got round and thrown their bombs into the pill box, with deadly effect. ... Turnour was given immediate attention, but died at Poperinghe Hospital on September 28. At least 30 bullets struck him in the charge, and that he kept his feet at all shows the triumph of will power and spirit over mere flesh and blood.

The capture of this particular pill box made a gap in the line of mutually supporting pill boxes that were here a feature of the enemy's defences. Our troops poured through this gap and reduced the others on either flank by encircling them from the rear.

It is hardly too much to say that his individual effort turned the tide of victory in that part of the field in our favour. A recommendation for the V.C brought the grant of a posthumous D.S.O.<sup>7</sup> which hardly seems an adequate reward. However that may be. Turnour's exploit has been immortalised by a

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<sup>6</sup> Pillboxes were the German defence used on the waterlogged Flemish lowlands as an alternative to deep dug-outs. They were capable of holding between 18 and 50 men, small concrete forts up to 4 feet thick and reinforced. Most were blind except for a doorway at the rear. Some were loopholed so that machine guns could fire from within. This is the sort that Jack faced.

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<sup>7</sup> 8,981 Distinguished Service Orders were awarded during [World War I](#), each award being announced in the London Gazette. The order is generally given to officers in command, above the rank of Captain. A number of more junior officers were awarded the DSO, and this was often regarded as an acknowledgement that the officer had only just missed out on the award of the [Victoria Cross](#). (Wikipedia Aug 2009)

picture of the scene as he fell; which is in our War Museum, drawn by one of the A.I.F. artists (Fred. Leist)...<sup>8</sup>



Lieutenant John Edward Turnour DSO



This painting by Fred Leist, held in the Australian War Memorial, depicts **Lieutenant John Edward Turnour**, leading an attack on a pillbox at 5:50 am on 26 September at Polygon Wood. He died from his wounds on 28 September 1917.

Lt John Edward Turnour was the Great Uncle of **Ms Louise Ryan** the writer of this piece.



(From L – R)  
 A.W. 'Tom' Turnour ,  
 unnamed friend from Cohuna  
 J.E.G. 'Jack' Turnour,  
 Keppel Turnour (Jim Turnour, another brother, was in hospital at the time this photo was taken)



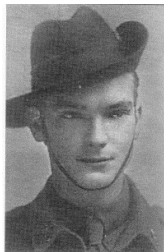
Louse Ryan with Lambis Englezos at our 2023 Polygon Wood ceremony



<sup>8</sup> This article was published less than 6 months before Major-General Elliott's suicide)

## Jim Baddeley Recalls His Great War

by Anthony McAleer and Lambis Englezos



On February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1916, seventeen year old Jim Baddeley from Smythesdale, Victoria, forged his mother's signage on his enlistment papers and joined the AIF underage.

He would travel across the world as a member of the 58<sup>th</sup> Battalion and would soon be thrown into the horrors that were the Western Front. From the terrible winter on the Somme to surviving shell blast at Bapaume, from the killing fields of Polygon Wood to gas attacks at Ypres, from trench raids at Messines to the terrible battles of Villers Bretonneaux, Ville Sur Ancre, Peronne and Bellicourt.

As a young man in my twenties, I had the great privilege of sitting with a 93 year old Jim as he educated me on what the Great War was like through his personal experiences before, during and after the war. Gratefully, he was always open about what he went through and the pain it caused him. The extraordinary interviews I did with Jim were later published by the Lilydale RSL Sub-branch as a memoir that utilised his own words. It was called 'Seventeen Year Old Soldier – Jim Baddeley Recalls his Great War'.

Watching Lambis' wonderful interview with Jim in this short film brings back so many fond memories of him. A true gentleman who survived extraordinary times. To me his personal story is the essence of sacrifice and endurance, bravery and loss, good and bad times.

**Lest We Forget.**

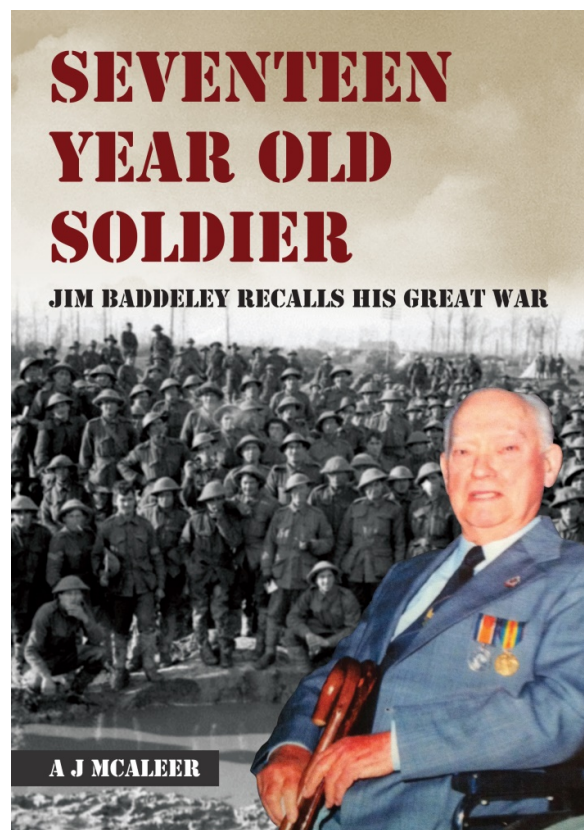
Anthony McAleer

In 1992 **Lambis Englezos** conducted an interview with Jim Baddeley, the last of the 58th Battalion

Jim was 93 at the time. He lived until 99.

The following is a link to that interview

<https://vimeo.com/902043809/fbb0457ae3?share=copy>



## Fromelles The Literature of the Battle

By Mike O'Brien



As part of Rare Book Week 2024, Major General (Retd) Mike O'Brien will give a talk - appropriately on the anniversary of the battle - on this topic. The Battle of Fromelles has generated a large volume of writing. Some is good, some otherwise! There has been sectarian controversy, accusations of coverups and more.

Details: **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024**, 6.30 pm, Tonic House, 386 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.

Bookings :

[www.rarebooksmelbourne.com](http://www.rarebooksmelbourne.com) .

## A Tribute to Pompey

Pierre Seillier OAM



In our last Newsletter we paid tribute to Pierre Seillier on receiving his OAM. Pierre is a strong supporter of Friends of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade.

Here is his tribute to Pompey Elliott



## The RUSIV Library



The military library of the **Royal United Services Institute of Victoria** is accessible to everyone. Its collection, rated by the National Library of Australia as one of national significance, is extensive and well-catalogued, Included is a great collection of First World War books, pamphlet and maps, with the best collection on the Battle of Fromelles available. Our volunteers staff the collection from 9.30 to 4.30 on Mondays and Thursdays (ph excepted).

Visits are by appointment  
([secretary@rusivic.org.au](mailto:secretary@rusivic.org.au)) (24 hours notice)  
with photo ID. Web: [rusivic.org.au](http://rusivic.org.au) .

## Our Soldier Stories

From Graham Williams (Editor)

Over the years **Friends of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade** has accumulated a significant collection of our own Soldier Stories . (Refer following page)

**Mike O'Brien** of the RUSV has kindly agreed to archive these stories and store them electronically at the RUSV. It is envisaged that members will then be able to access these stories on request. This work is ongoing and further details will be announced in due course.

## FRIENDS OF THE 15<sup>TH</sup> BRIGADE SOLDIER STORIES

Year	Soldier	Battalion	Contributor
1993	Tom Brain	60	John Lahey (Age Newspaper)
	Bill Boyce	58	John Lahey (Age Newspaper)
	Bill Owen	58	John Lahey (Age Newspaper)
2009	William James Gunn Murray	58	Alf Argent
	George Martindale	59	Paul Cunningham
2010	Archibald Monkhouse	60	Graeme Monkhouse
	Victor A Dennis	58	Jean Hart
	Francis Gannon	58	Adrienne Dore
2011	Capt L.W.Elliott	57	Gavin Elliott
	Cyril Tasman Boyd	60	Julie Stevens
2012	Donald John Burnet	60	Don Jewell
	Sgt Henry Charles Stubbs	58	Kate Jeffrey
	Pte Oscar Frederick Smith	60	David Smith
2013	Lieut. Wilfred Griffith Barlow	58	Pamela Clarke
	Pte Edgar Williams	57	Graham Trimble
	Pte Francis Joseph Walsh	8	Paula Hyndes
	Pte John Brown	60	(no name)
2014	Driver Joseph Moore Gould	59	Elaine Gould
2015	Cpl William Boyce	58	Lambis Englezos
2016	Pte Horace Whinfield	60	Max, Ken, Yvonne Whinfield, Adam Elliott
2017	Pte Jack Peoples	58	Kevin Peoples
	Sgt George Gowthorpe Martindale	59	Paul Cunningham
	Private Jack Peoples	58	Kevin Peoples
	George Gowthorp Martindale		Nick Brodie
2018	Private C.V. Prew of the 57 <sup>th</sup>	57	Roz Hamilton
	Walter Edward Shiells	58	Tony Jones
	Major Charles Denehy	58	Kristin Schnieder
2019	Captain David Brendon Doyle	60	John and Sandra Torpey
	Sergeant E.J. Morley	60	Helen Sleigh
2020	Alfred Le Roy		Doris LeRoy
	Private James Plozza	58	Colleen Dumesny
2021	Sgt Don Donaldson		David Rose
	Pte Frank Donaldson		David Rose
	Major Walter Cass		Diana Cousens
	William Reid Fitton	59	Peter R Fitton
	Lt Rupert Moon	58	Len Kelly
2022	Sgt Charles Henry Nash	59	Max lamb
	Albert and Arthur Currie	59	Ron Currie
2023	George McAdam Polwarth	59	Liz Barbante
2023	Pte Patrick Vincent Rahilly	60	Tony De Bolfo

## MEMORIES OF 2023

### OUR POMPEY CEREMONY



*Students from Elliott House, Ballarat and Clarendon College, with their teacher Mr David Struth*



*Lambis Englezos welcomed everyone and introduced our Guest Speaker Dr Ross McMullin*



*Ross spoke of his recent book **Life So Full of Promise***



*Jan Dimmick and her son Guy laid the wreath on behalf of Friends of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade*

### OUR VILLERS-BRETONNEUX CEREMONY



*Students from Strathmerton Primary School and their Principal Jane Haywood together with Lambis Englezos and Alison Harcourt*



Our Guest Speaker, Ms Karen Wood spoke of her family's, connection with Villers Bretonneux which goes back over 45 years. Karen's mother, Joyce, was instrumental in the twinning of Villers-Bretonneux with Robinvale, Victoria.

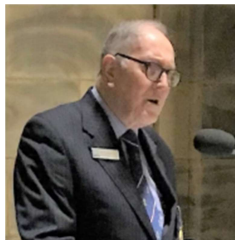


*Karen with Association des Anciens Combattants Francias*

### OUR FROMELLES CEREMONY



*Peter Corlett Sculptor of "Cobbers"  
(Photo courtesy Jennifer Gilmour)*



*Colonel John Coulson OAM RFD ED, Shrine  
Governor, opened the ceremony*



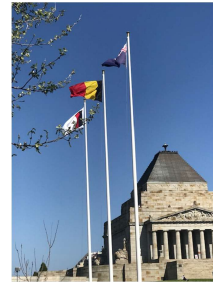
*Mr Andrew Guest read the names of the seven  
Recently Identified Soldiers.*



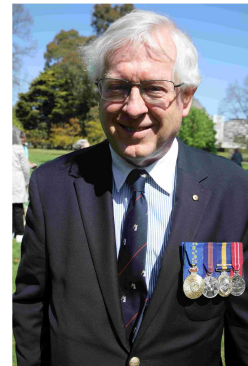
*Suzanne Englezos with Ward and Jo Selby*



### OUR POLYGON WOOD CEREMONY



*Australian, Belgian and 57 Battalion Flags*



*Our guest speaker Dr Ross Bastiaan AM RFD.  
Dr Bastiaan has created plaques to commemorate  
many of Australia's battles including Polygon  
Wood*



*Roz Hamilton, Maria Baker, Ross Bastiaan and  
Lambis Englezos*



*Friends of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade Wreath at the base of  
the 57<sup>th</sup> Battalion tree  
( Above photos courtesy George Fernando)*