

## Foreword



GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
SYDNEY

This fourth volume of 'Rallying the Troops' brings to a conclusion a remarkable journey of research and discovery – research of the highest order. But, of course, these four volumes are much more than a research task. They have brought to life the community of Ku-ring-gai during the First World War and in the immediate post-war period. We have been introduced to some remarkable Australians who called Ku-ring-gai home and who helped to create a nation. These volumes have helped us to understand the enormous impact of the Great War on the people of Australia and those who served her.

Even with the benefit of hindsight, on any tour of Gallipoli and the Western Front you can be quickly overwhelmed by the scale of the loss of life and the stories of the conditions under which the Anzacs lived and fought. Imagine then, the bewilderment and confusion back in Australia as the casualty lists were published after Fromelles, Pozières, Polygon Wood and Passchendaele. Perhaps the only sensible and sensitive way to engage with this tragic period in our history is to bring it out of the world of statistics and down to the societal and human levels.

'Rallying the Troops' has achieved this for us in an informative and well-written manner. Volume IV completes the journey of linking Gallipoli, Fromelles, Pozières, Polygon Wood and Passchendaele to Roseville, Killara, Lindfield, Gordon, Pymble, St Ives, Turramurra, Warrawee and Wahroonga. This volume in particular concentrates on the battles and post war events of 1918 as well as setting us among the hospitals, charities and institutions that had been created to cope with the returning servicemen and women, and the impact of tragedy on families and community. Importantly, it captures the community's reaction to the news of the Armistice: 'The people feeling themselves completely justified, applied themselves very painstakingly and soberly to the business of being glad'. This final volume in particular will assist us in our understanding of why our commemorative style and form have developed to what we know and are accustomed to today.

In October of this year the people of New South Wales will celebrate the opening of the extended and renovated Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park. At the heart of the extension is a new hall, the Hall of Service. Within that Hall, in an imposing and emotional installation, will be displayed soil collected from the 1701 towns, suburbs and villages across New South Wales from which men and women were recruited during the Great War. The four volumes of 'Rallying the Troops' have performed a great service to all of New South Wales because through the re-telling of the experiences of the Ku-ring-gai community we have an insight into the experiences of every one of those 1701 locations.

Roseville, Killara, Lindfield, Gordon, Pymble, St Ives, Turramurra, Warrawee and Wahroonga: all of these suburbs will be found in the Hall of Service. In 'Rallying the Troops' we are privileged to see beyond the suburban names and into the homes and experiences of a generation of Australians whose legacy is profound. We are indebted to David Wilkins, Kathie Rieth and the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society for this invaluable addition to the history of our State and Nation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Hurley'.

**General The Honourable David Hurley** AC DSC (Ret'd)  
Governor of New South Wales

## Preface

*Let those who come after see to it that his name be not forgotten.*

These are the words on the Memorial Scrolls presented to the families of the fallen in what has become known as The Great War. And these are the words that have driven this project, a commemoration of all those associated with Ku-ring-gai who volunteered to serve in the War.

**This volume, the fourth and final in the series, is published to coincide with the centenary of the Armistice of 11 November 1918. This agreement for a cease-fire, signed in a railway carriage in the Forest of Compiègne, France ended the War, but it was many long months before the survivors were able to return home.**

The project was based initially on the hundreds of names, over 1,300, recorded on memorials in Roseville, Lindfield, Killara, Gordon, Pymble, St Ives, Turramurra, Warrawee and Wahroonga. As research progressed, however, nearly 500 additional names were revealed.

The contribution made by the men and women of Ku-ring-gai was outstanding. Of an estimated population in 1914 of about 12,000, nearly 1,800 volunteered. Men served in the various ground troops and light horse units, the navy and air corps, and women with the nursing units. A high proportion of men and women made their own way to the United Kingdom and enlisted with British units. French nationals resident in the area served with their country's army. Of all these volunteers, 300 were killed or died of wounds or disease. Over 340 were recommended for a decoration with nearly 170 receiving awards. These ranged from a Mention in Despatches to the Victoria Cross, the highest honour of all, received by Major Blair Wark, VC DSO, who is commemorated on the Pymble & St Ives Roll of Honour and at Killara Golf Club. His story is related in this volume.

Although the focus of this project was always the war service of the people of Ku-ring-gai, it has revealed a great deal about the community's growth and diversity; less than 10% of those who served were born in Ku-ring-gai and believed to have lived in Ku-ring-gai for their entire lives. Up until the early 1890s, when the railway line connected Hornsby to Milsons Point, the area was principally farmland. Subdivision for residential lots followed, and families moved

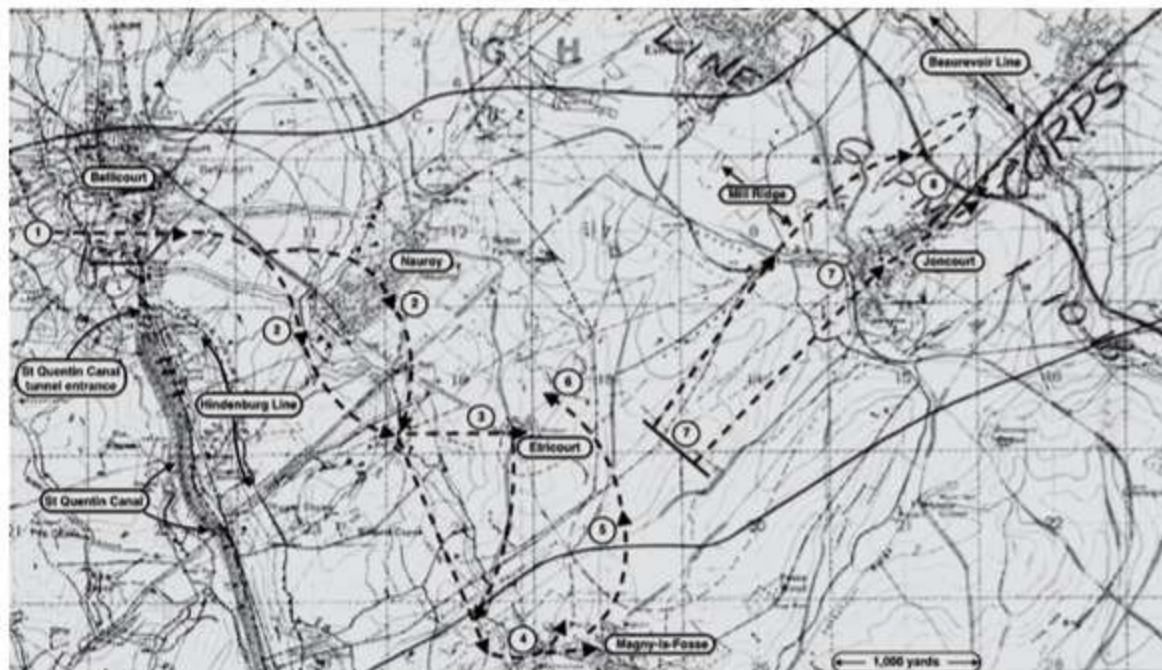
from other areas of Sydney, New South Wales and Australia. Immigrants from New Zealand, New Caledonia, the United States, Canada, France, Switzerland, Russia and India became residents. A substantial number were from Britain. The Unemployed Workmen's Act (UK) of 1905 made provision for unemployed workmen and their dependents to emigrate to find work. Many volunteers whose stories are related in these volumes were British born, some having lived in the area for less than a year before enlisting in the AIF and heading back home to fight. Some residents of Ku-ring-gai were German born, many of whom were naturalized Australians. Their experience throughout the war years was difficult. Regarded with suspicion, some were interned for the duration. As such, these volumes have become a social history as well as a military one.

The chapters in this volume deal with the last year of the War, the battles leading to the Armistice followed by the organisation involved in occupying the troops awaiting repatriation, and the preparation for their return to civilian life. This volume also contains the biographies of volunteers with names beginning S to Z, and an addenda section that includes the biographies of those who have been identified after previous volumes were released. At the commencement of each personal biography is displayed where the service of the veteran is commemorated within Ku-ring-gai. In some cases, however, the note reads: 'Not commemorated in Ku-ring-gai'. Through these pages, we have sought to properly commemorate such persons.

## Australian Corps' Final Battles

(18 September – 5 October 1918)

Hindenburg Outpost Line, St Quentin Canal,  
Beaurevoir and Montbrehain



**Map 6.2**  
Major Wark's 32nd Battalion  
advance from 29 September  
to 1 October 1918.

Sources: Operational map, 2nd Division HQ war diary October 1918 (AWM RCGI100881) with overlay of the 32nd Battalion advance prepared by David S Wilkins. Data sources: from 32nd Battalion war diary, September 1918; AWM RCGI1004578; CEW Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18*, Vol. VI, *The AIF in France During the Allied Advance, 1918*, Angus & Robertson Ltd, Sydney, 1942, pp.971-2, 974, 976, 1,010.

1. **29 September, 9am:** crossed the start line and moved through American units south of Bellicourt; fought through the Main Hindenburg Line and over the canal land bridges.
2. **11.45am:** captured Nauray on the Hindenburg Support (Catelet) Line.
3. **12 noon:** captured Étrécourt.

4. Cleared the northern part of Magny-la-Fosse on the Hindenburg Support (Catelet) Line.
5. **2.30pm:** the battalion swung back towards Étrécourt to protect its left flank.
6. **30 September, 7am:** consolidated the battalion position against a German counter attack from Mill Ridge (near Joncourt) to their north east.

7. **1 October, 6am:** attacked and captured both Mill Ridge and Joncourt.
8. Patrols pushed through to near the Beaurevoir Line.  
**By 6pm** the Allied front line was as shown by the solid wavy line in the north east corner of the map.

### A Victoria Cross (VC)

It was during this phase against the Main Hindenburg Line and beyond over the course of three days from 29 September that Major Blair Wark DSO,<sup>17</sup> brilliantly led his command, the 32nd Battalion (5th Division), from the front in a series of advances from Bellicourt through Nauray, Étrécourt and Magny-la-Fosse to Joncourt. Initially in dense fog under heavy artillery and machine gun fire at very close range from all sides, the situation for his battalion was critical. Major Wark moved quickly to the front to conduct a reconnaissance alone, assessed the enemy dispositions and promptly led his men forward. At this time, some American units involved were at a standstill, utterly leaderless and disorganised, so Wark promptly gathered more than 200 of them under his command, commandeered some passing tanks<sup>18</sup> and pressed forward. His actions in these early stages of the battle narrowly averted considerable confusion among the attacking troops. Still moving fearlessly at the head of his assault force and at times far in advance of it, attended only by a runner, Wark led his command to sweep through the Hindenburg defences towards the village of Nauray. Pushing quickly through

Nauray, while taking 50 prisoners, his battalion then swung towards Étrécourt. Personally leading the assault, he encountered a battery of 77mm calibre field artillery guns firing at point blank range into his rear companies causing heavy casualties. With a few men, he rushed the battery position, to capture four guns and 10 of their crew. The remaining Germans either fled or were killed.

As their advance continued towards Magny-la-Fosse, Major Wark pushed rapidly forward and, with the support of just two Non-commissioned Officers, he surprised and captured 50 Germans. He quickly seized the opportunity and deployed a company forward through the village to secure it. As he checked his new position, Wark realised the speed of his advance had left other units behind causing his left flank to be exposed and insecure. Despite exhaustion from a strenuous day's fighting he rearranged his defences, sought out and made contact with the Allied units either side of him and 'made his line secure'.

At 7am the next day, 30 September, he again led his men forward in attack with an advance of 1,500 yards to the north of Étrécourt, encouraging

## 11: From Home to Home: The Daily Life of Service Men and Women

By Ed Carr

Historians and the general public can know a great deal about the daily lives of soldiers, doctors and nurses in the Great War because they wrote letters to their friends and family, some took photographs and many kept a diary. Fortunately, much of the written record of those extraordinary times has been preserved by institutions like the Australian War Memorial, the National Archives and the Mitchell Library in Sydney. This chapter follows the experiences of several men and women of the Ku-ring-gai district, through their diaries, letters and photographs.



Narrelle Hobbes  
at her desk.  
Photograph Milania  
Oppenheimer.

The trove of first-hand information about those who served in the AIF is rich and deep. Many were away from their home and loved ones for a very long time – as long as four or five years. Letters and diaries record the excitement and frustration of living in new and strange lands. In the trenches of Gallipoli or on the Western Front, the risk of death or serious injury and the horror and destructiveness of war were constant companions. Yet life went on. Men and women still had to eat, wash and sleep somewhere. They worked, joked, went on leave and in their spare time, they played games and devoured letters and newspapers from home.

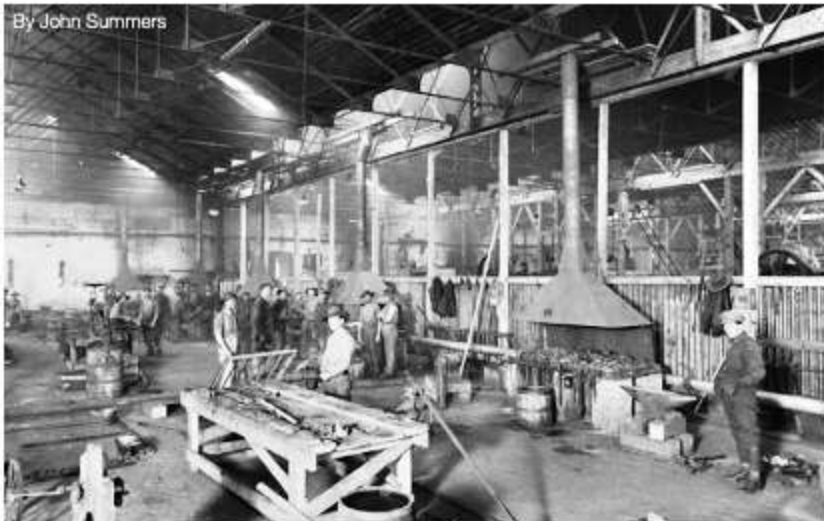
For many if not all, the experience of serving overseas was life-changing in a way that those who have not lived through such times can only imagine. Narrelle Hobbes' summed it up when she wrote from the Valletta Military Hospital, Malta where she nursed many soldiers wounded at Gallipoli:

*Oh dear if this ghastly war  
would only end, somehow one  
feels at times that things can never  
be the same again for years to  
come, people will look at things  
differently and be different.<sup>6</sup>*



## 14: Preparing for Peace: Non Military Employment and Post War Education

By John Summers



Students and German prisoners in the blacksmiths shop at the Australian Corps Training School, Jeumont France in April 1919. The tools used were all made by the students from pieces of salvaged scrap iron. Photograph AWM E08033.

In the months leading up to an anticipated war's end, the leadership of the AIF was confronted with a set of problems unprecedented in recorded history. The dissolution of the Australian war organisation required the demobilisation of 165,000<sup>1</sup> individuals scattered over an area from the Middle East to the British Isles, likely to be waiting for more than a year to be repatriated back to Australia.

Lieutenant General John Monash described the task in psychological rather than logistical terms, explaining that while during the war 'men could be handled in the mass ... yet during mobilisation they had to be handled as sentient impressionable individuals.'

The emphasis was on the moral and physical welfare of each individual, that the ordinary soldier or nurse was the focus of the Non Military Employment (NME) scheme and 'that every man should be made to thoroughly believe that he was being really so treated.' Along with propaganda and openness with the men and women about the progress and difficulties of the immediate period after the Armistice, the scheme of NME (an extension of the existing AIF Education Scheme) was a key element of the 'Reconstruction Morale.'

The aim of this massive and extensive logistical exercise was manifold: to keep 180,000 individuals purposefully active, to prepare them for entry and re-entry in many cases to educational and vocational institutions and the wider workforce and for the economic benefit of the nation. The organisation of transportation through to the recruitment of teachers, from syllabuses to dealing with British universities, employers and importantly trade unions fell to Colonel JH Bruchell and in turn Brigadier Generals WR McNicoll and CM Long.

NME had been formally discussed and planned as early as 10 June 1918 when senior AIF officers met to consider the purpose, character and logistics of a scheme for post war non military life similar to the training schemes being established by the Canadians and New Zealanders. At

## 21: Post War Housing in Ku-ring-gai

By Kathie Rieth

*"Oaklands", Roseville  
31 October 1920*

*I beg to advise change of address formerly of Dudley Street Bondi. I have been allotted a War Service Home at the Plateau Estate, Malvern Avenue, Roseville but the house is not quite finished & in the meantime I have taken rooms at the above address.*

So wrote Mrs Mary Jessup to the Army Records Office, Melbourne. A widow with two daughters, all three had been financially dependent on her son Wellesley, who was killed in action in February 1917. By the end of 1921 Mrs Jessup had moved into No 27 Malvern Avenue.

With the repatriation of thousands of veterans, the young and not so young, the demand for new homes rose sharply. Some returned to established households; others, including many who married while overseas or soon after arriving in Australia, were in need of homes in which to settle and raise families. And then there were the widows and other dependants of men killed or physically or mentally incapacitated by their war service.

House-building in Australia as a whole had slowed during the war years. Ku-ring-gai, it seemed, did not follow this trend. In January 1919, shire president WR Fitzsimons submitted his report to the council focusing on Ku-ring-gai's phenomenal progress:

*...that the war has had little effect in the shire, as the buildings erected from 1913 to 1918, both years included, numbered 1,483 or an average of 247 a year. This alone, he says, represents an increase in the population of about 7,000 in six years.<sup>1</sup>*



Other figures published in construction journals of the time show the War did have some effect. During 1913, 294 buildings had been erected in Ku-ring-gai at a cost of £202,770. For the last months of 1914 and early 1915 these were similar to previous periods, after which building activity slowed. In 1914 there were 319 new buildings, 271 in 1915 and 216 in 1916.<sup>2</sup> In 1917, 160 new buildings were erected, including alterations to existing, for which the total cost was about £124,900. Activity quickened a little during 1918, when 193 new buildings were erected at a cost of £161,795.<sup>3</sup> Then building really accelerated from 184 new houses built in 1919 to 351 in 1920.

In Ku-ring-gai the decade following the War saw a significant growth in the subdivision, for residential lots, of land that had hitherto been orchard, market garden or farm. Post war housing programs in Ku-ring-gai not only provided homes for men returning to their own community but also brought in many veterans and their families with no prior links to the area.

By far the most ambitious program was that of the War Service Homes Commission (WSHC). A vital part of the Federal government's repatriation scheme, between 1919 and 1930, the WSHC built or helped finance a large number of homes, as many as 100, within the Ku-ring-gai area.

**Stock perspectives and plans, War Service Homes Commission.**  
Construction & Local Government Journal  
3 May 1920, p.12-13

# Service, Honour and Commemoration

By David S Wilkins

Those who answered the call of duty abroad in the War received campaign service medals of varying kinds depending on the period and places they served. Some were recognised for their bravery, meritorious service or high performance of duty by being decorated with honours and awards (both imperial and foreign). Wives and mothers were acknowledged for their sacrifice in sending away their loved ones while those who lost their lives were commemorated not only on gravestones and public monuments but also by personal medallions, plaques and badges presented to next of kin.

This appendix describes a selection of medals and commemorative insignia.



1914-18 Memorial Plaque

**1914-18 Memorial Plaque:** Next of kin of all Australian servicemen and women whose deaths were attributable to World War I received a memorial plaque and scroll 'as a solace for bereavement and as a memento'. The substantial bronze Memorial Plaque, 120 millimetres in diameter, shows Britannia and a lion on the front and bears the inscription: 'He/She died for freedom and honour'. The full name of the deceased veteran is engraved on the right hand side of the plaque. No rank, unit or decorations are shown, befitting the equality of the sacrifice made by all casualties. The shape and appearance of the plaque earned it nicknames such as the 'Dead Man's Penny' and the 'Widow's Penny'.

**The 1914-18 Memorial Scroll:** The scroll designed to accompany each Memorial Plaque was of thick paper, headed by the royal coat of arms, and bore the following message:

*He whom this scroll commemorates was numbered among those who, at the call of King and Country, left all that was dear to them, endured hardness, faced danger, and finally passed out of the sight of men by the path of duty and self-sacrifice, giving up their own lives that others might live in freedom. Let those who come after see to it that his name be not forgotten.*

Beneath the message were written by hand in red ink the serviceman or woman's name, rank, honours and unit.

**Royal Letter Accompanying the Memorial Scroll:** Because of the late arrival in Australia of the plaques many scrolls were sent out separately accompanied by a message from the King stating,

*I join with my grateful people in sending you this memorial of a brave life given for others in the Great War.*

**Air Force Cross (AFC):** Awarded to personnel for an act of valour, courage or devotion to duty whilst flying, though not in active operations against the enemy.

**Anzac Commemorative Medallion:** was issued in 1967 to commemorate veterans who survived the Gallipoli campaign.

**Bar:** A Bar (to a decoration) indicates that the decoration was awarded twice. A Bar was not a lesser award. There could be more than one Bar.

**Croix de Guerre (War Cross of Belgium):** was instituted to recognise acts of heroism performed by individuals of any of the Allied powers during the War while on Belgian soil. The medal was awarded by differing levels of military command: a bronze palm, a bronze lion and a gold lion indicated respectively that it was awarded by the army, a regiment or by land forces.

**Croix de Guerre:** (of France) was awarded to military personnel of all ranks including of any Allied army, for bravery in the face of the enemy. The various levels of Croix de Guerre awarded were: bronze (by the army), silver (by a division) and silver-gilt (by a corps). For subsequent acts of bravery the recipient was awarded a palm leaf for army citations, a gold star for corps citations, a silver star for divisional citations or a bronze star for brigade and regimental citations. Recipients of the Légion d'Honneur were automatically eligible to receive the Croix de Guerre.

**Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM):** An extremely high level decoration for bravery awarded to recognise gallantry by the other ranks.

**Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC):** Decoration awarded to commissioned officers for acts of valour, courage or devotion to duty whilst flying aircraft on active operations against the enemy.

**Distinguished Flying Medal (DFM):** Decoration awarded to personnel below commissioned rank for acts of valour, courage or devotion to duty whilst flying aircraft on active operations against the enemy.

**Distinguished Service Cross (DSC):** Decoration for acts of gallantry by naval officers below the rank of Lieutenant Commander, ineligible for the DSO.