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**Special points of interest:**

- More Soldiers Identified
- Our first AGM
- DNA Developments
- Ongoing Research

**OUR FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 19 JULY, 2014**

Our first Annual General Meeting as an incorporated body will be held

at Parramatta RSL Club,

Pitt Street & Macquarie Street, Parramatta

on 19th July, 2014, commencing 10.00 am.



We are looking forward to meeting with you then. Please pass on these details to anyone else you know who may be interested in the Association's activities.

**SUCCESS, SUCCESS, SUCCESS — MORE SOLDIERS IDENTIFIED!!!**

Since we prepared our first Newsletter, we have received with great enthusiasm, elation, relief, and many tears, the news that 20 more soldiers who were buried in the mass graves at Fromelles in 1916 have been identified.

We can proudly claim credit from the research conducted by members of this group alone for the identification of 3 of those soldiers.

In 2013, only 5 soldiers were identified, all from the German Death Lists, i.e., their ID tags were handed to the Red Cross by the Germans in late 1916.

Of the 20 identified in 2014, 16 soldiers were listed on the German Lists. At least one of those, (an uncle of one of our members) had been identified (in 2014) after the requisite DNA samples were provided in 2009/10. (At that time 4 samples were taken, now it is 2.)

The fact that so many of those 'found' in 2014, are on the GDL, points towards two probabilities:

- 1) That the Army team continues to review all forensic evidence as well as the DNA, for the GDL soldiers, and
- 2) That a higher level of 'chance' exists of identification, if one is listed on the GDL.

**SUCCESS, SUCCESS, SUCCESS .... CONTINUED****Problems with researching those on the GDL**

Some websites, where each of these men are listed, have had over 2,500 'hits'. This indicates a large number of people are working on, or have worked on this task. And thus the fact that so many remain unidentified points towards the difficulties associated with that specific research. Royce Atkinson has commented that at the personal level, and having worked on 5 of these 'boys' with others, he has struggled to even make an impression. Of the 5 being researched for example, 4 of the 5 remain at the "brick wall" stage, though he has managed to find the needed donor for 1 of the 5. This year, we do have a group of trained researchers working together, and they do have access to each other - and importantly to genealogical research resources, at a local library. For those on the GDL, that we have failed to progress, we have asked this group to peer review the work, and to take on some new 'boys' to see if we can 'make an impression' on this difficult group.

**The "Additional"**

Four identified soldiers were "additional", i.e. that group that we, in the Association have been targeting.

They were:

- ◇ Lt. Reginald Theodore Griffen, 32 Battalion.
- ◇ 2560 Sgt David Samuel Anderson, 54 Battalion.
- ◇ 1087 Sgt. Maj. William Henry Christian Rose, 55 Battalion and
- ◇ Joseph Edward Lee, 60th Battalion.

Of that 4, 3 were identified by the efforts of the Associations researchers. The one not identified by 'us', was Joseph Edward Lee of the 60th Battalion. Now to read the Red Cross reports of Joseph, (recommended) one would never think that he was a candidate to be found. Nevertheless, some obviously dedicated folk have successfully completed that research.

**Some thoughts:**

One can never be sure, who is at Pheasant Wood, but every missing soldier is a possibility.

- Those who are not there (or in other known resting places, must be either 'in the field' or at VC Corner.
- We are doing very well indeed, and have been acknowledged by the Army, especially in the finding of the 'additional'.
- Finally, 3 soldiers will now have their names on their 'headstones' as a result of research from this Association. Thanks to You!

It is highly appropriate that the unstinting leadership of the Australian Government, Army, and particularly the staff of the Unrecovered War Casualties Section —Army, Fromelles Team are acknowledged as an example of their commitment to our fallen cobbers.

May they now all have the dignity of their own marked grave.

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## THE FULL LIST OF IDENTIFIED SOLDIERS :-

Sydney John Gray	Vinton Baltam Baker	Joseph Edward Lee
Gordon Thomas Smith	William Hinton Doust	Ernest Robert Oliver
Albert Williamson	Archie McDonald	Jack Marchmont Campbell
Harold George Woodman	Percy Weakley	Edgar William Parham
Herbert Newey St. Smith	David Samuel Anderson	Frederick James Glenn
Reginald Theodore Griffin	William Henry C. Rose	William Thomas Connolly
John Edward Crocker		Adolph Thompson Knable.

## THE RESEARCH DOESN'T STOP THERE

So far we have lodged 12 submissions to UWCS - Army since the end of January, 2014 alone. If any identifications arise from these submissions, they will be part of announcements in 2015.

The Fromelles Association of Australia is part of a much larger effort to identify the soldiers of Fromelles, and we are deeply honoured to work with, and for families to achieve, identifications. The focus of the Fromelles team of researchers, is to place a soldier's name on his grave. Simply put, nothing else matters.

## WE HAVE INCORPORATED.

Just after our first newsletter went live in March, this year, we received confirmation of our registration as The Fromelles Association of Australia Inc. We can now provide a copy of our Constitution as an attachment with this email, and it will be posted on our Facebook page as well.

## CONTACT FROM AUSTRALIAN WORLD WAR ONE DESCENDANTS ASSOCIATION. ([www.awwod.org.au](http://www.awwod.org.au))

Following the sending out of our first Newsletter, I received contact from Arline Ronsisvalle, Secretary of that Association. Her members have been permitted to march at the back of the Anzac Day march in Sydney for over 10 years, and she suggested we might like to pass on the details of how and when to become involved. If you would like to drop her a line, her email is: [arlineronsisvalle@bigpond.com](mailto:arlineronsisvalle@bigpond.com).

## ONGOING RESEARCH TO FIND THE MISSING

- ◆ Researchers are always welcome. Our researchers are actively working on the identification of soldiers' families for the purpose of providing a named grave at Pheasant Wood, rather than an "Unknown" soldier.
- ◆ Proposal for calls for assistance. Royce has come up with some proforma letters to Genealogical groups, and to schools, suggesting that they may be able to offer assistance so as to find links to unidentified soldiers. These look great. We will be discussing the sending out of these items in the ongoing business of the Association.

*For those lost so far from home.*

- ◆ Meeting with Ancestry. Royce and others had a meeting with Ancestry Australia CEO Ben Mercer, on 26 March, 2014. Royce can update us on what is likely to develop from that meeting at our AGM at Paramatta on 19 July, 2014.
- ◆ Access to Government Births, Deaths and Marriages registries. We have received advice that New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia will be able to provide “free” access to their records for Association-sanctioned research. Applications for information are to be forwarded through Royce Atkinson for now.

### DNA TESTING.

UWSCA are negotiating a new contract for DNA identification. We do not know who or where, the contract is likely to be issued to, but a decision will be made in July, 2014.

Until then, the protocol from UWCSA will be:

- (a) No confirming phone calls will be made to donors we identify in the mean time; and
- (b) No DNA kits will be dispatched to donors till July (at least).

We will need an update on the process involved, and who is responsible for it, at our AGM.

### FACEBOOK DEVELOPMENTS

The Fromelles Association of Australia page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Fromelles-Association-of-Australia/400714926696817>

Our page name was changed in order to reflect the Association’s correct name now that we have incorporated. We have included our updated newsletter on our Facebook page.

We hope you can “Like” our Facebook page and go on to contribute your own stories of how your family has been connected with and impacted by The Battle of Fromelles.

I intend to continue publishing our own newsletter on that Facebook page in future also.

The Fromelles Descendants Database page.

Preceding our own Facebook involvement was the “closed” Facebook page for the Fromelles Descendants Database. There are many stories from people searching for their ancestors and some recounting the elation at finding a connection to somebody otherwise lost a long time ago.

Find Us on  
Facebook  
under:  
Fromelles  
Association of  
Australia

One contact on that database had been seeking a response from the Army for the last few years regarding identification of a missing relative. After seeking information, Royce Atkinson was able to advise her that she and her family were not the contact persons, and that the sampling provided from other family members did not provide a match. She was very grateful, and now reassured. She has even gone on to connect with family members she was otherwise unaware of. A great result. Others have posted on the Descendants database that they have found a lost ancestor through the efforts of our own Association. Very gratifying.

### **FEEDBACK FROM OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER, MARCH, 2014.**

Our first newsletter was sent to all those persons who had made contact with us in some way or other, whether from the first meeting held at Kearsley in 2012, or since. In one email, I was described as “Rupert”, perhaps a reference to Rupert Murdoch, or publishing generally.

One response received came from Paul Cobb, author of *Fromelles 1916*, advising that this is “a significant milestone in the Association’s development.”

We received many compliments on the publication of our first newsletter, some of which went on to advise that they would be passing our information on to other family members who were similarly interested in the Battle of Fromelles, and our attempts to identify missing soldiers.

Some have recounted their own emotional responses to having travelled to Fromelles and feeling their ancestor ‘walking with’ them as they did.

Others, having seen our postings on Facebook have advised that the Newsletter triggered some thoughts on writing their own story. Let’s hope we read them soon.

Thank you all for that, and the many other compliments that came back from you all.

### **WEBSITE FOR THE ASSOCIATION?**

We have received feedback from Mr. Chris Bryett regarding a possible website tool. Chris was active along with Lambis Englezos in trying to muster the Army’s involvement in holding the initial archaeological exploration of the Fromelles mass graves.

Chris has advised us that “Weebly” is free and fairly easy to use. He used it for his own site seeking inscription of Fromelles on the French and Belgium niche of the hall of Memories at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, Sydney. If anybody is familiar with “Weebly” it may be useful to pursue a web site through that facility.

### **AN UPCOMING BOOK ON FROMELLES**

A publication spanning two volumes should be published by Oxford Archaeology in June. Allowing for the usual last minute delays, it will probably be published in July.

OA is now working out its print run. They have asked people in Australia to estimate how many copies should be earmarked for sale in Australia. They suggested 10.

Local people contacted by OA suggest the need might be more likely for 500 copies, as there is likely to be far more interest in Australia than in UK.

The two volumes of the book deal with the battle, the process of excavation (with illustrations of anonymous skeletons for the first time), the artefacts, what anthropology told us, and how anthropology was integrated with service records of those who might be in the grave, the extraction of DNA and relating it to relatives, the procedures of the Fromelles identification board, etc.

All in all, probably the best insight available on what went on at a major ‘forensic’ mass burial.

If anyone is interested in more information, please let us have your feedback. We will pass it on to the appropriate contact persons.

**Submit Your  
story for  
inclusion in  
future  
Newsletters.**

**The Fromelles  
Association of Australia**

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The Fromelles Association of Australia has

incorporated in order:

- To champion the Sacrifice of the Soldiers who served at Fromelles, and their families.
- To promote, encourage, and document research designed to identify the missing soldiers of the Battle of Fromelles.
- To forge strong relationships with organisations and people interested in the Battle of Fromelles, especially families of soldiers, the Australian Army, and the citizens of Fromelles.

**Identified at last: Lt. Reginald Theodore Griffen, 32 Bn (l), Sgt David Samuel Anderson, 54 Bn (mid.) & Sgt. Maj. William Henry Christian Rose, 55 Bn. (at left side of pic on right of page)**



*For those lost so far from home.*