

**In this edition:****MORE IDENTIFICATIONS, SO ANOTHER NEWSLETTER**

We posted a Newsletter for March-April, ahead of Anzac Day. We would normally not be posting a Newsletter again until July, around the time of the anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles. But events overtook us after our March-April Newsletter was issued. We announced Two (2) newly identified soldiers: Corporal Alfred Thompson and Private Claude Yeo. But after we published, we found that there were in fact Nine (9) newly identified soldiers.

What makes the announcement all the more satisfying, is to have been acknowledged by the Unrecovered War Casualties Fromelles Project Team specifically acknowledge the work of our Association – the Researchers, the contacts, the families of the identified soldiers – in making its announcement. The following is reproduced from our Facebook page, published on 9 April, 2018.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: Nine World War I Australian Soldiers who fought in the Battle of Fromelles in France have formally been identified at the 2018 Fromelles Identification Board.

These soldiers were originally recovered from unmarked mass graves adjacent to Pheasant Wood in France along with a further 250 Australian soldiers who fought and died in the 1916 Battle of Fromelles.

A range of evidence collated by anthropologists, archaeologists and DNA specialists, along with artefacts and historical records was presented to the Fromelles Identification Board. The board concluded there was sufficient evidence to identify the remains found as the soldiers listed below:

- Captain Kenneth Malcolm MORTIMER
- Corporal Alfred THOMPSON
- Private Henry BELL
- Private William Edwin BOYCE
- Private Henry GARDNER
- Private Alexander McCULLOCH
- Private Stanley Richard O'DONNELL
- Private James Robert SMITH
- Private Claude YEO

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission will erect new headstones with the details of the nine identified soldiers on 19 July 2018, during the annual commemoration ceremony at Fromelles. The identification of soldiers killed in battle has been made possible by the Australian Army's Unrecovered War Casualties Fromelles Project team.

Members of the public whose relatives fought in the Battle of Fromelles, have a grave listed as unknown and are known to have died on 19 or 20 July 1916 are encouraged to register with the Australian Army Unrecovered War Casualties unit.

The Army also wishes to acknowledge the work of The Fromelles Association of Australia, the original Fromelles project team and the forensic specialists who all worked and contributed to these outcomes.

An online registration form can be completed at: <https://www.army.gov.au/forms/uwc-a-online-registration-form>

Additionally, if any family members have images of the identified soldiers please contact: army.uwc@defence.gov.au

Facebook: AusArmy #GoodSoldiering #YourADF #Fromelles



Captain Kenneth Mortimer

Service Number:	N/A
Battalion:	29th Battalion
Brigade:	8th Brigade
Age enlisted:	20 years, 2 months
Birthplace:	Wodonga, VIC
Date of enlistment:	1st July, 1915
Enlistment place:	Royal Military College, Duntroon, ACT
Date of death:	19th/20th July 1916, Battle of Fromelles

© Commonwealth of Australia. Photo: Australian Army

Kenneth Mortimer was born in Wodonga, Victoria. He was single and a Staff Cadet at the Royal Military College when he enlisted in the Australian Army on 1 July 1915. He was posted to 29 Battalion, Headquarters Staff.

On 9 November 1915, Lieutenant Mortimer, aged 20 at the time, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales, on board HMAT A72 Beltana.

Captain Mortimer served in Egypt and the Western Front before he was killed in action at Fleurbaix, France, on 20 July 1916.

Captain Mortimer was one of 250 Australian and British World War One soldiers recovered from a mass burial site at Pheasant Wood in France in 2009 and reburied in the Fromelles Military Cemetery in 2010.

Captain Mortimer was identified in 2018.

Further information regarding Captain Mortimer can be obtained from his Service Record at the National Archives of Australia on the link below:

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=7988857>



Private Alexander McCulloch

Service Number: 1011
Battalion: 32nd Battalion
Brigade: 8th Brigade
Age enlisted: 34 years
Birthplace: Nairn, Scotland
Date of enlistment: 24th June, 1915
Enlistment place: Blackboy Hill, WA
Date of death: 19th July 1916, Battle of Fromelles

Alexander McCulloch was born in Nairn, Scotland. He was single and employed as a labourer when he enlisted in the Australian Army on 24 June 1915. He was posted to 32 Battalion, C Company.

On 18 November 1915, Private McCulloch, aged 34 at the time, embarked from Adelaide, South Australia, on board HMAT A2 Geelong.

Private McCulloch served in Egypt and the Western Front before he was killed in action at Fleurbaix, France, on 19 July 1916.

Private McCulloch was one of 250 Australian and British World War One soldiers recovered from a mass burial site at Pheasant Wood in France in 2009 and reburied in the Fromelles Military Cemetery in 2010.

Private McCulloch was identified in 2018.

Further information regarding Private McCulloch can be obtained from his Service Record at the National Archives of Australia on the link below:

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=1941589>



Private Claude Yeo

Service Number: 795
Battalion: 30th Battalion
Brigade: 8th Brigade
Age enlisted: 38 years, 7 months
Birthplace: Randwick, NSW
Date of enlistment: 1st July, 1915
Enlistment place: Liverpool, NSW
Date of death: 20th July 1916, Battle of Fromelles

(No photo available.)

Private Claude Yeo was born in Randwick, New South Wales. He was single and employed as an auctioneer when he enlisted in the Australian Army on 1 July 1915. He was posted to 30 Battalion, C Company.

On 9 November 1915, Private Yeo, aged 39 at the time, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales, on board HMAT A72 Beltana.

Private Yeo served in Egypt and the Western Front before he was killed in action at Fleurbaix, France, on 20 July 1916.

Private Yeo was one of 250 Australian and British World War One soldiers recovered from a mass burial site at Pheasant Wood in France in 2009 and reburied in the Fromelles Military Cemetery in 2010.

Private Yeo was identified in 2018.

Further information regarding Private Yeo can be obtained from his Service Record at the National Archives of Australia on the link below:

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=3454747>



Private Henry Bell

Service Number:	191
Battalion:	29th Battalion
Brigade:	8th Brigade
Age enlisted:	38 years, 4 months
Birthplace:	Bendigo, VIC
Date of enlistment:	8th July, 1915
Enlistment place:	Eaglehawk, VIC
Date of death:	19th July 1916, Battle of Fromelles

Private Henry Bell was born in Bendigo, Victoria. He was married and employed as an insurance agent when he enlisted in the Australian Army on 8 July 1915. He was posted to 29 Battalion, A Company.

On 10 November 1915, Private Bell, aged 39 at the time, embarked from Melbourne, Victoria, on board HMAT A11 Ascanius.

Private Bell served in Egypt and the Western Front before he was killed in action at Fleurbaix, France, on 19 July 1916.

Private Bell was one of 250 Australian and British World War One soldiers recovered from a mass burial site at Pheasant Wood in France in 2009 and reburied in the Fromelles Military Cemetery in 2010.

Private Bell was identified in 2018.

Further information regarding Private Bell can be obtained from his Service Record at the National Archives of Australia on the link below:

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=3008625>



Private Henry Gardner

Service Number: 889
Battalion: 30th Battalion
Brigade: 8th Brigade
Age enlisted: 24 years, 11 months
Birthplace: Whitewell, England
Date of enlistment: 20th July, 1915
Enlistment place: Liverpool, NSW
Date of death: 20th July 1916, Battle of Fromelles

(No photo available.)

Private Henry Gardner was born in Whitewell, Yorkshire, England. He was single and employed as an asylum attendant when he enlisted in the Australian Army on 20 July 1915. He was posted to 30 Battalion, D Company.

On 9 November 1915, Private Gardner, aged 25 at the time, embarked

from Sydney, New South Wales, on board HMAT A72 Beltana.

Private Gardner served in Egypt and the Western Front before he was killed in action at Fleurbaix, France, on 20 July 1916.

Private Gardner was one of 250 Australian and British World War One soldiers recovered from a mass burial site at Pheasant Wood in France in 2009 and reburied in the Fromelles Military Cemetery in 2010.

Private Gardner was identified in 2018.

Further information regarding Private Gardner can be obtained from his Service Record at the National Archives of Australia on the link below:

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=4028082>



Private James Smith

Service Number: 3983
Battalion: 31st Battalion
Brigade: 8th Brigade
Age enlisted: 22 years, 9 months
Birthplace: Allora, QLD
Date of enlistment: 12th December, 1915
Enlistment place: Enoggera, QLD
Date of death: 20th July 1916, Battle of Fromelles

(No photo available)

Private James Robert Smith was born in Allora, Queensland. He was single and employed as a labourer when he enlisted in the Australian Army on 12 December 1915. He was posted to 32 Battalion, 9th Reinforcements.

On 31 January 1916, Private Smith, aged 22 at the time, embarked from

Brisbane, Queensland, on board HMAT A62 Wandilla.

Private Smith served in Egypt and the Western Front before he was killed in action at Fleurbaix, France, on 20 July 1916.

Private Smith was one of 250 Australian and British World War One soldiers recovered from a mass burial site at Pheasant Wood in France in 2009 and reburied in the Fromelles Military Cemetery in 2010.

Private Smith was identified in 2018.

Further information regarding Private Smith can be obtained from his Service Record at the National Archives of Australia on the link below:

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=1783199>



Private Stanley O'Donnell

Service Number: 314
Battalion: 29th Battalion
Brigade: 8th Brigade
Age enlisted: 26 years, 5 months
Birthplace: Malvern, VIC
Date of enlistment: 1st July, 1915
Enlistment place: Melbourne, VIC
Date of death: 19th July 1916, Battle of Fromelles

(no photo available)

Private Stanley Richard O'Donnell was born in Malvern, Victoria. He was single and employed as a warehouseman when he enlisted in the Australian Army on 1 July 1915. He was posted to 29 Battalion, A Company. On 10 November 1915, Private O'Donnell, aged 26 at the time, embarked from Brisbane, Queens-

land, on board HMAT A11 Ascianus.

Private O'Donnell served in Egypt and the Western Front before he was killed in action at Fleurbaix, France, on 19 July 1916.

Private O'Donnell was one of 250 Australian and British World War One soldiers recovered from a mass burial site at Pheasant Wood in France in 2009 and reburied in the Fromelles Military Cemetery in 2010.

Private O'Donnell was identified in 2018.

Further information regarding Private O'Donnell can be obtained from his Service Record at the National Archives of Australia on the link below:

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=7996281>



Private William Boyce

Service Number: 1218
Battalion: 32nd Battalion
Brigade: 8th Brigade
Age enlisted: 28 years
Birthplace: Gulgong, NSW
Date of enlistment: 19th July, 1915
Enlistment place: Blackboy Hill, WA
Date of death: 20th July 1916, Battle of Fromelles

Private William Edwin Boyce was born in Gulgong, New South Wales. He was single and employed as an engine driver when he enlisted in the Australian Army on 19 July 1915. He was posted to 32 Battalion, D Company. On 18 November 1915, Private Boyce, aged 28 at the time, embarked from Adelaide, South Australia, on board HMAT A2

Geelong.

Private Boyce served in Egypt and the Western Front before he was killed in action at Fleurbaix, France, on 20 July 1916.

Private Boyce was one of 250 Australian and British World War One soldiers recovered from a mass burial site at Pheasant Wood in France in 2009 and reburied in the Fromelles Military Cemetery in 2010.

Private Boyce was identified in 2018.

Further information regarding Private Boyce can be obtained from his Service Record at the National Archives of Australia on the link below:

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=3105162>



Corporal Alfred Thompson

Service Number: 2825
Battalion: 55th Battalion
Brigade: 14th Brigade
Age enlisted: 22 years, 2 months
Birthplace: Geelong, VIC
Date of enlistment: 11th August, 1915
Enlistment place: Warwick Farm, NSW
Date of death: 20th July 1916, Battle of Fromelles

(for photo see below)

Corporal Alfred Thompson was single and a farmer when he enlisted in the Australian Army on 11 August 1915. He was posted to 17 Battalion, 6th Reinforcements. On 2 November 1915, Private Thompson, aged 23 at the time, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales, on board HMAT

A14 Euripides.

Corporal Thompson served in Egypt and the Western Front before he was killed in action at Fleurbaix, France, on 20 July 1916.

Corporal Thompson was one of 250 Australian and British World War One soldiers recovered from a mass burial site at Pheasant Wood in France in 2009 and reburied in the Fromelles Military Cemetery in 2010.

Corporal Thompson was identified in 2018.

Further information regarding Corporal Thompson can be obtained from his Service Record at the National Archives of Australia on the link below:

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=1831497>

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A Reminder:

An Invitation to the Australian Fromelles Association and to friends and family from:

Wollondilly Anglican College

3000 Remembrance Drive, Tahmoor NSW

**Opening of the ANZAC Memorial (Remembering Fromelles)
Monday, 18 June 2018**

Members of the Fromelles Association of Australia are invited as our guests of honour to the opening of the ANZAC Memorial and Shelter on the College Grounds.

Official Ceremony and Dedication begins at 10.00 am.

Please RSVP to the School by Friday 8 June, 2018

Guests associated with Fromelles are invited to register at the Alfred Deakin Administration Building at 9.15 am



We often come across stories about the soldiers who fought or served at Fromelles. The following article is by Megan Kovel, Intern, Research & Discovery at the State Library of New South Wales, and was originally published on 18th July, 2016.

The Battle of Fromelles

On the evening of 19 July 1916, Australian troops became involved in their first major battle on the Western Front

Stationed in northern France, close to the town of Fromelles, between the Somme Valley and the Belgian border, the 5th Australian and 61st British divisions had yet to engage in any combat.

Several weeks prior, just south of Fromelles, the British Army and German Second Army began what would become a five month long battle known as the Somme Offensive. The intense fighting over a period of several weeks required the British to request reinforcements. Knowing the Germans would be needing similar support, careful attention was paid to the movement of troops within the region. When intelligence reports arrived indicating movement, it was decided an attack would be planned against the German line at Fromelles.

This battle was intended to distract the Germans from moving south to join the larger offensive. The artillery bombardment of the German lines began on the morning of 19th July and by 6 p.m. the full assault had commenced. With periods of rain in the previous days, the fields were wet and muddy. Aged 22 when he enlisted in 1915, W.J.A. ('Allan') Allsop was present that night and he documented in his journal a vivid account of the events which unfolded. As a stretcher bearer, Allsop was responsible for ferrying the wounded from the trenches to the ambulances posted behind the lines:

'Backwards & forwards we travelled between the firing line and the R.A.P. [Regimental Aid Post] with knuckles torn and bleeding due to the narrow passage ways. "Cold sweat", not perspiration, dripped from our faces and our breath came only in gasps. The communication trench was about 1½ miles long. By the time we had completed 2 trips (six miles) with the numerous zig-zag turns in the trench and the stoppages caused by the traffic up and down, we were weak and completely exhausted.' (Allan Allsop, MLMSS 1606/Item 2)

As the battle wore on, the number of wounded grew exponentially. Teams worked non-stop, carrying one man at a time to safety. The trip, however, proved to be just as dangerous for Allsop and the other stretcher bearers, as it was for the soldiers stationed in the trenches. He recounted:

'No sooner had I entered this sap "Piney Avenue" than a bullet struck my steel helmet and nearly knocked it off my head. The sound caused my mates in front of me to look round. Happily the bullet came at an angle so that the roundness of the helmet caused it to glance off.' – (Allan Allsop, MLMSS 1606/Item 2) (transcript; page 15)

When the battle ended on the morning of 20th July, the Australian and British divisions had been devastated. What seemed like a decent plan in theory, turned out to be ineffective. The massive size of 'no-man's land' separating the two trenches, the relative inexperience of the men involved, and the inability to effectively notify all troops that the engagement was called off all contributed to the failure. Additionally, because the Germans had been on the high ground, they had seen all of the movements of the British and Australian troops in the period leading up to the battle. Unfavourable weather conditions had forced the postponement of the offensive for several days, and therefore it would not have been hard for the Germans to deduce something was about to happen. Allsop documented in his journal the preparations of battle:

16th July (Sunday) Two of us were given a job of making the Operating Theatre Gas Proof. Later in the afternoon we were asked to make two operating tables as fast as we could. Evidently something is expected. The arrival of troops and guns seem to suggest it.

17th July (Monday) Orders this morning stated that an offensive movement had been planned for today but it has been postponed till Wednesday. It is rather strange that such orders should be circulated when they are generally kept secret. Aeroplanes were very busy today. (W. J. A. Allsop diary, 20 July 1916, MLMSS 1606 / Item 2, a3146012 - a3146013)

With 5,533 Australian casualties, the Battle of Fromelles is recognized as the deadliest twenty-four hours in Australian military history. In 2008, a project was undertaken to discover the location of mass graves nearby the battlefield which was believed to hold the remains of soldiers who perished during the battle. Through the hard work and dedication of the project team, the remains of 250 individuals were recovered. In 2010, the soldiers were properly buried with full military honours at the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery, and [as of May, 2018, 159] of the 250 soldiers had been identified.

During the war, Allsop served in both Egypt and France, assigned to the 8th Field Ambulance, 15th Field Ambulance, and later the Australian Corps Signal company. He returned to Australia in April 1919 on the troopship, *Sardinia*. A collection of five journals Allsop kept which cover his experiences between July 1915 and December 1917 were purchased in 1920 by the State Library as a part of their European War Collecting Project.

In commemoration of the centennial anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles, the diary of Allan Allsop was on display in the State Library's Amaze Gallery.

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UPCOMING ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, July 29 at 10:30 AM

Castle Hill RSL Club

77 Castle Street, Castle Hill NSW 2154

Our AGM this year will be held on the 29th July. Hopefully the venue at Castle Hill will enable more people to be present and enjoy the event and the topics being discussed on the day.

Anyone with an article to be put on the agenda, please contact Geoffrey Benn via email on gvb456@gmail.com

The meeting proper is expected to start at 11.00am after a minute's silence.

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One of our Guests at our AGM will be Scott Harris, from:

'THE WARRIOR'S RETURN'.

This organisation started operating just over 3 years ago. The originators realized Australia has a new generation of veterans. These are all fresh from active service all around the world.

Some of them are coming back with physical injuries that can be seen and others are coming back with injuries that can't be seen and in some incidences both.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a significant and very widespread issue that is not being adequately dealt with by the Australian Defence Force or the Australian Government. Many serving and former members of the ADF feel helpless and unsupported in their battle with this disorder.

But this disorder is not only owned by member's that have seen operational service, it is owned by any member that has seen or been involved in an activity or action that has

For those lost so far from home.

seen or been involved in an activity or action that has a significant impact on that service personnel.

Many ex-service personnel may not have PTSD but suffer significant difficulty in re-adjusting to civilian life. Grief (loss of brotherhood), Isolation, poor coping skills, relationship issues and many other difficulties are rife amongst the brave men and women who have sacrificed a lot to protect this nation.

The Warrior's Return Incorporated aims to assist the Veteran in resolving these issues.
THEIR VISION:

To foster the most successful and well adjusted generation of former service personnel, particularly veterans, in Australia's history.

THEIR MISSION:

To honour and empower former service personnel (veterans) particularly those who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as they transition to civilian life.

OVERVIEW:

The Warrior's Return Australia is a Not-for-Profit Incorporated Association. They are run BY Veterans and Veterans' partners, FOR Veterans and Veterans' partners and Children.

"We are a no BS, "bottom up" organisation, based on, and responsive to, the ACTUAL requirements of veterans."

THEIR DEFINITION OF 'VETERAN':

Someone who has, at some point in their life, served in the Australian Defence Force.

We do not discriminate based on conflict, service or operational experience.

A Veteran is someone who, at one point in his life, wrote a blank cheque made payable to the Commonwealth of Australia for an amount "of up to and including their life"

Contact Information for: Scott Harris
9 Wright Court
Bray Park QLD
Ph: 044 717 0066

Email: scott22march@gmail.com

Email: lorettasomerville@thewarriorsreturn.com.au

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We understand from our friends in France, that the service at Fromelles this year will commence at 6.00pm on Thursday 19th July. For anyone travelling to the service, please contact Geoffrey Benn via gvb456@gmail.com, to let him know. Otherwise, for now, we look forward to meeting up with you at Castle Hill for our Annual General Meeting.

The Fromelles Association of Australia

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Treasurer: Bill Irvine:



**FROMELLES ASSOCIATION
OF AUSTRALIA**

For those lost so far from home