



## \* THE FROMELLES IDENTIFICATIONS FOR 2019 \*

### SEVEN FIRST WORLD WAR AUSTRALIAN ARMY SOLDIERS NO LONGER LIE IN UNKNOWN GRAVES. Australian Army March 26 at 12:18 PM ·

Over 100 years after their loss in the Battle of Fromelles, these men now have their names on their headstones, after they were unveiled at the Commemoration and Headstone Rededication Ceremony, with the support of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Having been recovered from an unmarked mass grave in 2009, with 250 of their mates, the following 7 soldiers were formally identified earlier this month:

- ◆ 352 Private Arthur George BATT 32nd Bn. A.I.F. age 32 of Hilton, South Australia
- ◆ 4188 Private Edward James HOPE 54th Bn. A.I.F. age 28 of Penrith, New South Wales
- ◆ 641 Private Leslie Clark DUNN 31st Bn. A.I.F. age 28 of West Melbourne, Victoria
- ◆ 1291 Private George HONEY 32nd Bn. A.I.F. age 31 of West Guilford, Western Australia
- ◆ 715 Lance Corporal Ralph JOHNSON 31st Bn. A.I.F. age 19 of Middle Brighton, Victoria
- ◆ 77 Lance Corporal John Alexander CRAWFORD 32nd Bn. A.I.F. age 32 of Hindmarsh, South Australia
- ◆ 3433 Private Peter Paul SHANNON 53rd Bn. A.I.F. age 35 of Merriwa, New South Wales

This result is only possible because family members were identified and donated their DNA for identification purposes. We still seek DNA from relatives of the missing from Fromelles. More information is available at <https://bit.ly/2TXHr4h>

We wish to acknowledge the work of **Unrecovered War Casualties-Army** unit, the **Fromelles Association of Australia**, the original **Fromelles Project Team** and the forensic specialists who all worked and contributed to ensuring these men are finally known.

Lest we forget.

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### Our Response on Facebook:

We are pleased to be acknowledged for the searching that has taken place already, but we are also pleased to be able to continue to assist in the search for families who can help with the identification process. And we will continue to do so.

Congratulations to all those in the Unrecovered War Casualties Unit headed by Andrew Bernie, David Wilson, and Al Cooper.

One 'find' that was very satisfying for us is that the Fromelles Association started a GoFundMe campaign to raise money to find family for Shannon, but after it became public in Ireland, family members came forward and volunteered information which resulted in a positive connection. We were then, and are still thrilled at receiving that response.

All the identifications are a blessing for their families. We are just amazed that our band of researchers has found so many connections. And we will continue to do so.

Hopefully more will come this year. This makes the total identified now 166 out of 250.

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#### Our Annual Conference & AGM

### Private Arthur George Batt

**Service number:** 352

**Year of birth:** 1884

**Place of birth:** Adelaide, SA

**Age at enlistment:** 31

**Enlistment date:** 18 Nov 1915

**Battalion:** 32nd Battalion

**Date of death:** 20 July 1916

**Age:** 32

**Place of burial:**

Pheasant Wood Military Cemetery, Fromelles, France

## 2/3 OF THE DIGGERS FROM PHEASANT WOOD NOW HAVE THEIR OWN HEADSTONES

From Jim Munro, President FFFAIF

(This article has now been uploaded to the FFFAIF website at: [www.ffaif.org.au](http://www.ffaif.org.au).)

The names of 233 or 93% of the 250 soldiers buried by the German Reserve Bavarian Infantry Regiment soldiers following the Battle of Fromelles are known.

The graves of 166 or 66% of the 250 soldiers whose remains were recovered from the communal pits near Pheasant Wood, Fromelles in French Flanders and were reburied with full military honours in the new Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery in 2010 are now identified with their names.

The names of a further 67 soldiers are known to be buried in the Cemetery along with 17 whose identity is not known. Identifying these 84 soldiers remains the challenge that can only be solved now by matching the soldier's DNA with that of a descendant. These are some of the 1,102 Australian soldiers killed in the Battle of Fromelles on the night of 19th July, 1916 and continuing into the 20th with no known grave. (1,333 Australian soldiers were listed as having no known grave less 231 now known to have been buried near Pheasant Wood).

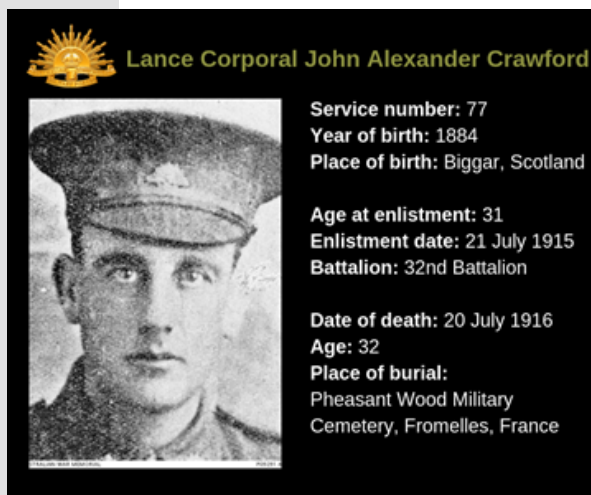
The 2019 Fromelles Identification Board has revealed the names of 7 more Australian soldiers who will have their names inscribed on individual headstones. Again, they are:

- ◆ 352 Private Arthur George BATT 32nd Bn. A.I.F. age 32 of Hilton, South Australia.
- ◆ 77 Lance Corporal John Alexander CRAWFORD 32nd Bn. A.I.F. age 30 of Hindmarsh, South Australia
- ◆ 641 Private Leslie Clark DUNN 31st Bn. A.I.F. age 28 of West Melbourne, Victoria
- ◆ 1291 Private George HONEY 32nd Bn. A.I.F. age 31 of West Guilford, Western Australia
- ◆ 4188 Private Edward James HOPE 54th Bn. A.I.F. age 28 of Penrith, New South Wales.
- ◆ 715 Lance Corporal Ralph JOHNSON 31st Bn. A.I.F. age 19 of Middle Brighton, Victoria
- ◆ 3433 Private Peter Paul SHANNON 53rd Bn. A.I.F. age 35 of Merriwa, New South Wales.

The official media release by The Minister for Defence Personnel, Darren Chester can be found at: <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/dchester/media-releases/seven-australian-soldiers-identified-battle-fromelles>

The identification of these soldiers follows at least 100 submissions made to the Joint Identifications Board for consideration in March, 2019, mostly by the Fromelles Association of Australia supported by DNA samples from descendants. (See Seeking Fromelles DNA matches.)

Privates Batt, Dunn, Honey, Hope and Shannon's names were on the original Working List developed for the Fromelles Project in 2008 based on the research and advocacy of Lambis Englezos OAM and his team. The Service Records of these soldier contained German documentation advising that their bodies had been buried by the German Army following the Battle. The name of Lance Corporal Ralph JOHNSON was added to the list following research by the Fromelles Descendants Database team who compiled detailed family histories for most of the soldiers on the Working List. The Australian Army Fromelles Project Group subsequently called for descendants to register for DNA contributions and this more recently has been continued by the Unrecovered Casualties – Army unit and broadened to relatives of any soldier killed in the Battle of Fromelles with no known grave. This has enabled Lance Corporal Crawford also to be identified from DNA samples contributed by relatives.



A list of the names of the 233 Australian soldiers known to be buried in the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery including the names of the 166 soldiers identified so far is available from: [enquiries@ffaif.org.au](mailto:enquiries@ffaif.org.au).

Anyone who believes that they are related to one of the Australian soldiers who are still missing from the Battle of Fromelles are invited to register their details with Unrecovered War Casualties – Army at <https://army.govcms.gov.au/forms/uwc-a-online-registration-form>.

Jim Munro, 26 March 2019

A chart setting out the identifications in a statistical sense follows on the next page.

	Thought to be buried by the Germans	Identified with named headstones	Identified from Original Working List	Identified from Munich and Fromelles Database re-search	Identified but not on Working List
Soldiers identified	233	166	125	5	36
Soldiers recovered	250	250			
Source of soldiers' names	93%	66%	75%	3%	22%

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In response to Jim Munro and FFFAIF's thoughtful article, we wrote:

Hello Jim,

Thank you for the comments in your email, and for passing on the attached items.

It is said that there is no glory in war. But there is heartfelt appreciation for the families of the fallen at Fromelles, when they discover a tangible connection with the Battle of Fromelles. Relatives can visit for the first time ever and see a headstone with a family member's name on it, with an epitaph that will be forever.

Tears and tingling sensations often come together when this happens. Last year I saw the family of Captain Mortimer on their knees with such mixed feelings, in front of his headstone. I watched the families of Gardner walk proudly with tears in their eyes, seeping down onto their cheeks, and not wiping the tears away. I read the letters and postcards of Bell at his headstone, on behalf of his family.

I think this is what drives us. I think that the heroes in this process are our researchers, who trace the families, track the donors, contact the families, and ask for their help. And in the process, make ongoing friends. And without any expectation of glorification, or reward.

Geoffrey Benn 27.03.2019

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#### RESULTS OF OUR POLL: SHOULD EVERY SOLDIER KILLED IN ACTION AT FROMELLES, BE EXHUMED FOR IDENTIFICATION?

Our poll was cast through Facebook, our website, and direct e-mails to people we have contact information for. It read:

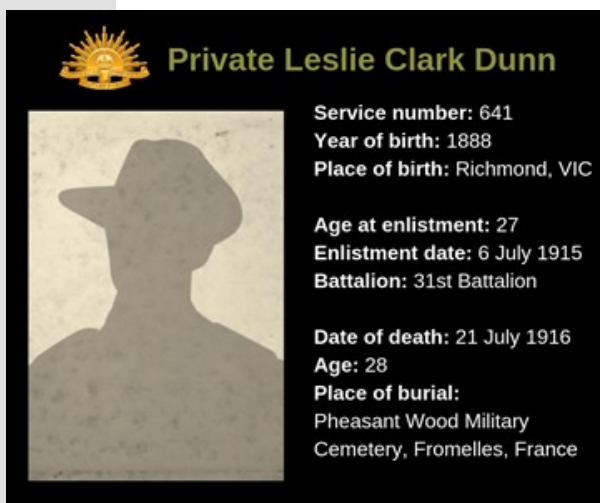
At the end of World War 1, there were 1,299 unidentified Diggers laying in unmarked graves, buried under the soil of No Man's Land, or exposed to the elements, at Fromelles, a world away from home. They had no identification, and no headstone; while the living had no place of pilgrimage, no place to grieve and certainly no personal recognition of their loved one.

Our soldiers were not well treated, having been left to lay rotting in 'No Man's Land' for 3 years

before being placed in mass graves. Did you know that the US Army in WW1 identified 97% of their fallen; the British were satisfied with 20 to 25%. With today's technology this is now intolerable.

Despite initial opposition from the Australian Government, 250 Australian soldiers were carefully exhumed from the mass graves of Pheasant Wood, and finally, laid to rest in peace in the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery after making the greatest sacrifice during battle. Of those, 159 (more than 60%) have been positively identified, given a name, and given a place in our nation's history. But that was only 250 of the original 1299 unidentified at the end of WW1.

The enduring love, respect and ongoing commitment of families means that between 2000 and 3000 donors have freely given their DNA in an attempt to identify lost soldiers.



*For those lost so far from home.*

Their details and DNA samples have been supplied to the Army, and are now on record. It is anticipated that many more from Pheasant Wood will be identified because of this selfless act of the living out of respect for the dead.

We support its use to identify all of our boys who were sacrificed in that bloody madness called the Battle of Fromelles.

Right now we are specifically thinking of the many families, who have no identification, no headstone, no place of pilgrimage, no place to grieve, and certainly no personal recognition of their loved one.

We believe that all our fallen deserve to be identified, their service to country honoured; and to be reconnected with their families, even in death.

We believe that the only way to recognise Australia's debt to these gallant soldiers is to have them exhumed, their DNA taken and to be matched against the existing and any future data base. This will ensure that in time, they are properly honoured and memorialised.

We asked: Do you support the exhumation all these soldiers in the hope they can be identified?  
YES / NO ?

The results are now able to be published, and the final tally can now be shared with you all.

<b>Facebook Poll:</b>	<b>Yes: 307</b>	<b>No: 108</b>
<b>Other (direct email):</b>	<b>Yes: 99</b>	<b>No: 8</b>
<b>Overall Totals:</b>	<b>Yes: 406</b>	<b>No: 116</b>
<b>In Percentages:</b>	<b>Yes: 78%</b>	<b>No: 22%</b>

There were 3954 'reaches' on Facebook, with 994 'engagements', resulting in 415 votes posted.

There were over 600 direct emails to persons interested in Fromelles, and who are on our contact list.

We have begun to and will continue to use this result in order to pursue appropriate treatment of the missing at Fromelles.

Thank you one and all for your participation in this request for your response.

Geoffrey Benn, Secretary

Fromelles Association of Australia.

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### CLINGAN AND GROGAN: A DISCOVERY AT FROMELLES

A story by John and Dorothy.

In 2013, my wife Dorothy and I visited Fromelles as part of our honeymoon.

My wife had organised the visit as we wished to pay our respects to my identified relative- Pvt Alexander Clingan.

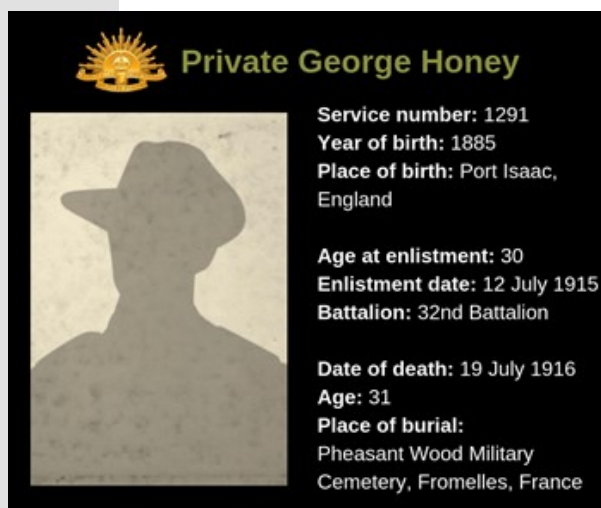
We met the wonderful people of the town, paid our respects at Alec's grave, walked the battlefield then journeyed to 'VC Corner' where the names of all those killed in action are engraved..

We found Alexander's name and I took a moment alone to reflect. Dorothy walked across and stopped at a randomly selected panel just a couple down from me.

At her first glance at the names she made an incredible discovery. Her eyes went straight to the name of her great uncle- Sergeant Vincent Grogan, killed in action, 19th July 1916.

Vincent was from Barnsdale in Victoria. Alexander, from Waterloo NSW.

We had no idea until that moment, that both of our families shared a common link to that terrible day. We confirmed Vincent's details upon our return home. His name appears in a German death list.



*For those lost so far from home.*

Over a century ago, those 2 young men could never have dreamt their relatives would meet, marry and walk the same ground in that small town in northern France.



[John and Dorothy seen here at the Centenary Commemoration in 2016.]

We are having a special frame of Alexander & Vincent's photo and details, plus the collection of bullets and shrapnel we found in the field during our Fromelles visits.

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### THE DONOR FOR 3357A Cpl Percy Robert KEARNEY

#### – Getting the DNA Sample to the Courier.

*When there is a deadline for getting a DNA sample in before the identifications can be tested.*

28 November, 2018: Email from Royce Atkinson to a hopeful donor, Judith.

Hello Judith, I wish to confirm that a mt DNA submission was made, on your behalf, to Unrecovered War Casualties section - Army ( UWCA 1800 019 090) at 1013 Hrs this date. A Major Wilson should be in touch on the mobile number provided.

I attach some reading material for you, and might I thank you for going through this process - fingers crossed that we get an identification!



#### Private Edward James Hope



Service number: 4188  
Year of birth: 1888  
Place of birth: Penrith, NSW  
  
Age at enlistment: 28  
Enlistment date: 24 Sep 1915  
Battalion: 54th Battalion  
  
Date of death: 20 July 1916  
Age: 28  
Place of burial:  
Pheasant Wood Military  
Cemetery, Fromelles, France

Please contact me if I can be of assistance in any way.

Regards, Royce Atkinson

14 January, 2019: Email from our hopeful donor to Royce Atkinson.

Hi Royce, Just letting you know that I took my DNA sample to the office of DHL at Fyshwick this morning. I tried to phone them 6 times on Friday and kept getting a computer voice telling me to try again later.

However I only had to wait 30 minutes to hand it to the receptionist over the counter!

This is in relation to my Great uncle Percy Kearney.

*For those lost so far from home.*

Thanks for all you are doing to try to identify these brave soldiers. Judy

*14 January, 2019:* Email from Marg O'Leary, our Vice President (Research) to Judy.

Hi Judy, How very good of you to take it right to their door, as I know you don't live anywhere near there. And in this heatwave. Please take care.

We will all keep our fingers crossed.

Cheers, Marg

*18 January, 2019:* Email from Royce Atkinson to our donor, Judy.

We all have our fingers crossed Judith, and your story might just find its way into our Newsletter - as "a story of dedication".

Wonderful, Royce.

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### **AUSTRALIAN WORLD WAR ONE DESCENDANTS ASSOCIATION**

If you would like to march on Anzac Day in honour of an ancestor who served in WW1, you may wish to contact the Australian World War One Descendants. whose Website is: [www.AWWOD.org.au](http://www.AWWOD.org.au).

They are a group of like minded people who have joined together to organise a group of descendants to march on Anzac Day in remembrance of our forebears who served in World War One. Their objectives are:-

- To help preserve and continue the memory of all (ANZACs) Australians who served in WW1.
- To help foster and further ANZAC Day and its purpose.
- To encourage participation from Australian WW1 descendants in future ANZAC Day Marches.
- To assist people in accessing information and records pertaining to Forebears' service.

Please Contact their Secretary, Arline Ronsisvalle on 0413 231 051 if you would like more information, or wish to take steps to march with the descendants.

Email - [arline@awwod.org.au](mailto:arline@awwod.org.au), or write to:

Arline Ronsisvalle, Secretary AWWOD

1/121 Anzac Avenue, Engadine NSW 2233

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### **WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION MEETING 27 APRIL, 2019**

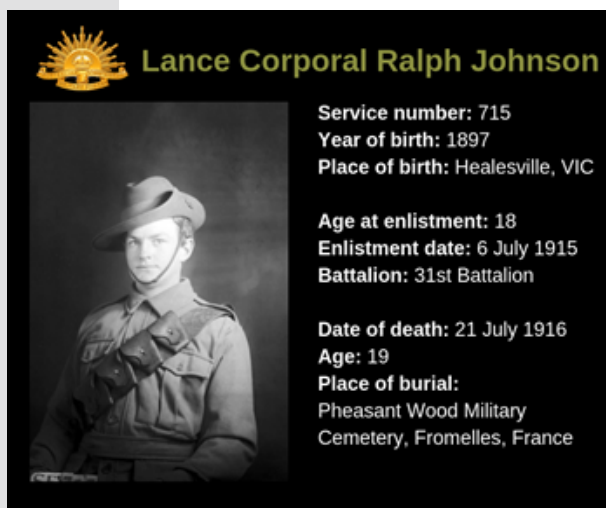
You are also invited to attend the next branch meeting on Saturday the 27th of April 2019. If you do attend, please ensure you advise the hosts that you are part of the Fromelles Association of Australia.

The details are as follows: Location: 99 York St, Sydney CBD, Level 2 (enter via public lobby and then take the lift).

Timings: 12:30 to 4:30pm. Subscription: \$5 (to cover refreshments).

Agenda: 12:30: Welcome and chairman's news.

12:45. "The Australian Nurses at Harefield Hospital, location of the 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital", Janette Pelosi and Dr Nicole Blay RN tell the story of the Nurses at this 1000 bed hospital in Middlesex, England, where over 50,000 wounded and injured AIF diggers were treated during the course of the First World War. Their research reveals the remarkable history of this place and the women who served there, and who are still remembered by the



*For those lost so far from home.*

local community each ANZAC Day.

2:15pm: “The Australian Society of World War One Aero Historians’ database of Australian airmen of the Great War”, a survey and introduction to this world-class record of the over 5500 Australians who served in the Empire’s air services. David Perkins, who manages this data base for the Aero Historians, will explain details of this extraordinary biographical record and of the men who served in aerial combat.

3:15pm to 3:45pm: Afternoon tea and raffle draws.

3:45pm: “Captain Edwin Cowan, MC\*\*, RFC, killed in action November 1916, aged 18 years: a biographical sketch using archival material”, Paul Simadas tells the story of a remarkable young Irishman who flew in the Royal Flying Corps, and in his short life achieved the status of an Ace and was awarded three Military Crosses.

4:00 pm: “show and tell”. You are invited to bring an item or memento related to a pilot or nurse who served in the Great War. The simplest things are often of the greatest interest.

4:30pm: Closing remarks and thanks. -----

Several raffle prizes, comprising books, DVDs, and the special St Hallet’s “Western Front” Shiraz will be drawn, with each ticket being \$2. Please support the branch.

RSVP by return email to Paul Simadas at: [wfaaustraliabranch@gmail.com](mailto:wfaaustraliabranch@gmail.com)

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# **FROMELLES ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FROMELLES ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA**

We have been able to settle on a date for our next annual get together, and a venue. Please save the date, and we look forward to seeing you there.

When? Saturday, July 27, 2019 at 10 AM – 4 PM

Where? Australian Army Infantry Museum

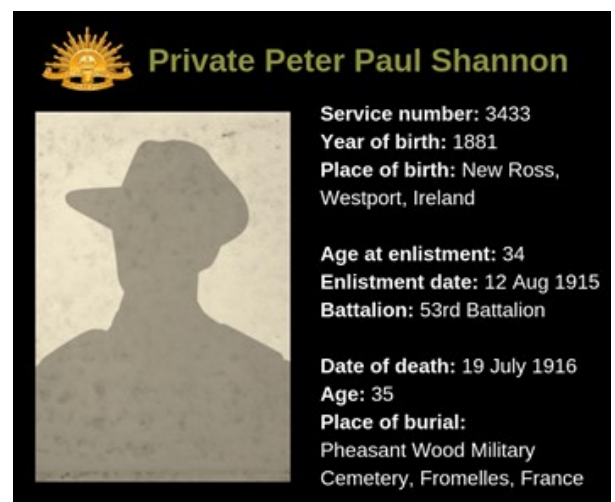
Address? Range Rd, Singleton Military Area, Singleton, New South Wales 2331

Entry by donation, with gold coin or more if you wish.

Our annual general meeting, following on from the anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles on 19th July. An occasion to share information about our search for the as-yet unidentified soldiers of Fromelles, and matters which relate to the search for their identities.

Our Program Includes:

- ◆ KEY NOTE SPEAKER to be announced
- ◆ AUSTRALIAN ARMY - UWCA—the Fromelles Project Team.
- ◆ MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT ROYCE ATKINSON
- ◆ REVIEW FROM RESEARCHERS - Finding the Missing
- ◆ More items will be added before the day.



*For those lost so far from home.*

**ADOPT A COBBER AT FROMELLES.**

For the previous two years, Pierre Seillier has worked with the pupils and the School Principal of the Cobbers School at Fromelles, on the topic of Australian remembrance. He has conducted several presentations at the school about Fromelles before, during and after WW1, the life of soldiers in trenches on the frontline, and the stories of some Australian soldiers buried in Pheasant Wood Military Cemetery. Following the project of the School Principal and himself— "Adopt a Cobber of Fromelles" - the kids decided to adopt the graves of some soldiers identified since 2009. They are in touch with descendants and share their work with them. Pupils of the school are the next generation of remembrance, the next generation of French-Australian friendship, the next keepers of the flame. With the identification of seven new soldiers, Pierre and the School Principal hope to meet more families, to adopt other cobbers.

Soldiers adopted so far are:

JOHN MORLEY aka WILLIAM HOWARD, HARRY VICTOR WILLIS  
 SAMUEL WILSON, ERIC WILSON, ERIC CHINNER, FREDERIK ROWLINGS  
 HERBERT GEORGES POLLARD, HERBERT NUTSY BOLT, KENNETH MORTIMER  
 ALFRED THOMPSON, WILLIAM BRUCE HIGGINS, RAYMOND HOLSTEIN PFLAUM  
 COLIN ARNOTT, GEORGE CROFT, CLAUDE WARD, ROSSITER ALFRED  
 BARRETT, ATHOL HALLIDAY MC DOWELL, ALFRED GEORGE TUCK, WILLIAM  
 POLDING RYAN, RAYMOND CHARLES BISHOP, and ARCHIE MCDONALD.

If you are a descendant and if you wish that your soldier would be adopted you can contact Pierre Seillier on: [pierreseillier@hotmail.fr](mailto:pierreseillier@hotmail.fr)  
 or the school principal on: [ce.0591243f@ac-lille.fr](mailto:ce.0591243f@ac-lille.fr)  
 You can see the work of pupils on this link:

<http://ecoledescobbers-fromelles.etab.ac-lille.fr/category/australie/?fbclid=IwAR2rtFX1v6RiotHVGzBci3AY2chvqiNogKw9wOf4zaCpWOUERoOKzEuGPbU>

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**FROMELLES ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA NEEDS A WEB-SITE DEVELOPER/MANAGER. COULD IT BE YOU?**

To enable further development of our existing web site or creation of a new site, we are searching for a Web-site developer/provider and web-site manager.

**Public Access**

The new site will be larger than our existing site and capable of managing large amounts of data, which must cater to the needs and skills of a wide ranging client group. Primarily we wish to provide a site that allows us to provide stories, photographs and official data information on soldiers who fought at Fromelles.

Some information will also come from families and will provide an insight into that component of the human cost of that Battle. The site must be easily searchable by those who come to the web site, including a personal search process as well as a search by battalion.

Information and individual stories on each soldier will include impacts on his family from 1916 to now - no matter whether they have been identified or not.

**Management Functionality**

Normal management functionality will be needed including membership, financial and overall management of the site.

**What we Need**

Firstly, we need to attract a person to this role and to participate in the development of this exciting new development in our history.

Secondly, we need to attract a person/s that is capable of managing the site and to keep our data current and safe.

**COULD THIS BE YOU?**

**Please Note**

The Fromelles Association is a not for profit organisation and has no funds to speak of, with every spare cent being spent on searching for DNA donors. Every member of our group, including your management team, volunteers their time and money to this cause.

Thus these positions will be voluntary.

Contact: Marg O'Leary, via: [margrick@iinet.net.au](mailto:margrick@iinet.net.au)

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**Finally, a small climatic comparison.**

While we suffered in the heat here in Australia over this previous summer, our soldiers were treated to a thick white coat in the winter, at Fromelles.



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The Fromelles Association of Australia  
103 Bogalara Road, Old Toongabbie NSW 2146

E-mail: [gvb456@gmail.com](mailto:gvb456@gmail.com)

Website: <https://fromellesremembered.wordpress.com>

President: Royce Atkinson : [royceatkinson@hotmail.com](mailto:royceatkinson@hotmail.com)

Vice-Presidents (Research): Marg O'Leary & Ann Watson

Secretary: Geoffrey Benn : Phone: 0408 219 636

Treasurer: Bill Irvine



FROMELLES ASSOCIATION  
OF AUSTRALIA

*For those lost so far from home*