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**Services in
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Fromelles**Conference**

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The Roth Family

A MELBOURNE FAMILY WILL NOW HAVE A NAMED GRAVE TO HONOUR THEIR RELATIVE KILLED IN FRANCE IN WW1.

The Australian soldiers came under "the barrage of our own guns" after ending up too far behind the German trenches at Fromelles.

It was 7.30pm on July 19, 1916; the last time Private Albert Beck saw Private Leslie Clark Dunn.

Their 31st Battalion only entered the front-line trenches three days before the battle of Fromelles, the worst 24 hours in Australia's military history.

Private Beck said they made it hundreds of metres behind the last line of German trenches as Australian troops fought their first major battle on the Western Front.

"We got on too far and came into the barrage of our own guns," he recalled in January 1917, after Private Dunn was named on a German death list.

"We had to fall back and Dunn was not seen to come back with us."

He had already sent that information to Private Dunn's wife Lillian in Melbourne.

The mother of two young children - David, five, and three-year-old Edward - waited months for news after her husband was reported missing in France.

His death in the battle of Fromelles was confirmed in March 1917, a month after the Germans sent the 28-year-old's identification disc to the War Office.

"He was only young, he left young children behind and a young widow and 'we don't know where he is'.

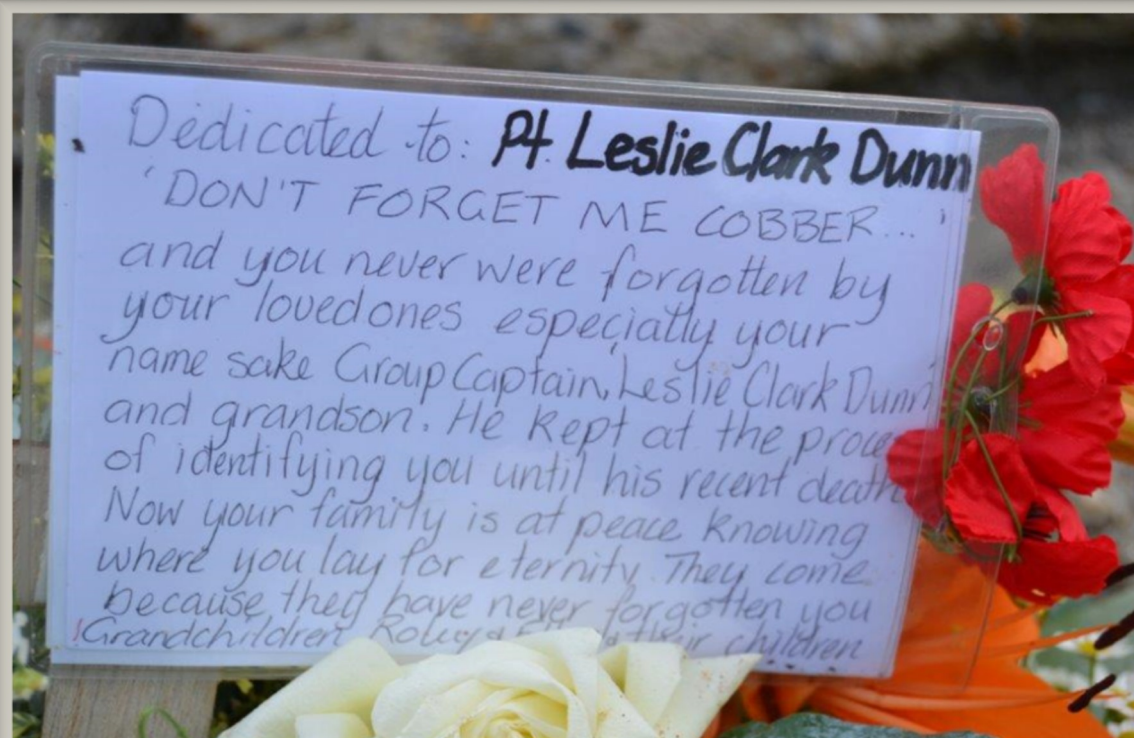
"We basically had no real closure. He was just this mystical figure that we knew very little about."

Hopes of finding the soldier's final resting place were renewed by the discovery of an unmarked mass grave near Fromelles in 2007.

The remains of 250 men were recovered in 2009 and reburied the following year as 'unknown soldiers' in a new military cemetery.

Roley followed his older brother Leslie's lead in providing a DNA sample early on, but largely gave up hope their grandfather could be identified as years passed with no news.

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"The fact that they've now made an ID and that he will have a named grave gives a wonderful sense of closure to the whole thing," said Roley, who also has a sister Ellen.

Sadly, 77-year-old Leslie Dunn died in December.

"It is bittersweet that, yes, we have got closure on it but it's too late for him to hear about it," Roley said.

Leslie followed his father David and namesake grandfather into the military, serving as a Royal Australian Air Force pilot for 33 years.

His younger son Chris Dunn, who spent 15 years as a RAAF pilot, remembers being at Fromelles with his dad for the 2010 dedication ceremony at the new cemetery.

"It was actually quite emotional when we were there," Chris said.

"To walk through afterwards and see all of the unknown soldiers' headstones, it was quite eye opening."

The 5th Australian Division suffered 5533 casualties, including 1917 dead and 470 taken prisoner, at Fromelles.

The attack by Australian and British troops was meant to be a feint to stop German reserves moving south, but was a disaster.

Chris is proud of his family's four generations of military service, but laments the "utter waste of life" at Fromelles for little or no strategic gain.

"It really was just a complete tragedy."

Reading Private Dunn's war records, Chris was particularly struck by his great-grandmother's heart-breaking requests for information about her missing husband and later his death certificate and will.

"She's saying: 'I've got two young sons. It's hard to settle affairs if I don't know that he's actually been killed.'"

"It's quite sad."

So far, 166 Australian soldiers have been identified among the 250 found in the mass grave after a search prompted by research by retired Melbourne teacher Lambis Englezos.

A number of members of the Dunn family plan to go to Fromelles in July for the annual commemoration ceremony at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Cemetery.

Roley is amazed that he will stand on the soil where the battle took place and see his grandfather's grave.

"As a 28-year-old in 1916 on that ground, he couldn't imagine that future generations in peace would be standing on the same soil, 103 years later."

Chris expects the ceremony will be both emotional and comforting, knowing there is now a focal point for grieving.

"I think it's important that we continue to recognise those who paid the ultimate sacrifice over there, a long way from home."

[Article: From the Canberra Times 22 April, 2019. Australian Associated Press]

[Photograph: Taken at Fromelles, July 2019]

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AN ACCOUNT OF THE SERVICE AT FROMELLES FROM ANN WATSON

Hi, it's the next day and I have recovered from a very long, emotional, and exciting day. We were picked up with the identified soldiers' families at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Lille, at 12 noon and taken out to Fromelles to a light lunch in the Cobbers School cafeteria where we met the town's mayor Jean Gabriel Masson and the school principal. After, the mayor led us down the lane to the mass grave site and then onto the Museum where the families were given research done into their soldier by the genealogists present. Unfortunately the Batt family had contacted me saying they couldn't make the ceremony and fortunately for me Dave Wilson asked if I would act in their place, so I also collected any and everything I could for them.

We departed the Museum and by coach went out to Cobbers Statue and onto VC Corner. Our Australian Diplomat from Paris accompanied us driving in front of the coach with the Australian Flag flying. One of the group fell on the VC Corner steps cracking her head ... lots of blood ... everyone with any first aid training gave assistance and the Ambassador sent her off to hospital in Lille in his car.

The Dedication Ceremony started at 6pm officiated by Lieutenant Colonel Ben McLennan who did a superb job. His French sounded great to us however he said he made a few blues. After

For those lost so far from home.

the dignitaries arrived and were seated (on the other side of the cenotaph from where the families were seated) there were the usual welcomes and acknowledgements followed by the wreath laying. I didn't fully understand what was asked of me by Carole who organised the wreath. Whereas others had their association's names on the sash I asked for "Lest we forget" and purchased a card and wrote what was suggested by Royce. However after assuring that all the wreaths were in order when the time came Lt. Col. Ben used his French accent to name the organisation and some old French bloke from the flag bearing party strode forward and took the wreath and laid it for us!! I



chose not to make a fuss of any kind although our families' group looked a bit astonished because they knew the



[Dedication of the headstone of Cpl. Ralph Johnson.]

For those lost so far from home.

wreath was from our Association. I guess I looked just as astonished too, sitting on the edge of my seat all ready to rise. Sorry about that but not under my control.

The soldiers identified were then named as one member from each family went forward and met a child from the village who carried 2 long stemmed red roses. The child I met was named Juliette and we walked together to Arthur George Batt's grave.

When everyone was in place, the family member unveiled the headstone. Juliette passed one of the roses to me and we placed them at the foot of the stone.

After returning to our seats there was the Ode of Remembrance, Last Post, National Anthems, a final blessing and departure of flag bearers and Official Parties.

There was a reception at Cobbers School and we returned to Lille about 8.30pm.

That's the bare bones ... lots of friendships made and stories told, Ann.

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IN SYDNEY, THE SERVICE WAS HELD AT THE ANZAC MEMORIAL, HYDE PARK

If you read the notes on the card to Leslie Clarke Dunne on page 1, and compare that to the wreath laid in Sydney, you may think there was some collaboration. In fact they were completely independent of each other, yet shared almost identical sentiments.

The distance from the Archibald Fountain to the ANZAC Memorial, approximates the widest point of No Man's Land at Fromelles. The last commemoration by those who had fought at Fromelles, and had returned, took place in 1966.

The Trustees of the War Memorial continued to place wreaths on behalf of the 5th Division Association at the Anzac Memorial on each 19 July anniversary, but 40 years later (2006) less than 30 people attended.

Prior to the 2007 Fromelles Service, the Memorial's Trustees approved FFFAIF to place wreaths on behalf of the 5th Division Association for the Fallen at Fromelles and the Missing at Fromelles.

Since then, FFFAIF, in conjunction with the staff of the Anzac Memorial, has organised the annual Commemora-

tion of the Battle of Fromelles on behalf of the Trustees, which has grown in numbers. When numbers were too many for the Commemoration to be held in the Western Front alcove, the Commemoration moved to the Eastern Forecourt and then with extensions to the Anzac Memorial to the Northern Forecourt.

Again this year, a service of commemoration was held at Hyde Park, Sydney after the step-off from the Archibald Fountain.

We have the pleasure of sharing with you the following letter from Jim Munro, President, Friends & Families of the First AIF, to The Fromelles Association of Australia, following the commemoration service.

Dear Fromelles Association of Australia members,

I would like to thank your members for participating in the Fromelles Day Commemoration on 19 July at the Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park, Sydney that commemorated the men of the 5th Australian Division who participated in the Battle of Fromelles. I have attached my Report on the Commemoration for your use and records.

Each year, the Fromelles Commemoration seems to bring forth some Fromelles memorable moments and this year we were privileged to have descendants of two of the seven soldiers who have had their identity returned and were having headstones bearing their names dedicated at the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery later that day. We acknowledged the relatives of:

- * Private Arthur George BATT 32nd Bn. A.I.F. age 32 of Hilton, South Australia.
- * Private Edward James HOPE 54th Bn. A.I.F. age 28 of Penrith, New South Wales.



For those lost so far from home.

We also acknowledged the efforts of the Fromelles Association and the Australian Army Unrecovered War Casualties Unit in the search for relatives with matching DNA.

We were also privileged to have Warrant Officer Class 2 Nathan Grumley as Flag Ensign for the Australian Army National Flag Party walking in the footsteps of his great grandfather William Grumley, who was wounded at Fromelles and returned to Australia.

When his great grandfather was 75 years old in 1966 (the year before he died), he participated in the last parade of the 5th Division veterans from the Archibald Fountain in Hyde Park (Sydney) to the Anzac Memorial to request the Trustees to always remember their comrades who fell at Fromelles.



[Picture: 3 generations of Grumley family. Image: St. Clare's College, Waverley.]

The commitment by the Trustees is what the Fromelles Day Commemoration honours. For WO1 Grumley to be Flag Ensign for the Procession that included his Father, siblings and children (3 generations) was probably a "once in a lifetime" opportunity for a serving soldier.

Adding to this "Fromelles Moment" was the fact that William Grumley's brother Tom, also enlisted in the AIF. Tom's Great Grand daughter Laura Grumley (so Nathan's 2nd cousin) won FFFAIF's John Laffin Travel Scholarship in 2007 which included a trip the Western Front - she was already a winner of the Simpson Prize (as in John Kirkpatrick Simpson and his donkey in Shrapnel Gully) that had taken her to Gallipoli for the 75th Anzac Anniversary when she was still at school. The impact of those experiences convinced Laura to change her career from history teaching to become a paramedic (she now works with NSW Ambulance). Her 2nd Cousin Nathan is a paramedic with our Special Forces.

Cheers as we Keep The Memory Alive,
Jim Munro

Some brilliant photos and video taken by the Students of St Clare's College, Waverley and Michael Mannington for Community Photography can be viewed on-line at the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/FromellesDaySydney2019/>.

You may also be aware that the Seven Network crew were present and put to air in the 4pm and 6pm News some video of the Sydney Commemoration. Reporter Chris Maher has forwarded the following link. <https://www.facebook.com/7NEWSsydney/videos/500852147340844/>

Copies of the report and photos and videos can be downloaded from the www.ffaif.org website as well as the FFFAIF Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/FromellesDaySydney2019/>. Previously on 26 March, Chris Reason of the 7 Network did a good news story on the identification of Private Edward Hope. See:

<https://7news.com.au/news/nsw/digger-identified-103-years-after-battle-of-fromelles-c-22509> or

<https://www.facebook.com/7NEWSsydney/videos/1765419183558886/?v=1765419183558886>

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A MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM PAT SHANNON AFTER THE SERVICE AT FROMELLES

Sent: Monday, 22 July 2019 11:40 PM

To: Kate Jackson; Marg O'Leary

Subject: Fromelles Ceremony

Dear Kate, Marg,

I have just returned to Dublin from a fantastic occasion in Fromelles. The headstone rededication ceremony for Peter and his six comrades was one of the most moving, dignified and memorable events I have ever attended. The Australian ambassador to France attended (his father came from Ireland!), together with the top 'brass' from the Australian armed forces, representatives of the French armed forces and the Mayor of Fromelles. There were about 30 relatives representing the families (all apart from my sister and I having travelled from Australia). The hospitality we were shown throughout the entire day from the local community was extraordinary. They provided a lovely lunch (at which I was speaking with Marg's researcher colleague) and a reception at the school after the ceremony. We visited the museum, the place where the soldiers

were first buried, the Cobber's Statue on the former German lines, the VC Corner and then finally the ceremony in the new Commonwealth Graves cemetery.

In the most moving and poignant parts of the entire ceremony, each soldier's name was called out in turn, and a schoolchild, carrying two red roses, took a representative of each family by the hand and led us to our soldier's headstone which was covered in a red cloth. When all seven were standing at our headstone, we removed the cloth to show the headstone, now with the name and the inscription, and the family member and the schoolchild each laid a red rose in front of it.

I was delighted to see that our story, and our photograph, made it into the local newspapers. I was also thrilled that Ian Chambers, the Chairman of the Dublin Branch of the Western Front Association, travelled from Ireland to attend the ceremony and laid a wreath at Peter's headstone. Ian is the person who wrote

the article in the local New Ross Standard newspaper and which started my involvement in the project.



I also met a lot of the scientists who were involved in the excavation and analysis work, including the archaeologist in charge of the operation, the forensic scientist and several others. Really great to have the opportunity to talk with them. I also heard that the analysis showed that Peter had a chronic back problem - which fitted in exactly with what would be expected of someone who had been working as a shearer.



I could go on for a long time describing all the experiences but will stop and send this email. The clergyman was born in Ireland and knew a colleague of mine as well as some of my wife's relatives - it's a small world.

I should mention that both my sister and I were proudly the Fromelles Association lapel pins that Kate sent us in order to represent the Australian family at the ceremony.

Best wishes, Pat [Shannon]

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OUR FIRST FROMELLES CONFERENCE, HELD IN SINGLETON on 27 JULY.

This year saw our first ever Fromelles Conference. The interest in how Fromelles unfolded, what happened to our soldiers, and how those who have been recovered have been identified continues to fascinate and excite the interest of families ever since connected to that Battle. We were able to host a day in which various topics were covered in more detail than we had been previously. Nearly 50 people were in attendance at the Australian Infantry Museum, Singleton for the Seminar, and participated.



Major David Wilson, with Lambis Englezos and Geoffrey Benn presented a session dealing with the battle configuration, the layout of the opposing forces, and the weaponry involved.

Lambis Englezos spoke of the 40 soldiers from 31 Battalion erroneously recorded as having been killed in action on 21 July, 1916, while Geoff Benn assisted with a description of the effects on soldiers caused by exposure to battle.

Lambis Englezos gave us his updated presentation on the search for, the discovery of, and the exhumation of the burial pits at Fromelles. During the presentation, we called on Janine Skurray [from Adelaide] to read the letter of the grieving mother, featured in previous Newsletters. There wasn't a dry eye in the room while Janine went about her task.

Major David Wilson presented more information dealing with the role played by Army in the identification process, and the work of Unrecovered War Casualties Unit.

Ann Watson showed us the extent of research work and the genealogical work involved in finding connections for Sgt. Arthur Ralph Kenney, and later gave us an account of the service at Fromelles on 19 July.

Warren Smith was called on to give a short account of the capture of his grandfather as a Prisoner of War, and the effects of his illness on his return to civilian life.

For those lost so far from home.

The letter from Pat Shannon in Ireland, was read to the group (see article earlier) during Royce Atkinson's presentation on the modern day connections with relatives.



The highlight of the day came when two sets of relatives for Corporal Tasman George Vale found that they were sitting one row apart, and had not previously met. It was a moment we will not forget. Both families had been involved in the process, and wait in hope for an identification.

[Pictured: Lambis Englezos, Geoffrey Benn, Major David Wilson, Royce Atkinson, and Ann Watson.]

Tom Grieves spoke of a presentation by the family of Corporal Arthur Vernon, 4610, 57 Bn. It was to acknowledge eyewitness testimonials of the sustained acts of bravery, in the face of almost certain death of Private Edgar Williams, 4621, 58 Bn. Williams was a Stretcher Bearer, and was ultimately killed in No Man's Land after bringing back wounded for over 60 hours continuously, one of whom was Corporal Arthur Vernon.

It was a day which we look forward to presenting again, with more information from more speakers. Thanks to Australian Infantry Museum staff, all those who participated in discussions, and for everyone who attended, to make the day such a success.

Geoffrey Benn

[A group picture of most of those in attendance on the day.]



For those lost so far from home.

After the Seminar we received the following feedback:

From Janine Skurray (from Adelaide): *Can't thank you all enough. Wonderful talks by Geoffrey Benn, Lambis Englezos, Ann Watson, Royce Atkinson and Major David Wilson, on the history and research of the lost soldiers of Fromelles France. Can't thank you all for the wonderful conference (not sure I thank Geoff for getting me up to read the heartfelt letter of a mother writing for news of her lost son 3 years after this dreadful battle). I was a bit teary as were the audience. Very excited that I learnt how to spread the net wider to identify our boy. Having Dave Wilson talk about the family research certainly added to the info we already knew. The talks clarified how the tracing of DNA works and the personal stories were very moving and meeting the team that have worked so hard over the last decade or more was a huge honour. It gave me hope that identification of James/John Gordon will still be found. Wonderful speakers and so well organised.*

Adrian Redfern (Benalla, Vic.): *Home from a wonderful weekend. Interesting topics and people. Great friends thanks to all.*

From Warren and Sheena Smith: *Hi Royce, Geoff and the wonderful team, Thank you for organising another wonderful day. Always wonderful to hear these very personal stories that are truly inspiring. I think everyone in the room felt for the 2 families that connected and had never met yet had both given DNA samples. This is part of what it is all about.*

Thank you.

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"THE ROTH FAMILY" - A FROMELLES STORY



In 2011 The Fromelles Association commenced research to locate suitable DNA donors for a Dubbo boy who lived in Surrey Hills in Sydney. Harold Roth, only son of George and Ellen Roth who, on the evidence in Red Cross files, was likely to be at Pheasant Wood. In those days we had little information to go on, and did not know if any donors had provided a sample. We did know that the Roth family had emigrated from Germany in the 1850's.

Photo: Harold Roth with his sister Gladys Roth (the grandmother of Liz Mitchell)

After some months we did learn from family that a mt sample had been provided probably, in 2010. No Y donors were located in Australia with all Y lines petering out.

Once all of that information became available the search was "on" for the requisite Y donor in Germany and it was Marg O'Leary who found a Y line that would eventually lead to a donor.

But the fact that we had a "line" was only the start of our efforts to actually locate a name and address, and to start to broach the subject of the donation of a sample. We eventually decided to write a formal letter to every Roth in the general area of Beutelsbach, Bavaria and it was by these means that we found Markus Roth, our then, potential Y donor.

For those lost so far from home.

It is difficult to explain the emotional impact on researchers of actually finding a donor after such a long search, and then to agonise through the actual donation process. Suffice to say that for every victory there are many other experiences.



During this phase Marg also found another person working on the same task. This person was Australian Liz Mitchell, daughter of the mtDNA donor (the niece of Harold), who was living in London and had created a Roth family tree of enormous complexity and covered many generations. Liz had started her search when the family learnt that Harold could be one of the unidentified at Fromelles. Through extensive research Liz had discovered that the Roth family had lived in the town of Beutelsbach since at least 1610 and many could possibly still be there. Beutelsbach is a little village and part of the town Weinstadt which today has a population of 24,000. It is 20km from Stuttgart, which houses the headquarters of Mercedes, Porsche and Bosch. Stuttgart is the capital of the County Baden-Württemberg, the 3rd largest in Germany. In the early times of Württemberg, the earls of Württemberg were buried in the church of Beutelsbach. This same church and graveyard today holds many records and gravestones of the Roth family.

Photo: The church in Beutelsbach.

Liz had found a male member of the Roth family however he declined to donate his DNA. Meanwhile however, Marg had identified, found and made contact with Markus. Finally and after much "nail biting", the Y sample was received by UWCA. Sadly, and despite our hopes and pray-

ers, no match was found at that time.

As a story this has always "tugged at Marg and my heartstrings" for it seems unique that we were asking for and (UWCA) had received a DNA sample from a German national, who did not know of his relationship to Harold, an Australian soldier fighting German soldiers in WW1. Harold would have been aware of his German connections as his grandfather had kept informed of events in Germany throughout his life until his death when Harold was 14 years old.



Photo: Beutelsbach has always been a wine growing region.

Such is the lot of many folk during war, but nothing better displays the power of families as this case of family unity.

In 2019 I was travelling to Germany as my wife, Marilyn, was keen to visit the Black Forest, (where I now sit penning this story) and it was important to me, that I try to meet up with Markus, just to say "thanks".

Well that was an idea that continued to expand and between the 24th and 27th of March 2019 the Roth family, including Liz Mitchell, together with myself and Marilyn had many times together, and many, many emotional moments. We were welcomed with open arms and hearts into the family that still had strong bonds amongst them. Relatives came from nearby villages to meet us and share family stories and photographs.

For those lost so far from home.



Photo: Doris, Markus' mum, showing Liz a local Beutelsbach book with photos containing family members.

It is fair to say that it was a wonderful time and a unique opportunity to watch and to a small extent, participate with a family reuniting after some 170 years.

Part of our Association charter is to identify soldiers and to reunite families.

Photo: The Roth family, from many continents, sharing cake and coffee



Photo: from l to r: Liz, Bettina (Markus' sister), Miriam (Markus' wife) and Markus.

I can think of no better example.

Royce Atkinson

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Our only other item of note is our new address for correspondence, as set out below.

For now, the land line telephone number is inactive due to the change of address, and the ongoing pro-

cess of getting connected to NBN services.

Thank you all for your ongoing interest in the soldiers of Fromelles, as we
Keep Their Memory Alive,

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President: Royce Atkinson : royceatkinson@hotmail.com

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Treasurer: Bill Irvine



FROMELLES ASSOCIATION
OF AUSTRALIA

For those lost so far from home

For those lost so far from home.