

FIVE SOLDIERS

CHRISTINE JOHNSON

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Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Catalogue essays by Michael Shmith

The pity of war, the pity war distilled.
Wilfred Owen, *Strange Meeting*, 1918.

There, in one line of iambic pentameter of just eight words, its two related thoughts divided by a single comma, is the very essence of the spoils of universal conflict and the price paid by the millions of people who, throughout history, went to war and never returned.

Among them was Wilfred Owen himself; among the greatest of Great-War poets, he was killed in action in France in November 1918, a week before the Armistice. He was twenty-five. Only a few months earlier, in the late spring, Owen wrote the poem that would prove to be the figurative and literal epitaph to his own truncated life. Owen's muse, Siegfried Sassoon, would describe *Strange Meeting* as Owen's passport to immortalityⁱ; and engraved on Owen's centennial memorial at Shrewsbury Abbey is another quotation from the poem: 'I am the enemy you killed, my friend'.ⁱⁱ

Strange Meeting, a curiously evocative and bleak poem of forty-four lines, portrays an encounter in hell between two dead soldiers who fought on opposing sides. Here, at last freed from bloody horror and enmity with perhaps an eternity in which to discuss, debate and reflect, one man says to the other:

*For by my glee might many men have laughed,
And of my weeping something had been left,
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,
The pity of war, the pity war distilled.
Now men will go content with what we spoiled.
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.*

It is useful to be reminded of the technical definition of 'distillation': 'a method of separating mixtures based on differences in their volatilities in a boiling liquid mixture'ⁱⁱⁱ. In the context of Owen's poem, the phrase '... the pity war distilled' indeed attains a purity and clarity, but also with a burning intensity, as potentially lethal as pure alcohol. The power of the word is just as concentrated when seen in the context of the Great War and its ghostly roll-call.

When it comes to the stories of five Australian soldiers, all from Victoria, whose lives were cut short because of the war, the process of distillation is more directly related to the civilian calling they shared: pharmacy. For Alan Couve, Eric Bisset, Malcolm Jones and Gordon Jewkes, all students of the Melbourne College of Pharmacy, the laboratory of science all too quickly and all too tragically became the melting pot of war, and these men never returned.

The fifth soldier, Frank Cahir, also a student at the college, survived the war, but stayed behind to work as a photographer, helping to identify the graves of fallen soldiers. He returned to Melbourne in 1921, but took his own life seven years later.

These men embodied the more precise distillation of the effect the war wreaked on the local pharmaceutical industry. Of Australia's almost two-hundred pharmacists, pharmacy students and apprentices who served, around ten per cent of them were killed in action or died in service. Since pharmacy was often a family business, these losses were felt down the generations.

Today, more than a century after the Armistice, the stories of the five soldiers remain vivid and enthralling. So, too, does the ever-continuing story of pharmacy, whose roots may be embedded in ancient science and botany, but whose progress, in terms of accrued knowledge and its application, knows no bounds.

Together, these five just men were bound by personal bravery and their professional calling. Let this couplet from Wilfred Owen's *Strange Meeting* serve as a memorial to each of them:

*Courage was mine, and I had mystery;
Wisdom was mine, and I had mastery:*

ⁱ An immortality that would gain immeasurably half a century later by the enduring success of Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* (1962), whose texts interspersed the traditional Mass with several of Owen's poems (including *Strange Meeting*).

ⁱⁱ From Poetry Critique by Kenneth Simcox, published by the Wilfred Owen Association, 2000. <http://www.wilfredowen.org.uk/poetry/strange-meeting>

ⁱⁱⁱ From pharma-iq.com. Ref. <https://www.pharma-iq.com/glossary/distillation>

ALAN CRAWFORD COUVE

Occupation	Chemist's apprentice
Address	Robinson Street, Dandenong, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Age at embarkation	20
Next of kin	Father, Joson M Couve, Dandenong, Victoria
Enlistment date	24 August 1914
Rank on enlistment	2nd Lieutenant
Unit name	<u>8th Battalion, G Company</u>
AWM Embarkation Roll number	23/25/1
Embarkation details	Unit embarked from Melbourne, Victoria, on board Transport A24 <i>Benalla</i> on 19 October 1914
Rank from Nominal Roll	Lieutenant
Unit from Nominal Roll	8th Battalion
Fate	Died of wounds 25 April 1915
Place of death or wounding	Gallipoli, Turkey
Date of death	26 April 1915
Age at death	21
Place of burial	Beach Cemetery (Plot I, Row B, Grave No. 2), Anzac, Gallipoli
Panel number, Roll of Honour, Australian War Memorial	52
Family/military connections	Brother: Lt H.T.L. Couve, killed in action 8 May 1915.
Other details	War service: Egypt, Gallipoli Medals: 1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal
<i>Information from database produced by UNSW and Australian Defence Force Academy, The AIF Project.</i>	



ALAN CRAWFORD COUVE

*By frowning Leeuwin they looked their last
On their fading homeland. Who shall dare
To probe the thoughts thronging close and fast
Behind set faces and eyes that stare?
Into the Indian Ocean they steamed
And some of them slept but many dreamed.*

— Eileen Ramsay (née Couve),
*The Troopships of Anzac (Oct-Dec 1914)*ⁱ

In the cold light of print of official records, the short life and premature death of Alan ‘Dutchy’ Couve describes a trajectory all too familiar in times of terrible conflict. Couve was one of the many fallen, but the documentation of his particular story proves how swiftly he plummeted from fledgling man of science to a bleak statistic of war. There, inscribed in faded grey ink, eighth down in the left-hand column in the student register of the Melbourne College of Pharmacyⁱⁱ, is Couve, Alan C, one of thirty students at- tending the college’s 1914 session. And there, listed on page 162 of the Pharmaceutical Register of Victoriaⁱⁱⁱ, is Couve, Alan Crawford, registered pharmaceutical apprentice to Joson Couve (his father), Dandenong.

Pharmacy in those days, as much as it is now, tended to be a family business, centred on a particular city or town. The Couve family were certainly part of Dandenong’s thriving community. There was twenty-one-year-old Alan, his sister, Eileen, and his elder brother by three years, Henry Thomas Ladson Couve (known as Tom); Alan and Tom, a public servant who worked for the fledgling Country Roads Board, played for the Dandenong football team; Tom was also club secretary.

On 29 August 1914, Alan (5’8”, 12 stone and 36 inches around the middle) completed his application for a commission in the Australian Imperial Forces. Under military qualifications, he writes:

- 2 years Colour Sergeant^{iv} junior cadets
- 2 years Sgt. senior cadets, high school
- 1 year Col. sergt. senior cadets
- 1 year set. Citizen Forces
- 1 year 2 months 2nd Lieut Citizen Forces.^v

Then, in mid-October of 1914, like thousands of their compatriots, the Couve boys went off to war. They sailed from Port Melbourne on *HMAT Benalla*, to Albany, Western Australia to join the first convoy of thirty-eight Australian and New Zealand ships and four cruisers bound for Egypt, which they reached on 2 December, where they completed their training. In early April 1915, the 8th Battalion sailed for the Gallipoli peninsula.



Dutchy and Tom, brothers in arms, to be sure, were cruelly destined to die within fifteen days of each other.

Alan, by now promoted to first lieutenant, led his men into battle on the first day of the Anzac landing, 25 April 1915. He suffered a gunshot wound to the skull and died the following day. He was the first College of Pharmacy student to die in World War I. On 8 May, Tom was killed in action on the Gallipoli peninsula.

On 20 May, the news of Alan’s death reached his parents, Joson and Minian. The flag on Dandenong Town Hall was at half mast, and *The Dandenong Advertiser*, under the head-line ‘ROLL OF HONOUR’, reported:

It was market day, wet and dreary, but there was a big attendance of people from the country, and the drooping flag and other signs of mourning had a most depressing influence on the sympathetic spirits of both the town and rural folk, when the news spread [...]

Lieutenant Couve, who was 21 years of age, robust and manly, [...] was a very promising student, passing his examinations with credit. He was leading a battalion when he fell. mortally wounded. It is reported that he had been previously wounded, but left hospital, and bravely went to the front again, only to meet a glorious death.^{vi}



The following August, Corporal John Walker, a comrade of the brothers, wrote to Joson Couve^{vii}: 'I miss the two Couves very much. Both Tom and Dutchy were well thought of, in fact very much admired. Those who faced the task in the beginning, and were killed, did their duty and died like men.'

From the inventory of effects of the late Lieut. A.C. Couve^{viii}:

- 1 Jack Knife.
- 1 Pocket Knife.
- 1 Compass.
- 3 Coins.
- 1 Belt.
- 1 Bible.
- 1 Photo.
- 1 Pr Nail Clippers.

1 Cross.

1 Tube Aspirins Tablets.

1 Wristlet Watch.

1 Gold Necklet, with locket and charm attached.

In juxtaposition to the shocking speed of Alan's abrupt and early exit from one of the century's most disastrous military campaigns was the excruciatingly protracted process that took a further five years for his family to receive proper confirmation of his death.

In June 1915, a month after the Couve brothers were killed at Gallipoli, their father contacted his federal parliamentary member to seek help over a 'very curious matter'. Curious, and confusing. Joson had asked the defence department to clarify conflicting reports he had received: that either both of his sons had been killed, or that one of them was dead and the other wounded.

Despite the efforts of civilian and military authorities, the Couve family would remain in doubt about the exact fate of their loved ones until more than a year after the Armistice. In fact, by this time, the situation had been compounded.

On 4 January 1920, Eileen Couve wrote to Senator William Bolton ^{ix}, an old family acquaintance who had also been at the Gallipoli landing, but was invalidated home later that year. She told Bolton that returning men of Alan's unit had brought back with them 'so many varied stories of his death & burial, and also one rumour that he did not die, but was somehow made prisoner of war & is now in Switzerland, being treated for loss of memory'. She continued: 'You can well believe that such reports are very unsettling, and I should be glad of the official record.'

Eileen was particularly concerned that her father, by now seriously ill, did not learn of the rumours his younger son might be still alive.

Bolton took the matter up with the military records department, which replied on 17 January, advising there was little reason to doubt the circumstances of the death of Lieut Couve and that he was buried at Gallipoli. But where? 'Particulars regarding the grave have not yet been received,' the letter said. '... but an intensive search is how being made all over old battlefields with a view to locating unregistered graves'

Meanwhile, Eileen was doggedly pursuing her own inquiries. On 12 January, she wrote to the officer in charge at the Switzerland headquarters of the allied forces, asking for his help to determine if Alan was still alive? Eileen wrote: '... for nearly 5 years we have had to mourn him as dead with just a tiny seed of hope that someday something might give us a clue.'

As possible help in finding her brother, Eileen enclosed several family photographs along with a one-page detailed description of her brother: 'Heavy, powerful build, well proportioned, with high-arched feet; light brown hair, tanned complexion grey-blue eyes inclined to be round [...] exceptionally muscular, with good carriage, good teeth, some gold filled.' She also described Alan's athletic prowess, sensitive hands and a 'fine untrained baritone voice, with the gift of entertaining a company or crowd'. Eileen added that Alan was 'be-trothed to Millie Veale whose Father was the local Vicar. Her photo enclosed'.

The wheels turned slowly. On 8 March 1920, the commandant of Australian Imperial Force Headquarters in London received a letter from the British War Office, asking him to reply to Eileen on the office's behalf. The message was clear: '... no released prisoners of War or other offices or soldiers suffering from loss of memory are being kept in Switzerland. [...] It is very much regretted that it is impossible to hold out any hope that any officers or men missing in Gallipoli will be found to be still living.'

On 15 March 1920, the AIF forwarded the correspondence (including the return of Eileen's family photographs) to the records department of the Department of Defence, Melbourne. It wasn't until 14 May that the officer in charge of base records wrote to Eileen, quoting most of the War Office's original letter. At last, five years after Alan Couve's death at Gallipoli, could his survivors finally achieve perhaps at least some peace of mind.

On 25 May 1921, Joson Couve received a short letter from base records of the AIF, informing him that Lieutenant AC Couve of the 8th Battalion is buried in the Beach Cemetery, Gallipoli: Pl. 1, Row B, Grave 2. His brother, Tom, whose body was never found, is among the 20,771 names inscribed on the Helles Memorial, Cape Helles, Gallipoli.

The Couve family was no different from the thousands of other Australian families affected by the ravages of war. The emotional effect of losing two sons, two brothers would never leave them. After the Armistice, the surviving Couves left Dandenong to resettle in Red Cliffs, in the Mallee, where Joson opened the town's first pharmacy, and Eileen began her research into local plant life ^x.

Alan's fiancée, Millie Veale, also never recovered from her loss. She was described by a friend of the family as 'such a lovely person [...] I liked her; she was so gentle and interesting and so sad that she never married after Dutchy was killed.' ^{xi} Millie, who lived with her two unmarried sisters in a large house in Melbourne, became a good friend of Eileen's, often visiting her at Red Cliffs. When Eileen died in 1961, she left her entire estate to Millie.

ⁱ Hilda Eileen Ramsay (1886-1961). Sister of Alan and Tom Couve. After World War I, Ramsay and her parents resettled in the Mallee district of north-western Victoria, where she became an avid and respected botanist. The HE Ramsay collection of more than one thousand specimens was transferred in 2016 from the Mildura Arts Centre to the National Herbarium of Victoria. Ramsay gave her Anzac poem to her naturalist friend John Plant.

ⁱⁱ List of Students Attending the College, p. 41. Australian manuscript collection, State Library of Victoria (MS9601. Records ca. 1857-1955).

ⁱⁱⁱ Apprentices' Indentures Registered during the Year 1913, Victoria Government Gazette, 5 January 1914,

^{iv} Introduced into British Army in 1813 to signify person who carried the ensign or 'colours'. Equivalent rank to staff sergeant.

^v Form A.22, from defence base records. National Archives of Australia: Couve Alan Crawford : SERN LIEUTENANT : POB N/A : POE N/A : NOK F Couve Joson M.

^{vi} 20 May 1915, p. 2. trove.nla.gov.au.

^{vii} Excerpt of letter, published in the Dandenong Journal, 26 August 1915.

^{viii} National Archives of Australia. Details as above.

^{ix} Colonel William Kinsey Bolton (1861-1941). Soldier and politician. Nationalist Party Senator for Victoria 1917-1923.

^x Local historian Mary Chandler says the family never coped with the deaths of Alan and Tom. '[they] came up to Red Cliffs I think because it was a soldiers' settlement and away from Dandenong where they lived.' Correspondence with Christine Johnson, January 2019.

^{xi} As above.

ERIC SIMSON BISSET

Regimental number	4751
School	State School, Golden Square, Bendigo, Victoria
Religion	Presbyterian
Occupation	Chemist
Address	Hobart Road, Murrumbeena, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Age at embarkation	27
Next of kin	Mother, Mrs A Bissett, Hobart Road, Murrumbeena, Victoria
Previous military service	Served in the Junior Cadets and the Rifle Club.
Enlistment date	16 December 1915
Rank on enlistment	Private
Unit name	14th Battalion, 15th Reinforcement
AWM Embarkation Roll number	23/31/4
Embarkation details	Unit embarked from Melbourne, Victoria, on board HMAT A68 <i>Anchises</i> on 14 March 1916
Rank from Nominal Roll	Private
Unit from Nominal Roll	46th Battalion
Fate	Killed in Action 14 November 1916
Place of death or wounding	France
Date of death	14 November 1916
Age at death	28
Age at death from cemetery records	28
Place of burial	No known grave
Commemoration details	Australian National Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux, France
Panel number, Roll of Honour, Australian War Memorial	141
Miscellaneous information from cemetery records	Parents: John and Alice Louisa Bisset. Born at Bendigo, Victoria
Family/military connections	Brother: 22919 Alan Ecila Longmore Bisset, 7th Field Artillery Brigade, killed in action, France, 20 October 1917.
Other details	War service: Western Front Medals: British War Medal, Victory Medal
<i>Information from a database produced by UNSW and Australian Defence Force Academy, The AIF Project.</i>	



ERIC SIMSON BISSET

The official studio portrait of twenty-seven-year-old Private Eric Simson Bisset shows him in uniform, slouch hat and chinstrap firmly in place, head turned slightly to the right. It is a formal photograph, with a slightly ruminative, tense air, as if Eric would rather have been somewhere else.

By the time he enlisted on 16 December 1915, Eric was a student at the Melbourne College of Pharmacy and was a registered pharmaceutical apprentice to GE Gulliver, of 338 Collins Street, Melbourne. His medical certificate, dated 16 December 1915, deemed him fit for service, with ‘no disease or physical defect calculated to unfit him for the duties of a soldier’ⁱ.

The Bendigo-born Eric, whose previous military experience was in the junior cadets and the local rifle club, was one of the multitude who signed up for the war. A report published in early 1916 showed that in Victoria in one week alone there were 779 enlistments, including 100 Light Horsemenⁱⁱ.

Another photograph, taken at Port Melbourne on 14 March 1916 by JE Barnes (known as the ‘embarkation photographer’), shows troops piled on board HMAT A68 *Anchises*ⁱⁱⁱ. A sole civilian on the dock gazes up at the vessel, which is jammed to the gunwales. Somewhere in that hugger-mugger, khaki-clad, flag-waving crowd are the men of the 15th Reinforcements of the 14th Battalion and (if only one could look closer still) one of their number, a man with pale complexion, blue eyes and brown hair, just over five-and-a-half feet tall,^{iv}: Private ES Bisset, Regimental No. 4751.

He had exactly eight months left to live.

In early April 1916, the *Anchises* docked at Suez, and Eric and his unit were transferred to the AIF training camp at Tel-el-Kebir, temporary home to around forty thousand Australian troops. On 29 July, Eric and his unit sailed on the MMT *Arcadia* from Alexandria to England arriving at Southampton on 9 August. A month later, the unit was shipped across the English Channel to the AIF base at Étapes, in northern France, for intensive training.

At this stage of the war, the allied forces of Australia, Britain and France were engaged in the Somme Offensive, which raged from July to November 1916. The Somme was a turning point of the war, with shockingly huge casualties on both sides^v. The end, which hardly justified the means, was that the allies gained just over ten kilometres of ground from the enemy.



Eric Bisset’s part in the Battle of the Somme began on 6 October, when, newly transferred to the 53rd Battalion, he went off to fight ‘in the field’^{vi}. On 21 October, he was transferred to the 46th Battalion.

All the while, the weather was worsening. An unyielding and cruel winter was swiftly approaching, and with it, irrevocably near-freezing wind and teeming rain. As one Australian soldier, Philip Owen Ayton, would recall in his diary:

It was the heaviest rain I had yet seen in France. It lashed the mud from the banks of the trench and dashed it into our eyes. We were wading through mud and water up to our be-hinds [...] We struggled on. Often sinking to our waists in the slime and dragging each other out.^{vii}

The Australian war historian Walter Belford famously declared that ‘mud was the God of this sector’. How the trenches were full of water and mud and the ‘decomposing remains of heroes of already forgotten battles.’

It was as if the whole region had wilted under the terrific strain put upon it, and as if the back bone had gone out of the land, leaving only a soft, viscous mass for the troops to die in.^{viii}

Bedford was writing of the battlefield near the village of Gueudecourt in northern France. It was here where Eric Bisset would die.



By mid-November, as the Somme Offensive was nearing its end, Bisset was among the Australian troops manning the support trenches - those 'ghastly ditches' ^{ix} - behind the front line. Tuesday 14 November 1916 was what had been called one of the worst days of the entire war, with the constant downpour from the heavens matched only by the heavy shelling. It was early in the morning of this dreadful day, as the men were about to draw their breakfast rations, that a German shell dropped into the trench, killing Eric Bisset along with at least eight other men. One eyewitness would write:

I had just seen Bisset in the trench. I was about 7 yards away when a shell burst ... and 8 men were killed. Bisset among them, but his body was not found. The shell must have buried him. I was so close I was covered with mud from the explosion."^x

Four days later, on 18 November, the Somme Offensive finally ended.

Just as the bodies of Bisset and his fellow soldiers were never recovered, destined to lay deep in the morass that would become their eternal resting place, it is still not possible to pinpoint the exact spot where they died. Official accounts are confused (most likely because of the intense warfare being waged), reporting at least five different locations across a relatively large area between Gueudecourt in the north-east and Flers in the south-east.

But the focus has narrowed, thanks to modern scholarship on social media, utilising military documentation, the trench maps of the day (kept by both sides) and an extraordinary aerial photograph taken by a WWI German aviator. The most likely location of Bisset's death is on the eastern outskirts of Flers.

The memory of Eric Bisset is inscribed deep in Portland stone at the Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, France. His name is one of more than ten thousand that commemorate the Australians who were killed in France and who have no known graves.

Eric was not the only Bisset to fall. A month shy of a year later, on 20 October 1917, his younger brother, Alan^{xi}, was also killed in action. Gunner Bisset, of the 7th Field Artillery brigade, died at Passchendaele, in Belgium. He had been wounded in action in France in September, and returned to his unit only two weeks before his death. He is buried in the Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery, Belgium.

The deaths of the two Bisset brothers deprived their family of two of their most beloved sons. But the Bisset family itself continued to thrive as the decades went by. Today, the Bisset clan is large and widespread: a suitable generational memorial to those two boys from Bendigo who went to the war and never returned.

ⁱ Certificate and other documentation, National Archive of Australia, ref. NAA: B2455, BISSET E S. Series number: B2455.

ⁱⁱ *The Argus*, 15 March 1916, p. 10.

ⁱⁱⁱ His Majesty's Australian Transport.

^{iv} As per medical certificate.

^v At the Somme, from 23 July to 3 September, 6,800 Australian troops were killed, with around 23,000 wounded. Other nations fared far worse: on the first day of the offensive alone, British casualties were more than 57,000, including almost 20,000 deaths. German losses over the entire offensive totalled an estimated 650,000 men. These unprecedented high losses were due in part to the rapid mechanisation of weapons, including machine guns, heavy guns and the introduction of tanks.

From <https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/14946>.

^{vi} Military term for active combat or manoeuvres.

^{vii} From *Hell of a Time: An Australian Soldier's Diary of the Great War*, p. 150. By Phillip Owen Ayton, ed. Elvala Ayton, Text Publishing, 2019.

^{viii} Captain Walter C. Belford. From *Legs–Eleven, Being the Story of the 11th Battalion (AIF) in the Great War of 1914–1918*, Perth, 1940, p.360–1. Quoted in <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/conflicts/australians-western-front-19141918/australian-remembrance-trail/windmillpozières-8>

^{ix} As above.

^x From eyewitness report by informant Byrne, 4746, 46th AIF, B Company. 4 November 1916. Australian Red Cross wounded and missing enquiry bureau files. <https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/awm-media/collection/RCDIG1038269/document/5625937.PDF>

^{xi} Alan Ecila Longmore Bisset (1890–1917). Engine driver, enlisted 20 January 1916 and joined the Reinforcements of the 8th Field Artillery Brigade. Embarked from Melbourne 20 September 1917.

WALLACE GORDON JEWKES

Regimental number	142
Place of birth	Ballarat, Victoria
School	Ballarat State School, Victoria
Other training	Accountancy and Pharmacy
Religion	Methodist
Occupation	Chemist
Address	St Kilda, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Age at embarkation	22
Next of kin	Father, Wallace Meikeljohn Jewkes, 39 Lock Street, St Kilda, Victoria
Previous military service	Served as a Captain Adjutant in Senior Cadets Forces. In charge Instructional Camp at Royal Park 1915-16.
Enlistment date	9 May 1916
Rank on enlistment	CSM (WO Class II)
Unit name	39th Battalion, A Company
AWM Embarkation Roll number	23/56/1
Embarkation details	Unit embarked from Melbourne, Victoria, on board HMAT A11 <i>Ascanius</i> on 27 May 1916
Regimental number from Nominal Roll	Commissioned
Rank from Nominal Roll	Lieutenant
Unit from Nominal Roll	39th Battalion
Other details from Roll of Honour Circular	Resigned above rank and enlisted as private in 39th. Received his commission to Warrant Officer and Lieutenant in England 1916.
Fate	Died of wounds 10 January 1917
Place of death or wounding	Houplines, Armentieres
Age at death from cemetery records	22
Place of burial	Hazebrouck Communal Cemetery (Plot I, Row C, Grave No. 7), France
Panel number, Roll of Honour, Australian War Memorial	131
Miscellaneous information from cemetery records	Parents: Wallace Meiklejohn and Jean JEWKES, Military Road, and Raglan Street, Mosman, New South Wales. Native of Ballarat
Family/military connections	His only brother was Staff Sergeant in AMC from 1914 to 1919.
Other details	War service: Western Front Medals: British War Medal, Victory Medal
<i>Information from database produced by UNSW and Australian Defence Force Academy, The AIF Project.</i>	



WALLACE GORDON JEWKES

Over more than a century, millions of words have been written about World War I: its history, its purpose and the overwhelming cost it inflicted on human life and suffering. Sometimes, though, the effects of that conflict are best expressed in just a few paragraphs — especially when penned by a soldier who is staring his own death in the face.

Here, in little shy of 300 words, is a letter dated 9 January 1917, written from the front line in France by twenty-two-year-old Ballarat-born Lieutenant Wallace Gordon Jewkes, of the 39th Australian Infantry Battalion, to his parents:

Dear Mother & Father,

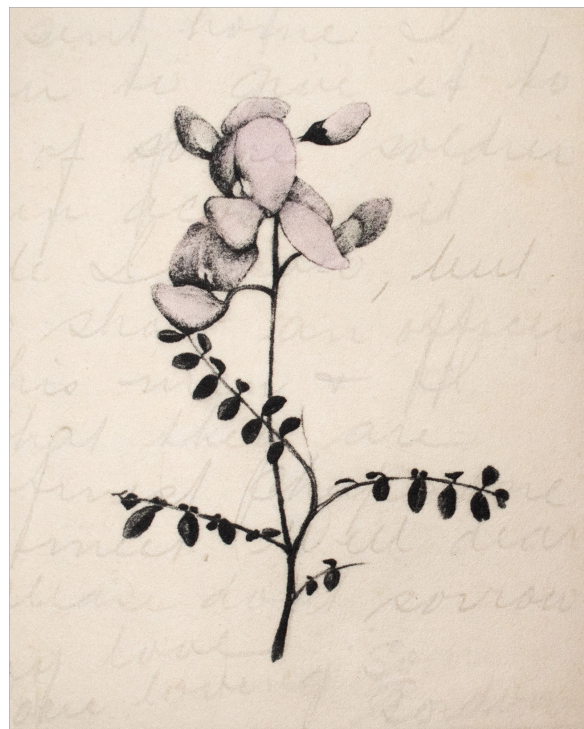
I'm afraid that you will think me rather gloomy in writing in the following strain but of course one has to take the necessary precautions at these times, the fact is that our Battn is carrying out a raid on the enemy trenches tomorrow night, and I am one of the chosen volunteers, there are three of us altogether, that is officers, & 50 men. Of course, we are considered the elite of the Battn & I am proud to be in the position for it shows that I have the confidence of those over me which is a great factor at these times of great tests. This war business is one which makes a man a man as regards the possession of those qualifications which are expected in a real man & I am delighted to know that my superiors think me a possessor of those qualifications. If I should meet with bad luck and not get back I don't want you to mourn for me but just think of it in the light that you have given a son in a great cause & that he did his duty as a man. I'm afraid my personal belongings amount to practically air, but all there is will be sent home to youⁱ & if there is any money sent home I should like you to give it to the dependents of some soldier killed in action, it will be very little I know, but it will serve to show an officer's appreciation of his men & I can tell you they are marvels, & the finest chaps one could wish to meet. Well dear Mother & Father please don't sorrow for me.

All my love

Your loving son

Gordon.ⁱⁱ

Although Gordon Jewkes undoubtedly passed the test of courage assigned to him, his foreboding tragically proved true. The next night, 10 January, on a raid on German trenches at Houplines, Armentières, he was shot in the head.



A fellow soldier, Staff Sergeant Martin, was one-hundred metres away when Gordon was shot. 'His men brought him back and he died two hours later. I saw his grave which had a nice cross erected on it with his name and battalion. He was buried with his comrade, Basil Whiteⁱⁱⁱ. He was well known and liked by all his men.'

Gordon's service record^{iv} shows that his remains were transferred to the Hazebrouck Communal Cemetery, near Calais in northern France. His gravestone of local white stone stands tall and proud.

More exact details of how he died are contained in a letter of condolence from his commanding officer, Captain CR Hutton, written to Jewkes' father:

He took part in a raid on the enemy's trenches, and when in them, at the entrance of a dugout, after calling on the occupants to surrender, was going in when he was shot at through a concealed loophole in the side of the entrance, and hit on the head. His loss is deeply felt by the officers of the company and myself, as he was a great pal of ours, and was such a splendid fellow and companion, and a grand soldier [...]^v.



The circumstances of the killing of Gordon Jewkes were referred to by Sir John Monash himself: 'It was a lesson to our boys,' he wrote in a letter to his wife, 'to take no chances in the future.'^{vi}

Ironically, and perhaps even irrelevantly, considering the circumstances, the raid that cost Gordon his life was considered a success:

Numbers of the enemy were killed, dugouts were blown up and machine guns put out of action, while valuable information was gleaned from the documents captured in the German trenches.^{vii}

The extinguishing of Gordon Jewkes' short life came just eight days after his promotion to Lieutenant, on New Year's Day.

We know from records^{viii} that Gordon was a 'strapping young man' of six foot two, with brown eyes, dark brown hair. He had attended Ballarat State School,

until moving with his family to Essendon, near Melbourne, where his father opened a chemist shop. Gordon was a Captain Adjutant in the Senior Cadet Forces, and in charge of the instructional camp at Melbourne's Royal Park. He enlisted on 9 May 1916.

On 27 May, Warrant Officer Class 2 Jewkes embarked for England on the A11 *Ascanius*, arriving at the Devonport naval base, Plymouth, on 18 July. On 23 November, having completed his training, Gordon and his unit sailed for the Western Front via Southampton. In a little more than six weeks, he would be dead. Or, in the official language of his service record, 'Struck off the strength'^{ix}.

Had Gordon lived, there was little doubt he would have gone into the family business: for generations, pharmacy surged rather than flowed through the Jewkes' veins.

Indeed, the profession can be traced back to Gordon's grandfather, Joseph 'Jack' Jewkes (1824-1900), an apothecary who emigrated to the Ballarat goldfields in 1854^x.

George Gilbert Jewkes, Gordon's older brother by two years, also studied at the Melbourne College of Pharmacy and served in World War I. He enlisted in October 1914, and served as a Staff Sergeant with the Light Horse Field Ambulance (AIF) in the Middle East.

Unlike Gordon, Gilbert survived the war and returned home after the Armistice. After completing his qualifications at the Melbourne College of Pharmacy, 'Gil' (as the family called him) joined his father's chemist business, by now located in the northern Sydney suburb of Mosman. In 1940, he moved to Canberra, where he held office in the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the NSW Pharmacy Board. In 1958, Gilbert received an OBE for his founding work at director of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, established by the Federal Department of Health. He died in 1964, almost half a century after his beloved brother was killed at Houplines.

ⁱ As they were. His father received them in July 1917. Listed on the inventory were: '2 Identity Disks, 1 Whistle & Lanyard, 1 Aluminium Drinking Cup, 2 Pipes, 1 Tobacco Pouch, 1 Wrist Watch, 1 Diary, 1 Pocket Book, Letters, Photos, Cards. Plus 1 VALISE (sealed). Sam Browne" Belt, Pr Gloves, 2 Pipes, 4 handkerchiefs, Suit Pyjamas, Khaki Shirt, Housewife [sewing kit], Razor, Belt, Shaving Brush, Comb, Mirror, Holdall. Plus

Cigarette Case, Ring, Metal Star, Coin on Metal Ring.'

ⁱⁱ Jewkes' original letter in the Australian War Memorial collection. Accession No. PR01102.

ⁱⁱⁱ Second-Lieutenant White of the 39th Battalion was killed in action on 6 December 1916. He was thirty-five. From <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/R1667249/>

^{iv} Entry dated 28 February 1917. From National Archives of Australia, JEWKES WALLACE GORDON. Series number: B2455.

^v Letter quoted in *The Australasian Journal of Pharmacy*, 20 March 1917, pp. 114-15.

^{vi} Letter from Monash to Hannah Victoria Monash, 15 March 1918. Quoted in *Monash: The Soldier Who Shaped Australia*, by Grantlee Kieza, ABC Books 2016, p. 354.

^{vii} *The Thirty-ninth : the history of the 39th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force*, by A.T. Paterson, 1934. pp 85-85. Quoted in: <http://empirecall.pbworks.com/w/page/43649777/Jewkes-%20W-G-CSM-142w>

^{viii} <https://www.greatwarforum.org/topic/89668-remembering-today-1012008-on-the-gwf/>

^{ix} Military term, meaning 'no longer one of the battalion, therefore no longer counted or included in the number of men the battalion has'. Quote from <https://www.greatwarforum.org/topic/94541-taken-on-strength/>

^x The pharmaceutical line continues unabated. Peter Jewkes, a direct descendent of Gordon, says: 'My father, David Gilbert Jewkes (1928-2016), was also a pharmacist who worked in Mosman for all of his career. His two sisters were also pharmacists [...] My sister and I seem to be the first Jewkeses in over a century not to have studied pharmacy.' Email to Andrew McIntosh, Faculty of Pharmacy, 28 June 2018.

MALCOLM JONES

Regimental number	5364
Place of birth	Caulfield, Victoria
School	High School, Melbourne, Victoria
Other training	College of Pharmacy, Melbourne, Victoria
Religion	Church of England
Occupation	Student
Address	East Malvern, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Age at embarkation	19
Next of kin	Father, John Albert Jones, Dandenong Road, East Malvern, Victoria
Previous military service	Served in the Senior Cadets, Lieutenant
Enlistment date	29 December 1915
Rank on enlistment	Private
Unit name	24th Battalion, 14th Reinforcement
AWM Embarkation Roll number	23/41/4
Embarkation details	Unit embarked from Melbourne on HMAT A28 <i>Miltiades</i> on 1 August 1916
Rank from Nominal Roll	Sergeant
Unit from Nominal Roll	24th Battalion
Other details from Roll of Honour Circular	Reported missing. A member of the first Commonwealth Team, gold medal, a member of the second Commonwealth Team, silver medal
Fate	Killed in Action 4 October 1917
Miscellaneous details (Nominal Roll)	*Spelt Malcolm Jones on NR
Place of death or wounding	Zonnebeke, Belgium
Age at death	20
Age at death from cemetery records	20
Place of burial	No known grave
Commemoration details	The Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial (Panel 23), Belgium
Panel number, Roll of Honour, Australian War Memorial	102
Miscellaneous information from cemetery records	Parents: John Albert and Emily JONES, Dandenong Road, Caulfield East, Victoria. Native of Caulfield, Victoria
Family/military connections	Brother of Major Allan Murray Jones M.G. D.F.C. was commander of 2nd Squadron of Australian Flying Corps, AIF.
Other details	War service: Western Front Medals: British War Medal, Victory Medal
Information from a database of produced by LFNSW and Australian Defence Force Academy, The AIF Project.	



MALCOLM JONES

One of the saddest things about what we know about Malcolm Jones is how *little* we know.

We know he was eighteen years and ten months old when he enlisted in December 1915 and by the time he was killed in action in a shell attack at Zonnebeke, near Ypresⁱ, on 4 October 1917, he was still two months' shy of twenty-one.

We know that a fellow soldier would recall that Sergeant Jones' '... people were chemists or something of that sort.'ⁱⁱ

We know for sure that Malcolm had studied at the Melbourne College of Pharmacy, along with his older brother, Allan Murray Jones; that they were both apprenticed to their father, John Albert Jones, Manufacturing Chemist, of Caulfield East; and that they both cut their studies short to go to war.

We also know (or can at least surmise) how proud their father must have been of his boys. When Malcolm enlisted, his father wrote this letter, dated 29 December 1915:

This is to certify that I am willing to allow my apprentice Malcolm Jones to enlist for Active Service and that I will hold over his indentures till his return when he can finish his term.ⁱⁱⁱ

Malcolm sailed with the 24th Battalion from Melbourne on HMAT A28 *Miltiades* on 1 August 1916. After further training in southern England and Étaples in northern France, he fought in France and Belgium. In August, he was promoted to Sergeant.

What we don't know, and will never know, is what would have happened if Malcolm had come back. Alas, a cruel and random act of war that failed to spare him and, in fact, as it was discovered later, obliterated him^{iv}, would essentially not only rob the Jones family of a beloved son and brother, but efface from destiny one yet to establish his professional mark and perhaps marry and raise his own family.

Instead, by sad default, his brother became the more famous and celebrated Jones. It was Murray (his preferred name) who returned to Australia in May 1919, and became a registered pharmacist the following year, opening his own business. It was Murray who would be remembered and suitably honoured^v for his outstanding war record — 'he developed a reputation for flying prowess and daring and aggressive tactics'^{vi} — particularly with the Australian Flying Corps in the Middle East and France. It was Murray who went on to achieve a distinguished career in the aviation industry^{vii}.

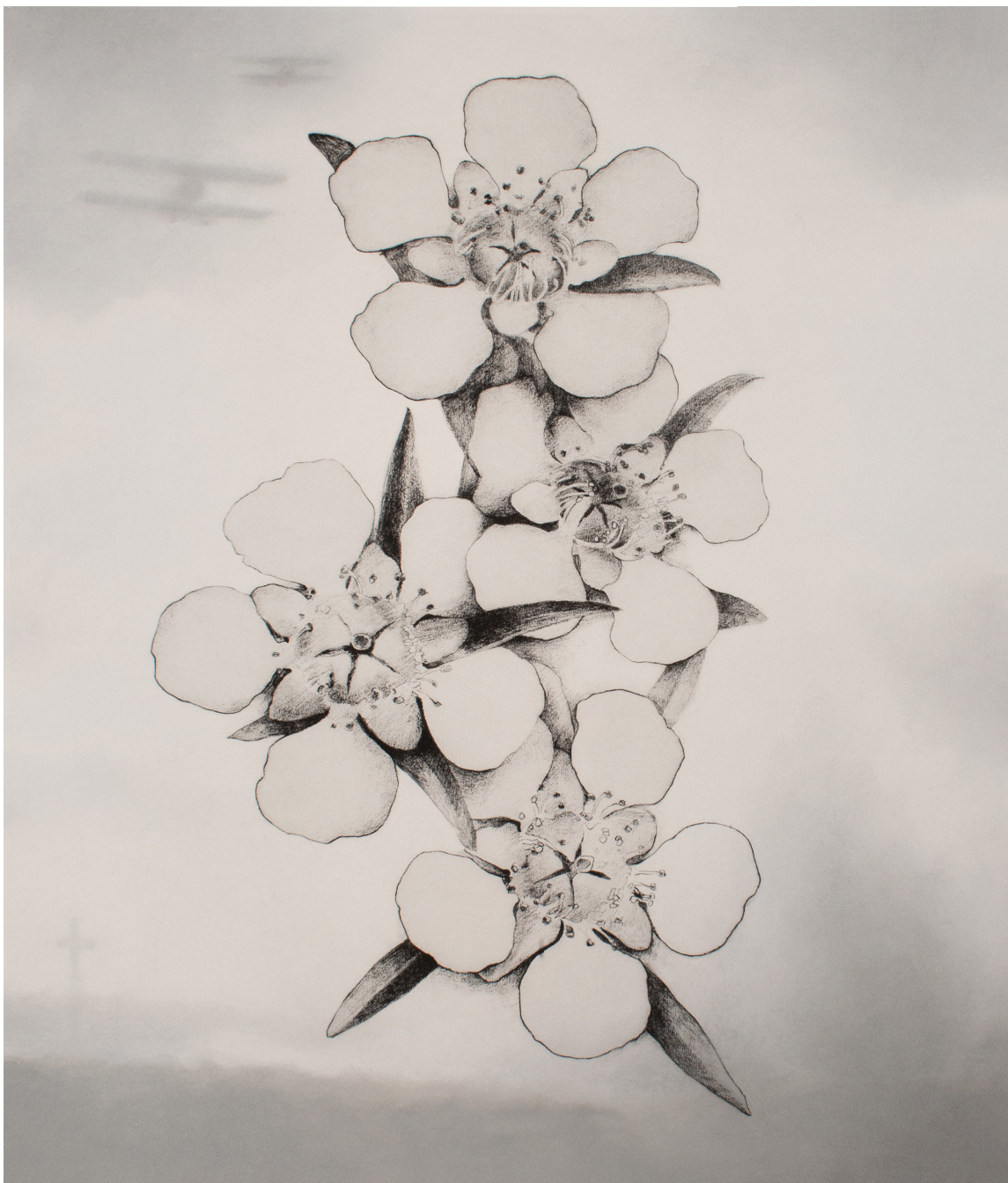


Another of Malcolm's brothers, Arthur Leslie William Jones (known as Les), had a strong, enduring career in pharmacy^{viii}. In 1927, as president of the Pharmaceutical Society of Victoria, Les was instrumental in engaging Sir John Monash, the then vice-chancellor of the University of Melbourne, to deliver the society's inaugural address.

And what of Malcolm Jones? His body was never found, but his name is inscribed along with those of more than 6,000 other fallen AIF comrades at the Menin Gate memorial at Ypres.

On 24 July 1927, the memorial was inaugurated by Field-Marshal Lord Plumer^{ix}, who had commanded Britain's Second Army in Ypres. His concluding words, while not mentioning any one soldier directly, resounded with profound truths about how important it is to recognise those who, like Malcolm Jones, are gone (somewhere) but never to be forgotten.

It was resolved that here at Ypres, where so many of the 'Missing' are known to have fallen, there should be erected a memorial worthy of them which should give expression to the nation's gratitude for their sacrifice and its sympathy with those who mourned them. A memorial has been erected which, in its simple grandeur, fulfils this object, and now it can be said of each one in whose honour we are assembled here today: 'He is not missing; he is here'.^x



ⁱ Australians spearheaded five of the 11 major assaults at Ypres during September and October. By October torrential rains 'turned the shell-torn ground into a morass, in which the wounded drowned and men struggled to make any headway'. Thirty-eight thousand Australians were killed or wounded at Ypres. <https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/captured/official/western/ypres>

ⁱⁱ Corporal D Morris, 24 Australian D Co, 13 Pl. Dated 13 January 1918. Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau Files 1914-18 War. Ref. 1DRL/0428.

ⁱⁱⁱ National Archives of Australia files. Ref. NAA: B2455, JONES M. Series number: B2455

^{iv} ' [...] no trace of Jones could be found [...] In my opinion he was blown to pieces'. Statement by Company Quartermaster Sergeant VAH Clark, 24th Battalion, 19 April 1918. Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau Files 1914-18 War. Ref. 1DRL/0428.

^v Murray Jones was awarded the Military Cross in 1917 and Distinguished Flying Cross in 1918.

^{vi} From Jones, Alan Murray (1895-1963), by Keith Isaacs, *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (1983).

^{vii} Murray gave up pharmacy in March 1921 to join the RAAF, becoming commanding officer RAAF Point Cook until 1924. He joined the Department of Civil Aviation in 1929 and then, in 1931, de Havilland Australia as general manager and eventually chairman. He died in Sydney in December 1963.

^{viii} In fact, four Jones brothers were involved with the pharmacy industry: in addition to Malcolm Jones, there was Allan Murray Jones, who qualified in 1920, Harold Morrison Jones (1925), and Arthur William Leslie Jones (1905). Les Jones died in 1952 at the age of sixty-nine.

^{ix} Field Marshal Herbert Charles Onslow Plumer, 1st Viscount Plumer, GCB, GCMG, GCVO, GBE (1857-1932).

^x Quote from <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/ypres-salient/memorial-menin-gate-inauguration.htm>

THOMAS FRANK CAHIR

Regimental number	63
Date of birth	1889
Place of birth	Yendon, Victoria
True Name	CAHIR, Frank
Religion	Roman Catholic
Occupation	Chemist's Assistant
Address	Rainbow, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Age at embarkation	24
Height	5' 9"
Weight	161 lbs
Next of kin	Mother, Mrs T Cahir, Rainbow, Victoria
Enlistment date	18 August 1914
Place of enlistment	Melbourne, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Unit name	2nd Field Ambulance
AWM Embarkation Roll number	26/45/1
Embarkation details	Unit embarked from Melbourne, HMAT A18 <i>Wiltshire</i> on 19 October 1914
Rank from Nominal Roll	Staff Sergeant
Unit from Nominal Roll	9th Field Ambulance
Fate	Returned to Australia 22 July 1921
Medals	October 1916: Bravery Commendation and Military Medal (MM) for devotion to duty and good work at Gallipoli. September 1918: Recommended for Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) for distinguished leadership on Western Front (not awarded). 17 July 2017: Awarded posthumous Distinguished Service Medal (DSM).
Discharge date	27 September 1921
Other details	War service: Egypt, Gallipoli, Western Front Commenced return to Australia on board HT 'Demosthenes', 22 July 1921; disembarked, 13 September 1921; discharged (medically unfit), 27 September 1921. Medals: Military Medal, 1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal
Date of death	22 May 1928
Age at death	38
Place of burial	Melbourne General Cemetery, Victoria
Information is primarily from a database produced by UNSW and Australian Defence Force Academy, The AIF Project, and edited or supplemented with additional information from the Cahir Family.	



THOMAS FRANK CAHIR

At first, Thomas 'Frank' Cahirⁱ appears the odd soldier out. For one, he was the first of the five soldiers to enlist, just days before Alan Couve in August 1914, and he went to war in October 1914, only a few months before his final exams. Second, Frank was the only one of the five soldiers to survive the war; the only one to return home.

Important differences, to be sure. Yet, there are common factors that inextricably bind him to his four compatriots. Take their deaths. Frank might have survived the bayonet or the bullet, but, in the end, a mere decade after the Armistice, his own death, by his own hand, was just as profoundly shocking, especially for those he left behind. There is, then, just as much reason to mourn the death of Frank Cahir as it is to lament the killings of Eric Simson Bisset, Alan Couve, Malcolm Jones and Wallace Gordon Jewkes.

Frank Cahir's wartime story is extraordinary in its vividness and immediacy. Not just of what he accomplished during the war, but after it.

Between 1914 and 1918, Private (later Staff-Sergeantⁱⁱ) Cahir served with two field ambulance units, in Egypt and Turkey and the Western Front, respectively. He was therefore in the prime (but ghastly) position to be able to witness the bloodshed and agonies of these conflicts — details he did not spare from his familyⁱⁱⁱ. A letter to his family from Gallipoli was the antithesis of 'the very tame accounts' being received at home. He described Sunday 25 April as 'a day I will never forget':

The first boat to hit the shore was full of third field ambulance men (as they accidentally got ahead of the infantry in the dark) there were eight of them killed and seventeen wounded out of the one boat. After the third Brigade landed and charged the cliffs, our ambulance was embarked in the boats, only our stretcher bearers, 108 of us. I can tell you my heart beat rather erratically, for the deck of the destroyer that took us in close to the shore was strewn with wounded and dying, poor fellows being hit before they reached the shore.

At any rate, Providence had a watchful eye over us and we landed without losing a man. On reaching the shore our work began, the beach was strewn with wounded and dying Australians and Turks, three of our own fellows were hit before we went a dozen yards, but the sight of our wounded pals put a feeling for revenge into our heads, and into it we went after the Infantry, it is impossible to describe it, anybody who went through the first three or four days will never forget it. [...]

Those first few days are like a huge nightmare to us, but the work our men did was glorious. Carrying men from off the top of the hills under an awful hail of shrapnel, but the thanks and grips of the hands of the dying and wounded would only spur you on to do more, it was impossible to use a stretcher and four of us would have to do the job with waterproof sheet.^{iv}



For his Gallipoli service, Cahir would be awarded a Military Medal^v. The citation praised his 'Devotion to duty and good work [...] at Anzac in continuously rescuing wounded from very exposed positions single handed and carrying them to the beach under exceptionally heavy rifle and shell fire and carrying water to the trenches on his return journey.'^{vi}

At the end of March 1916, Frank arrived in Marseilles, to serve in a different theatre of war: the Western Front. In December, he was evacuated to England in December with a shoulder injury that kept him out of action for most of 1917. Early the following year, he returned to the front, joining the 9th Field Ambulance, in General John Monash's 3rd Division.

By this time, it was reported that Monash was himself exhausted and drawn, perhaps the physical manifestation of his own famous thoughts on the whole conflict: 'For myself I am very heartily sick of the whole war business. Its horror, its ghastly inefficiency, its unspeakable cruelty and misery, have always appalled me but there is nothing to do but to set one's teeth and stick it out as long as one can.'^{vii}

That Monash and his men stuck it out is historical fact. So, too, is the fact that Staff-Sergeant Frank Cahir often exceeded the bounds of duty in several fields of battle.



This included the first battle of Villers-Bretonneux on 4 April 1918. The second battle, not directly involving Cahir, waged three weeks later, was described as ‘perhaps the greatest individual feat of the war – the successful counter-attack by night across unknown and difficult ground, at a few hours’ notice, by the Australian soldier.

viii⁷

Cahir was recommended in September 1918 for a Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) for his service on the Western Front. The recommendation praised his leadership:

On the 23rd August 1918, in the neighbourhood of Bray, between 5am and 7am his NCO four times made his way along a half mile of valley through a heavy concentration of gas, and in the face of fierce and continuous shelling to deliver dressings to a Regimental Aid Post.

During the fighting from Aug 22nd to Sept 1st his continuous devotion to duty and organising ability, coupled with great

coolness and determination under fire, were a large factor in the difficult task of keeping touch with moving RAPs, thus rendering possible the quick evacuation of casualties.

From the end of March 1918 until the present date, he has been constantly employed in the forward areas, in the organisation and supervision of the evacuation of the wounded. In the many days of bitter fighting during this period, he displayed a contempt for danger, energy and initiative beyond all praise. In the weeks of arduous trench warfare he set an example of endurance, cheerfulness and soldierly qualities that stimulated all ranks.

Because it was not officially gazetted, the DCM was not awarded to Cahir.

Frank’s war did not end with the Armistice. Instead of joining his compatriots and catching the next boat home, as he was perfectly entitled to do, Frank stayed on for two-and-a-half years as one of eleven-hundred Australian volunteers working for the Graves Detachment units of the AIF. His service vocation of ferrying and tending to

the wounded and the dying was now changed to one of search-and-exhumation — helping find and then identify the thousands of dead Australians whose bodies lay in those cold, hard foreign fields of northern Europe.

Frank's work as a unit photographer was described by his grandson, Fred, as 'a grisly task that inevitably exacted a tremendous toll'^{ix}. But there was ultimate resolution, too: a form of peace for the grieving families who at last, sometimes after many years, finally knew the remains of their loved ones could receive a proper burial or memorial.

On 22 July 1921, Frank finally set sail for Australia from England, on the *SS Demosthenes*. When it docked in Melbourne on 13 September, it was the first time Frank had set foot on Australian soil in almost seven years. Two weeks later, on 27 September, he was discharged from the AIF, on medical grounds.

On board *SS Demosthenes* Frank struck up a conversation with a young Irish woman from Liverpool, Mabel Murray, who had worked for the Bank of England and was emigrating to marry an Australian soldier called Jack Donovan. In the event, on 7 October, at St John's Church, East Melbourne, Mabel *did* marry an Australian soldier, but not Jack.

Frank and Mabel would be married for just six-and-a-half years. They had three sons, born over three years: Francis (Jim); Patrick (Pat); and Vincent (Vin).

Until comparatively recently, the Cahir family believed Frank Cahir died as a result of war wounds. The truth only emerged after one of his grandsons was researching in the Public Records Office, and found a newspaper cutting from May 1928, under the headline DEATH IN DOCTOR'S ROOM:

While working at the shop of E.G.Owen, chemist, Collins Street, city, yesterday morning, Frank Cahir, chemist's assistant, of Leicester Street, Preston, complained that he felt ill. And he visited a doctor a few doors away. The doctor suggested that he should go home, but Cahir replied that he had no home to which he could go. The doctor then told Cahir to rest in a spare room at the rear of the building. When the doctor visited him half an hour later Cahir was much worse, and he died a few minutes afterwards.

Plain-clothes Constable Evans of Russell Street has reported that when Cahir was lifted from the floor an empty bottle, which had contained poison, fell from his coat pocket. The doctor expressed the opinion that death was due to poisoning.^x

Why did Frank decide to take his own life? No one knows. Could it have perhaps been due to a form of post-traumatic stress disorder, resulting from his war experiences or his postwar work with the Australian Graves Service?

Frank's grandson, John Cahir, when reflecting on Frank's untimely death, said, 'In some way, shape or form, World War I, that's what got him.'^{xi}

Now it was Mabel's time to mourn. In June 1928, she wrote to her sister, Louise, in England:

I worshipped the ground my man trod on yet my love could not keep him. And after only 6 ½ years. He was the loveliest man ever born and all his friends say that. The letters I've received and telegrams – all from his friends, many of whom I've never seen, but all testifying to the respect and affection he engendered. It can't be true, Loo [*sic.*]. And I have only his little sons left to remind me of my lost happiness. Thank god they are like him so that I can never forget him.^{xii}

Mabel, ever practical, also said that, despite support from friends, she could not 'survive on charity alone'. She had three sons to bring up, and Australia was on the eve of the great depression. So she started a cake shop business in Preston.

Each son would follow their father into the military, serving Australia with distinction in World War II. All returned home and raised their own families. Today, there are more than one hundred descendants of Frank Cahir. 'He's embedded in our collective memory,' says his grandson, John.

It took almost one hundred years, but on 18 October 2017, Frank Cahir received his medal. As part of the Queen's Birthday investitures, The Governor of Victoria, Linda Dessau, presented the posthumous Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) to Cahir's surviving son, Pat. At the ceremony, the Governor stressed the importance of wearing the pins or medals. 'I urge you to understand that it is not boastful to wear a pin that inspires others to emulate you, and to do and to achieve the great things that you have done and achieved. A high tide truly lifts all the boats.'^{xiii}

The following 25 April, Anzac Day, ninety-three-year-old Pat Cahir marched as usual. On his chest, next to his own military decorations, glinting in the autumn sunshine, was his father's medal. Frank Cahir's tide finally came in.

ⁱ Frank Cahir enlisted for service as Frank Carr. According to Frank's grandson, John, the correct name is Cahir — the family name that back to Frank's Irish grandparents, Thomas and Ellen Cahir, who with their six children emigrated to Victoria in 1852, settling in Yendon, near Ballarat. Why, then, did Frank use 'Carr' on his enlistment papers in August/September 1914? 'We do not really know why,' says John. 'It is a question still open to family speculation today.' These theories include that Frank simply wanted to avoid inevitable confusion over spelling (Cahir is pronounced the same as 'Carr'), or that perhaps he didn't want to alarm his recently widowed mother, who might have seen Frank's name in the newspapers. Whatever, it still remains a mystery.

Email from John Cahir to Andrew McIntosh, Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Monash University, 2 March 2019.

ⁱⁱ He was promoted in June 1915, and continued serving at Anzac Cove. The following November, he rejoined the 2nd field ambulance on Lemnos, Greece, where he stayed until March 1916.

ⁱⁱⁱ Just as graphic and direct were the sketches Frank made in his field notebook.

^{iv} From letter to 'Dearest mother, sister and brothers', dated Anzac Cove, Gallipoli, 27 July 1915. Cahir family collection.

^v On 27 October 1916.

^{vi} Commonwealth Gazette No. 62, 19 April 1917.

^{vii} Extract from letter from Sir John Monash to his business partner in Melbourne, John Gibson. Written 17 April 1917. From *War Letters of General Monash* (orig. published Angus & Robertson, 1934; new edition published by Black Ink, 2015).

^{viii} Brigadier-General George Grogan, 23rd British Brigade.

^{ix} In 2010, Dr Cahir, a researcher at the University of Ballarat, received an Australian Army grant to investigate the work of the volunteer Australian grave-diggers (including his grandfather) who exhumed and identified the remains of the fallen. It is the first such study. Dr Cahir says: 'Army unit and battalion historians have naturally passed over a detachment of ex-soldiers who fired no guns, did not care for the wounded and came into being only when the guns had stopped firing. My research will look at who these Australians were, why they volunteered and what they did in their grim daily work.'

Fred Cahir, interview with Geoff Maslen, *The Age*, 30 November 2010.

^x *The Argus*, 23 May 1928, p. 24.

^{xi} Quoted in *Alchemy* magazine, issue 52, Summer 2018/19, p. 15.

^{xii} From Mabel Cahir's letter. Cahir family collection.

^{xiii} Speech from Government House website, <https://www.governor.vic.gov.au/all-speeches/queens-birthday-investitures-0>