

## **Historical Officers Report**

Events of the Great War as reported in the Camden News  
Cables from the European War.

### **4<sup>th</sup> April**

The German offensive continues, and the loss of Albert is reported, but a French communiqué issued on Wednesday afternoon stated that the enemy is held everywhere.

Sir Douglas Haig reports that fierce fighting continues on both banks of the Somme. He states that an enemy attack is developing to the eastward of Arras. There was severe fighting on Wednesday night astride the Somme, and northwards from Albert to Poyelles. After an immense bombardment the enemy opened a fresh attack in great strength on a wide front north and south of the Scrape. All assaults to the east of Arras were heavily repulsed.

Fierce fighting is still proceeding southward of the Scrape. "Our line northward of the Somme says the Press Bureau is substantially unchanged."

British troops have carried out a highly successful operation on the Euphrates northward of Hit. The entire Turkish force was destroyed or captured. Our casualties were very slight.

In Palestine British forces to the eastward of the Jordan are converging on Amman. Mounted men are within a mile of the town. In Palestine, despite stubborn opposition, the operations of the British forced eastward of the Jordan have been continued with success. Colonial mounted troops took a prominent part. The British position, as a result of an attack westward of the Jordan, has been advanced a depth of two miles on an eight miles front.

Australian troops are now in the line against the enemy. They are facing the head of the German advance.

The forces in Mesopotamia have reached a point half way between Bagdad and Aleppo.

The airmen have been busy and have dropped 22 1/4 tons of bombs on the enemy, causing enormous losses. There was no resistance from enemy aeroplanes.

A further advance has been made in Palestine, the British occupying Es Salt on Monday.

## 4th April 1918 First action at Villers-Bretonneaux (9th Brigade)



## 7th April LT Percy Valentine Storky VC at Bois-de-Hangard



## 11th April

News from the Western front 'says that the terrible gun fire' suggests that another great battle is beginning.

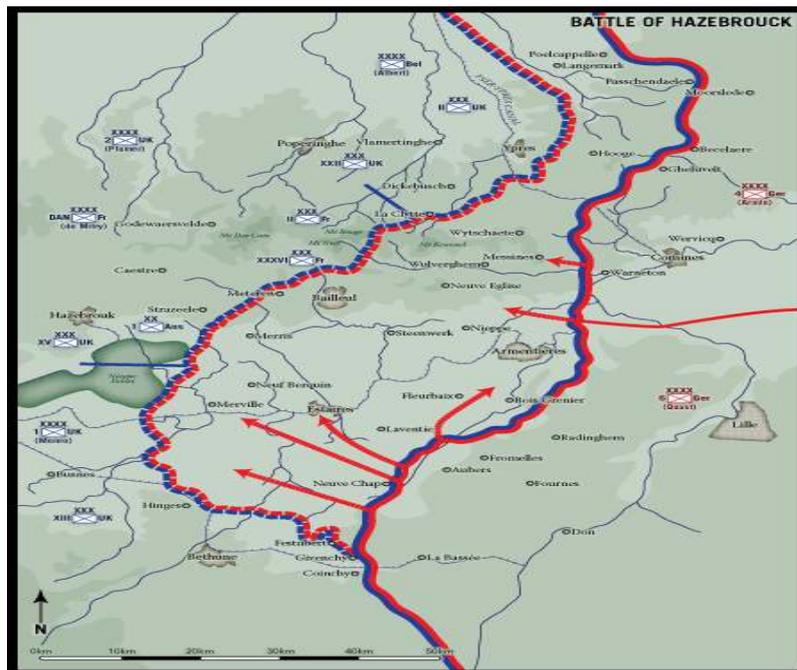
The French report:—"The night was marked by violent Artillery action, notably on the left bank of the Oise."

A semi-official Berlin despatch, describing the attack of April 4, says:—"We fought not only a brave enemy, but mud and rain."

The French and Australians defending south of Moreuil did not retire a foot.



## 12th April 1918 Battle of Hazebrouck (12-17)



## 18th April

The German offensive continues and during the last few days the enemy has advanced on the line between Givenchy and Hollenbeck. The advance at its greatest depth extends about twelve miles.

In a special order to the troops Sir Douglas Haig says: "There must be no retirement." High British authorities declare that a second crisis has arisen owing to the enemy's successes west of Armentières.

Saturday's battles illustrate the extreme velocity with which successive masses of German troops are thrown forward.

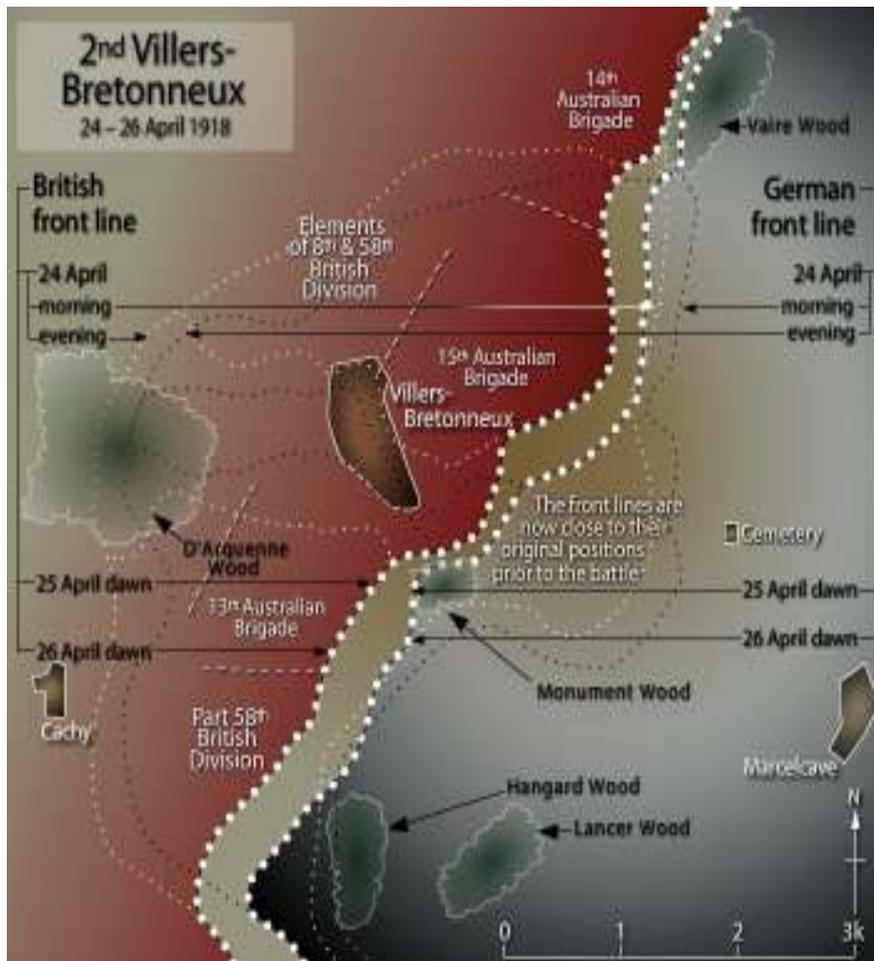
Australians, New Zealanders and Canadians hold the line against the enemy advance towards Amiens.

## 23rd April

**11 volunteers from HMAS Australia in raid on Ostend & Zeebrugge**



**24 – 25<sup>th</sup> April 1918, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Villers-Bretonneux**



**25<sup>th</sup> April**

Sir Douglas Haig's troops have withdrawn from the advanced positions east of Ypres to a new line. The Germans have consequently occupied, among

other places, Langemark, Poelcappelle, and Passchendaele. The Ypres withdrawal was carried out deliberately, undisturbed by the enemy.

There was an intense bombardment on the whole of the Lys battlefield on Wednesday morning. German attacks from the Forte de Nieppe and Wytshaete were repulsed with loss. German attacks were launched as far north as the line held by the Belgians.

Attempts to hammer away to Hazebrouck are being continued by the Germans. They are making little headway, and are sustaining heavy losses. The Allied line on the West front is still intact. Attacks have developed in the neighbourhood of Givenchy, but finality has not yet been reached. Determined efforts here failed before the British resistance. The Fighting continue. "The Germans admit that a counter-thrust south of Blackest road checked their forward movement.

25<sup>th</sup> April Lt. Clifford William King Sadler VC at Villers- Bretonnaeux



### **From The Home Front**

The new X-Ray apparatus has been installed at the Camden District Hospital, and the apparatus to carry out radiography should be a great boom to the institution.

Lieutenant John Wasson, of the Queensland Mounted 1 Troopers, returned to Australia nearly a fortnight ago, after very distinguished service at the front. At Gallipoli, Egypt, and Palestine he showed himself to be a splendid soldier and won distinctions both from British and French governments.

He served too in the Boer War as Sergeant, under General Antill; Lieutenant Wasson was twice wounded and on the last occasion most severely thus unfitting him for further fighting.

Sapper Roy Coleman, eldest son of Mr. O. V. Coleman, is back in Camden from the Western Front, France; he looks well and has every hope of his

injured arm healing. Roy saw many Camden boys just before he left the battlefield

Mrs. Hewel, of Argyle Street, Camden, who has four sons on active service fighting for the Empire, has received word to the effect that one of them has been reported killed.

Mr. A. Hawkey, Camden Park, has received word that his son, Richard Hawkey, had been killed in Palestine.

### **Soldier's Thanks.**

J. M. HAWKEY,—“I have to thank you very much for the Xmas parcel, which I received a few days ago, tho contents of which was very welcome and acceptable, and brought back to memory many happy recollections of dear old Camden. I am quite sure if you good people at home could only see the Joy that your parcels bring to our boys in the front line it would recompense you tenfold for your trouble Once more thanking you.”

### **CAPTAIN CAR'S LEWIS GUNNER.**

Last October we were in the forward slits; at Passchendaele, mud and slush to the knees and drizzling rain. We have been there four days, two hundred yards in front of the tiring line. About three o'clock in the morning, there was a moment's break in the clouds, the moon shone through, and tho mist broke.

Less than a quarter of a mile away I saw a large body of Boshes coining up under cover of the darkness to change over into a big strong Boshes point. Before you could say "knife" my friend Nylander No.1 Lewis Gun Team started Firing the others picked it up. The target lasted about a minute and a half and the mist closed down.

Next morning Fritz came out with a Red Cross flag to pick up his casualties. It took them about an hour and a half to on it. About a week afterwards from hospital I recommended Nylander for the M.M.

He got it and a fortnight afterwards he got a bar to it for a similar exploit, He was one of the first recruits of my first “Thousand.”

Considerable interest was taken in the visit of the War loan Tank Bank to Camden last Monday. The Lord Mayor of Sydney, who accompanied the Tank, was officially welcomed to the municipality by his worship the Mayor Of Camden, who introduced the visitors to the large assemblage of people gathered to witness Tank novelties' and add their bit to the War Loan?



**Private William James Peckham**

Killed in Action, 7th April 1918, Villers-Bretonneaux, France

**Private George Griffen Roy Mills**



Wounded in Action, 22nd September 1917, Belgium  
Died of Wounds, Cachy, France on the 16th April 1918.

**Private Charles William Thomas**

Awarded Military Medal, 20 November 1917  
Killed in Action, 17th April 1918

**Private Vivian Charles Gardner**



Killed in Action, 19<sup>th</sup> April 1918, Villers-Bretonneux France (Gas)

**Gunner William Calbraith Livesey**

Killed in Action, 29<sup>th</sup> April 1918, France

**The Jester in the Trench**

“That just reminds me of a yarn.” He said;  
And everybody turned to hear his tale.  
He had a thousand yarns inside his head.  
They waited for him, ready with their mirth  
And creeping smiles – they suddenly turned pale,  
Grew still, and gazed upon the earth.  
They herd on tale. No further word was said.  
And with his untold fun,  
Half-leaning on his gun,  
They left him - dead.

**Leon Gellert  
1892 – 1977**

Leon landed at Gallipoli 25<sup>th</sup> April 1915 with the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion AIF.  
Wounded by shrapnel he was evacuated in July to Malta then to London.  
Repatriated, discharged medically unfit. Re-enlisted in Adelaide in  
November 1915, was promptly discharged.

Ray Herbert  
Historical Officer