

Historical Officers Report From the Pages of the Camden Advertiser

4th April 1940

AIRMEN'S TOWNSHIP

Macquarie Grove 'Drome to Be War-time Training School

Historic Macquarie Grove at Camden will be transformed into an Airmen's Township within two months.

It is expected that some 500 men will undergo training there in connection with the Empire-wide war-time air scheme.

Huts will be erected, and negotiations are rapidly proceeding for the extension of electricity, telephone, water and sewerage services to the camp.

The Federal Government's decision to take over the Macquarie Grove Aerodrome was conveyed to Camden Council on Thursday morning last.

The property is owned by Mr. Edward Macarthur Onslow, and had previously been controlled by the Macquarie Grove Flying and Glider School. The efficiency of arrangements in connection with the new hangars and workshops were favourably commented upon by experts when these buildings were officially opened on September 30 last year.

PARS OF INTEREST

Two well-known Tahmoor brothers Len and Claude Gorrick, who are members of the Army Medical Corps in the A.I.F., were farewelled at a function held in their home centre. Presentations were made on behalf of Tahmoor citizens, Tahmoor Cricket Club, and the local sub-branch of the R.S. and S.I. League. Each received a wallet of notes, a belt, and a bullet-proof wallet. Mrs. C. C. Mulholland arranged for a party of Camden friends and relatives to attend the farewell gathering.

Len Gorrick won Camden District Cricket Association's B grade bowling award in the 1938-1939 season.

WAR-TIME WORKERS AT CAMDEN.

Camden Red Cross branch members are busily completing arrangements for the open air carnival to be held on Friday, April 12. All persons willing to join Home Nursing classes are asked to inform Miss Grace Moore on or before Saturday, April 13.

Camden branch of the Women's Voluntary Services will meet at 3.30 p.m. Thursday, April 11, at Camden Town Hall.

Members are asked to bring a gift for the stall.

The first lecture to Camden V.A.D. members will be given by Matron Norman at Camden District Hospital at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday, April 11.

MENANGLE PARK NEWS

(From Our Correspondent.)

Many A.I.F. recruits will experience their first military camp at Menangle Park. Major Rickards, who is in charge, will arrange a programme of early training. As the lads become more proficient they will be drafted to other sections of the A.I.F.

It is suggested to the railway authorities that the Menangle Park platform be enlarged, as congestion must occur with the additional military passengers.

OLD COINS FOUND IN FRENCH CANDLESTICK

More than 150 years ago in France, seven coins were leaded into the bottom of a brass candlestick. They were discovered the other day when Mrs. G. W. Mackie placed the candlestick on the stove at her Orangeville home and the bottom layers of lead and wax melted.

The candlestick a family heirloom was taken from France to England in about the year 1790 when Mrs. Mackie's grandfather, the late Charles de Ruddell, sailed across the Channel with his French parents.

11th April 1940

£60,000 Airmen's Township at Camden

70 Buildings for War-Time Scheme at Macquarie Grove

It is expected that from 700 to 1000 men will be employed within the next few days to build a £60,000 airmen's township at Macquarie Grove, Camden.

Hundreds of trees are to be removed, depressions levelled, roads and footpaths constructed, electricity, water and sewerage installed, and 70 buildings erected. No less than 31,000 square yards of bitumen will be used for the floor space of six huge hangars, which alone will cover an area twice the size of Camden Showground oval.

Macquarie Grove will become an intensified hive of industry for the next six weeks. The township must be ready for occupation by the Royal Australian Air Force Central Flying School on May 26.

Camden Council has offered its fullest and most loyal co-operation in the work. It has agreed to undertake the whole of the road and paving construction at a cost of about £6,250, and arranged for Mr. McGowan, Nepean Shire engineer, to supervise the work. The shire's road making plant will be used.

The Defence Department will meet the whole of Camden Council's costs and will provide progress payments of £1000 per week to enable council to finance its share of the work. Mr. J. E. Howe, Camden Council's consulting engineer, will have the cooperation of Mr. Buchan (engineer) and Liverpool Council's staff of linesmen to extend the electricity to Macquarie Grove, Preliminary preparations have entailed a considerable amount of time.

At Camden Mr. K. B. Wilson was entrusted with much of this necessary ground work. He was enthusiastically supported by the Mayor Alderman H. S. Kelloway the council and staff. Negotiations between the council and Defence Department have been proceeding (in camera) since January. The department's decision to move ahead with the building of the Airmen's Township was announced on Tuesday afternoon. When the builders have completed their gigantic task, some 500 members of the Air Force will move into their new quarters to commence their extensive training.

STUDLEY PARK "Not Sold To Army"

Mr. A. A. Gregory told this newspaper on Tuesday night that his Studley Park property had not been sold to the Army.

Commenting upon a news item which appeared in the "S.M. Herald" on Saturday reporting the sale, Mr. Gregory said that the Army may have secured official approval to negotiate for the purchase of Studley Park, but he had so far received no intimation in this connection from the authorities. He was surprised when he read the city newspaper report.

The property comprises about 180 acres and contains one of the best country golf courses in New South Wales; it is the headquarters of the Camden Golf Club.

(Local opinion is that the Army may decide to purchase the homestead and few acres adjoining the building, but would be unlikely to meet the heavy extra expense of buying a first class golf course for conversion into a parade ground.—Editor.)

Fire at Valley Coal Mine

Fire caused £5000 damage in the Nattai-Bulli Collieries' mine on Monday night. The whole of the machinery was destroyed.

Detectives who investigated the matter stated that they believe sparks from an engine exhaust started the blaze. The managing director, Mr. John W. Clinton, has ordered new machinery. The company will suffer a heavy loss, as the burnt machinery was not insured.

PARS OF INTEREST

ANZAC FUNCTIONS AT CAMDEN.

The annual Anzac Day "Service a Remembrance", arranged by Camden Ex-Servicemen's Fraternity, will held at the Cenotaph in Macarthur Park at 11 am on Thursday April 25. An address will be given by the Rev. S. R. Robbins, a former Camden Methodist Minister. It will be a combined service and everyone is cordially invited to attend. Camden District Band will lend the gathering in hymns.

The Diggers' Reunion and smoke concert is set down for Saturday April 27 at the Camden Town Hall. Members of the present day A.I.F. will be eligible to attend. An admission charge of 3/- will be made to cover the expenses of the function.

WAR WORKERS AT CAMDEN.

Since December 1, Camden Women's Voluntary Service have forwarded to the A.I.P. 206 pair of socks. 12 singlets, 12 underpants, 6 sets of pyjamas, and 4 handy pricks.

The committee has accepted with thanks the offer of Mr. W. A. Thorn; to organise a dance for May 2 to raise further funds for camp comforts. This effort is worthy of your support.

The Camden Centre meets at 3.30 this Thursday afternoon at the local Town Hall. Donations of sweets, cakes, jam, scones and other items for Friday's Red Cross Carnival may be left at Camden Town Hall during Friday-afternoon.

18th April 1940

AIRMEN'S TOWN

Work Commences at Macquarie. Grove

Three hundred men commenced the work of building a £60000 Airmen's Township at Macquarie Grove, Camden, on Monday.

Since then their numbers have increased. One contractor alone has 170 tradesmen on the job, and these will work on Saturdays and Sundays in order to complete their portion of the buildings by May 26.

"It resembled a race meeting," said one city carpenter on Monday, "There were fifty cars lined up on the ground and men filed across the field."

PERMANENT AERODROME

This newspaper now learns that Macquarie Grove will remain as a permanent Royal Australian Air Force centre.

During the war it will be devoted to the training of Air Force instructors.

If present plans are adhered to the property will become one of the leading airports in Australia.

The area comprises -100 acres, and is eminently suited for an Air Force base. Accommodation at Camden will be severely taxed by the influx of workmen. A number hoped to be able to arrange for their wives to stay here until the aerodrome is completed. They are finding some difficulty in arranging for the necessary extra accommodation.

DIGGERS REMEMBER

Special Wreath for Anzac Day Service at Camden

The names of district members of the A.I.F. who failed to return from the Great War of 1914-1918 are inscribed on the Cenotaph at MacArthur Park, Camden.

A special wreath and card will be placed at the foot of the monument by members of Camden ex-Servicemen's Fraternity on Thursday morning next to honour the memory of fourteen comrades, who have passed on since the war, and two Boer War veterans whose remains rest in local cemeteries. This additional Roll of Honour will contain the names of the late Brig.-General

George M. MacArthur Onslow, C.M.G., D.S.O., V.D., Cecil Wheeler, John G. Adams. Albert Wilfred, Wallace Jenkins, Bertie Roberts. John J. Roberts. Sergeant James Hunt a Military Medallist, Cecil W. Clifton. Abel J. Andrews, Edward Edmunds, Corporal Viney, Jas. MacLeod, Sidney Harbutt, John Fitzpatrick and Arthur McLennan. The latter two deceased served in the Boer War.

All district residents and visitors are invited to attend the Combined Service of Remembrance to be held at MacArthur Park, Camden, on Thursday next, April 25, at 11 a.m. Members of the Camden Voluntary Aid Detachment are asked to assemble in uniform at 10.45 a.m. at the Memorial Gates.

25th April 1940

CRICKETER TO SERVE WITH AIR FORCE

Mr. James Clark, Camden Park Cricket Club's hon. secretary and one of the best all-round players in the district, has been accepted for the Royal Australian Air Force and placed on the reserve list. He may not be called up for training for some three months.

The name of Jim Clark appears on the front page of every local sportsman's "Book of Goodfellows" a splendid type of young Australian. Jim, who is employed on the office staff of Camden Park Estate Ltd., is the only son of Mr. and Mrs. D. Clark, of Hurstville.

Ray Herbert
Historical Officer