

Events of the Great War as reported in the Camden News
Cables from the European War. March 1917

1st March

The enemy is steadily withdrawing from positions south-west of Bapaume. The British have gained a number of strongholds by easy process which they expected to win only after heavy fighting, beyond Miraumont and north-west of Serre and south of Jules. This is described as the most notable movement since August of 1916.

The sinking by the Germans of seven Dutch vessels has caused intense indignation throughout Holland and the neutral world generally. The ships sailed under directions made by arrangement with the German Government. "Only one of the ships attacked reached port. Holland is described by one correspondent as "a nation stunned and incredulous at German's barbaric action."

Sir Edward Carson, First Lord of the Admiralty, in introducing the Navy Estimate, made a survey of naval affairs. He said that 8,000,000 men to October, 1916, had been moved across the Sea, and only a few untoward incidents had occurred. Over 1,000,000 horses and mules, and also 9,420,000 tons of explosives and material, had been carried.

It is stated that Canada intends to introduce conscription shortly. The first call will be on unmarried men from 18 to 25 years.

A strike has existed at Krupp's munitions' works for the past fortnight. Seventeen thousand workmen demand better food and wages.

8th March

Sir Douglas Haig reports that, after stubborn resistance the British made further progress north of Pusieux-au-Mont. The line was advanced a quarter of a mile on a front of five miles. Owing to a hard frost and dense fog the advance of the British and the retreat of the enemy was necessarily slow. The enemy was extremely uncomfortable. The enemy retreats entirely at night, and as he retreats he destroys everything destroyable, even the woodpanelling of dugouts.

The Allied forces have made further progress on the Western front. The German General Staff has been assembled to consider the position. Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig reports important progress. French reports are also encouraging. British troops have taken over a further considerable section of the fighting line on the west. This is hailed as important news, and a guarantee that our forces are prepared for all eventualities.

Captain Bean states that the foremost of the Australian troops, for the first time for five months, are through into green country beyond the desolate shell field of the Somme.

There is uneasiness in Germany owing to the British' advance on the Ancre. Newspapers are not allowed to comment on the retreat.

The greatest sensation has been caused by the official announcement made at Washington that Germany has been endeavouring to enter into an alliance with Mexico and Japan to attack America in the event of America deciding to go to war with Germany.

Crude glycerine for explosives was being extracted from camp refuse. About 100,000 miles of flannel and khaki cloth had been manufactured.

15th March

It is officially stated that the Australian casualties to date number 51131. These comprise 833 officers and chaplains, 7 nurses, and 18723 other ranks. The dead are 612 officers, 7 chaplains and 26204 other ranks. 80 officers and 3402 other ranks wounded. Missing are 31 officers and 921 men, prisoners of war 49 Officers and 258 men.

British forces in Mesopotamia are rapidly advancing towards Bagdad. Enemy booty was strewn over 80 miles of country. An official message states that it is impossible to accurately state the captures, but 38 Guns have been taken.

The King of Montenegro has awarded various decorations to a number of Australian officers including Major-General Legge.

Intense interest is being taken in the position America is likely to take up. President Wilson is reported to have authorised the arming of merchantmen, and it is reported that sailors have been informed that any indication of hostile act on the part of a U boat will justify firing without warning.

The "Daily Chronicle" states that the Turks have probably lost at least two divisions and possibly an army corps. The great thing is that the Turkish army no longer exists as a fighting force.

It is officially announced that the British have occupied Bagdad. The British victory leaves the Turkish army in Persia in the air, and only a precipitated retreat will save it.

16th March 5th Division occupies Bapaume, Western Front



20th March Lt. Francis Hubert McNamara VC at Palestine



22nd March

Bapaume has fallen to the British and south and north of the river they have gone forward quickly. Sixteen new positions are under British occupancy. On the night of March 12 the Germans left their trenches north of Bapaume Road and the Australians entered within three hours.

Sir Douglas Haig reports that the German rearguard was pressed back and the British troops advanced to a maximum depth of 10 miles on a front of 45 miles. Sixty villages along the line which extends from Chanines to the neighbourhood of Arras were also occupied.

Mr. Phillip Gibbs of the "Daily Chronicle" states that the enemy is in full retreat, and if being pursued by the British and French cavalry.

Australia has been congratulated by Field Marshal Haig on the 1st Anzac Corp part in the capture of Bapaume. The casualties were slight. Mr. Walter Long, Secretary for the Colonies in addressing a large number of overseas troops, announced that the Australians were the first to enter Bapaume.

The Duma refused to obey the dissolution ukase, and M. Rodzianko sent a special courier to the Czar demanding the resignation of the Cabinet. The Governments reply was to dissolve the Duma. The Duma then formed itself into a Provisional Government, and declared the Cabinet no longer existed. The buildings of the Secret Police were burnt, the Department of Police was rifled, and all police stations were looted.

have impeded our advance. Enemy attacks on the St. Quentin Canal at Clastros and Montes court were broken. Violent fighting west of La Fere terminated in the complete defeat of the enemy. In the region south of the Aisne French troops enfolded the Germans inflicting the heaviest losses. The enemy's attempt near St. Michel failed.



Private Roy Geoffrey Small killed in action on the 17th March 1917 near Bapaume, France

FROM THE HOME FRONT

Cyclists Wanted.

The Military urgently require Cyclists for patrol and dispatch work behind the lines in France. Applicant's require having some cycling experience, and are required to go into camp at once. Applications should be addressed to Mr. H. M. Mackay, Hon. Secretary League N.S. Wales Wheelmen, Sydney, the organiser appointed by the Recruiting Committee. The ordinary military pay will be allowed and machines will be provided.

When Soldiers Return

Mr. Holman was the first public man in Australia to put forward the view that thirty shillings per week could not be accepted as an adequate pension for returned soldiers, and to insist that every invalided man should receive at least two pounds per week. The Premier has now pledged this State to supplement the Commonwealth allowance to the extent indicated, and the people of New South Wales are generous and just enough to back the National Government up in their determination that those who have suffered and made sacrifices in their defence shall receive the utmost consideration in the future.

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCES ENLISTMENT CONDITIONS.

The conditions governing enlistment in the A.I.F. are;

Age 18 to 45 years

Minimum Height: 5 feet 2 inches.

Chest Measurement 33 inches fully expanded.

RATES OF PAY PER DAY

Before Embarkation.

Lieutenant 18 shillings & 6 pence

Sergeant 10 Shillings & 6 pence
Corporal 10 Shillings
Private 6 Shillings

After Embarkation (including referred pay)
Lieutenant 21 Shillings
Sergeant 10 shillings & 6 Pence
Corporal 10 Shillings
Private 6 Shillings

SEPARATION ALLOWANCE.

Separation allowance will be paid to married men who are receiving less than 10s per day, but such allowance will not exceed the amount necessary to make up the difference between their daily rate of pay, and 10s a day. Subject to this limitation the amounts payable for separation allowance are as follow:

- (a) For wife living at home, 1s 5d per. day.
- (b) For each Children under 16 years of age 4 1/2d per day. A similar allowance as in (a) is payable under the same conditions to the mother of a Soldier, if she is solely dependent of him in for support.

An official cable had been received stating that Corporal Jack Stapleton was admitted to hospital on the first of March with gunshot Wound in the head, dangerous. Progress reports are anxiously awaited.

Word has been forwarded by the military authorities to Mr. G.H. Rowney, Wollondilly Shire engineer to the effect that his son, Tpr. G. Rowney has been wounded and was admitted to hospital in Egypt on 6th March. Tpr. Rodney was on active service with the Australian Light Horse volunteering Months ago.

Thomas Thornton (a Camden boy) son of Mr. T. Thornton Wounded in the arm and hip on December 11th, has made good progress and expects be out of hospital soon; he speaks gratefully of the kindness of nurses and English people. He enlisted at Newcastle after hearing of his brother's death, and had been fighting on the Somme, France, where he was wounded.

Ray Herbert
Historical Officer

I am looking for volunteers to man a display at the Camden Show; if you can spend some time please let me know.

Ray