

## Historical Officers Report

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

### 3<sup>rd</sup> May Second attack on Bullecourt sector of Hindenberg Line



#### 3<sup>rd</sup> May

Two "tanks" were responsible for a fine exploit. They moved through the walls of a factory and wiped out a number of machine-gunners.

The British garrison at Gavrelle simply sat tight behind their machineguns and killed the Germans in company with the artillery. The fields in front were covered with corpses. The entire country side around Monchy and Fontaine is strewn with dead.

Mr. Massey states that the Gaza battle was the biggest in all Palestine's history. The bodies of troops were larger than any of the Holy Land's countless campaigns. A glorious episode of the day was the wonderful steadiness of the, Anzac Mounted Corps' horse-holders, who, under heavy Artillery fire preserved grand discipline.

Fourteen German aeroplanes were brought down, and 16 driven down by British and French airmen in a day's operations. Between April 5 and April 15 the French brought down 25 enemy machines, in addition to 30 which were seen to fall.

#### 6<sup>th</sup> May Cpl George Julian Howell VC at Bullecourt, France



## **10<sup>th</sup> May**

The fourth phase of the Arras battle has opened with a heavy British attack on a front of 13 miles. Field-Marshal Haig reports a fierce day-long fight from the westward of Queant to the northward of Fresony, and east of Vimy, The enemy employed large reserves of men and guns in counter attacks, which were delivered practically right along the front. The British overcame the resistance, and penetrated a sector of the Hindenburg line westward of Queant, where they maintained themselves.

A windmill beyond Gavrelle changed hands repeatedly, the position being of great importance to either side.

The Australians have taken up their position in the Hindenburg trenches, and they are entirely surrounded by the enemy.

Mr. Philip Gibbs, writing to the "Daily Chronicle" says that the Australians' confidence in victory amounts to a faith. "If they do not get Bullecourt today he writes "they will get it tomorrow or someday". They are out to finish the business."

A report from Rome states that three shots were fired at the Kaiser as he was motoring to Berlin. Two shots struck the motor car. The would-be assassin was arrested.

A Washington message states that nine regiments of railway engineers will leave for France at the earliest possible moment

## **12<sup>th</sup> May Lt. Rupert Vance Moon VC at Bullecourt**



LT. R. V. MOON, V.C.

## **15<sup>th</sup> May Australians repulse attack Bullecourt**

## **17<sup>th</sup> May Allies capture village of Bullecourt**



### 17<sup>th</sup> May

The News of the capture of Bullecourt by the Australians after more than holding their own against picked German troops is described as splendid. This achievement has widened the bite in the Hindenburg line. The Australians progressed magnificently, bombing their way inflexibly along the main trenches.

Correspondents at headquarters state that the mere fact that Sir Douglas Haig's army has established itself on the ruins of Bullecourt constitutes a decisive defeat of the Germans, who have sacrificed thousands of lives in a desperate and futile attempt to relieve the menace of this vitally important position.

The British have repulsed repeated counter-attacks upon their positions in the Hindenburg line eastward of Bullecourt. For ten days the Australians, Sir Douglas Haig says, have maintained their positions in this sector.

The capture of Bullecourt was a brilliant feat of arms. It is the first serious blow against the enemy's new defensive system.

### 24<sup>th</sup> May

Heavy fighting continues on the western front, but no marked gains have been recorded. Bullecourt, however, is now definitely ours, after many days of strenuous fighting.

Sir Douglas Haig has sent a message to General Birdwood, congratulating the Australians upon their fine work in the capture of the Hindenburg line eastward of Bullecourt. "The gallant manner in which the Australians held the line against constant and desperate efforts to retake it, says the message, will rank high in the great deeds of the war, and helped appreciably to wear out the enemy. The fine initiative of the commanders, from the highest to the lowest was admirable.

Sir Douglas Haig reports:—"Our operations between Bullecourt and Foutaine-des-Croiselles were successfully continued last night. We captured a support trench last evening after fierce hand-to-hand fighting, and heavily

beat off counter attacks, our artillery engaging the enemy in the open. A large number of enemy dead were found. We captured 150 prisoners. Two German divisions have been engaged in this neighbourhood since yesterday morning.

In a latter report Field-Marshal Haig says:—"The severity of the German losses in the recent fighting in this area is confirmed. Excepting a sector of 2000 yards in length immediately westward of Bullecourt, we hold the whole of the Hindenburg line from a point one mile east of Bullecourt to Arras."

### **31<sup>st</sup> May**

In the House of Commons Lord Robert Cecil described the services of the Japanese Navy in the patrol of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. "These activities," he said, "are of additional value as indicating the assistance we might expect in the future."

A large squadron of enemy aircraft (sixteen) attacked the south-east coast of England on Saturday night. Seventy-six people were killed, of whom 27 were women and 23 children; 174 were injured, including 43 women and 19 children.' British airmen went in pursuit. A thrilling sight was witnessed as the chase continued for miles out to sea. Three enemy aeroplanes were shot down.

### **From the Home Front**

46 points of rain fell in Camden this week. For the month of April 420 points were recorded.

Private Phillip Augustine O'Hare of the Camel Corps, is a prisoner of war in Turkish hands, unwounded. His parents in Camden received a telegram on Tuesday last to the above effect.

### **Red Cross Rabbit Day**

April 4th was Red Cross Rabbit Day throughout New South Wales, rabbit trappers gave rabbits to be packed and frozen for shipment to be used in the hundreds of hospitals in Egypt, Great Britain and France for the succour of our sick and wounded.

The market for rabbits is reported lifeless in London. About 300,000 crates are expected to arrive before the end of June.

Les Darcy, the Australian boxer, has succumbed to his illness, his death was due to a complication of diseases beginning with pneumonia, the deceased's body will be sent to Australia for burial. A later message says that Darcy's death was sudden and unexpected.

The Chinese gardeners in the Camden district, with a generous spirit, have been supplying the Camden District Hospital with fine cauliflowers.

Trooper Stanley Archibald Percy Doust, writing from Palestine, referred to the great delight of the troops to be in Palestine after several trying months in the desert. "Their horses," he says, "must have imagined they got back to Australia again when they saw the beautiful grass and smiling fields in the Holy Land." He and some of his mates have been digging in one of the old ruined cities supposed to be thousands of years old for curios. They found some old coins, etc.



Private Reginald James Ellis Killed in Action 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1917 France.

Sergeant Thomas Joseph Magner Maxwell Killed in Action 7<sup>th</sup> May 1917 Palestine.

Private Vincent Francis Phippen Died of Wounds 24<sup>th</sup> May 1917 France.

Ray Herbert  
Historical Officer