



Centenary of Armistice, November 11th, 2018

Remembering those who served, and those who paid the ultimate sacrifice from the St John's Church World War One Honour Roll

Lest we Forget



St John
the Evangelist, Balmain
Anglican Church
of Australia

"It was decided in mid-1918 that an honour roll should be placed in the Church to record the names of all the men from the Parish that had served in the forces. The honour roll that surmounts the choir stalls at the right of the sanctuary is superbly carved, with the traditional grape vine design being symbolic of the Eucharist and of life itself. The rich Tasmanian Oak was donated by a parishioner, Mr Chidgey, and the firm of Todd & Co were responsible for the fine workmanship.

The honour roll, which cost 120 Pounds, was unveiled at a moving service in August 1918 at which the Archbishop was again present. The dead march was played, and the last post sounded in memory of the fallen - but the end of the service highlighted the Resurrection from the dead with the singing of the Halleluiahs Chorus."

ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

Below are just some of the stories of the many that fought and lost their lives in the First World War. These stories are linked to the names on the St John's Honour Roll and provide a selection from different walks of life that had St John's, and the War, in common. At the end is a map of Balmain, with some of the registered addresses from war rolls highlighted. As you walk around the area, you can see how the Heritage keeps some of these people's stories alive.

Honour Roll 1914

Details: Mortimer Hugh Froude
Contact address: Not known
Service number: Unknown

Mortimer Hugh Froude was born in Balmain in 1897, and the son of a dentist of Riverview, Darling Street.

After returning to Balmain on completion of his schooling (at Cessnock), he was put on as a rivet boy at a blacksmith's shop at Mort's Dock.

"The Tingara was undergoing repairs and refitting for a training ship for the Australian Navy at this time, and during one lunch hour he made his way to the chief of the boat and got all the particulars regarding the Navy. He was then only 15 years of age, but as soon as the Tingara was finished he was taken on, being No. 1 boy on the boat of the first fourteen boys to join the Australian Navy". (Evening News, Sydney, 31 May 1918, p 4)

He as confirmed at St John's two weeks before joining the Navy.

"He remained on the ship for 12 months, and, in August 1911, was transferred to HMAS Melbourne where he remained until three days before war was declared. He was then put on the flagship Australia, leaving Sydney on August 8, 1914."

He was an Ordinary Seaman when he deserted from the RAN in June 1915, when Australia was in British waters. He tried to join the British Army but was rejected due to his height. Froude then joined the Royal Navy as a Stoker and was posted to the cruiser Defence. On 31 May 1916, when at the Battle of Jutland, Defence was sunk with the loss of her entire crew of 903 men.



Honour Roll 1914

Details: James Watt

Contact address: 90 Curtis Road, Balmain

Service number: 3288

James was a labourer and had already been in the cadets for 3.5 years and had two infringement fines to his name prior to enlisting for the war.

James saw war service in Egypt and the Western Front. During his time in Egypt in March 1916 he spent some time in and out of hospital, and on 25 May 1916 he was found guilty of (1) disobeying an order of an NCO, (2) using obscene language to an NCO and awarded 7 days' Field Punishment No 2.

Embarked Alexandria to join the British Expeditionary Force, 19 June 1916; disembarked Marseilles, France, 29 June 1916.

He was wounded in action on 20 July 1916; and died of those wounds that day. He was 18 years old.

WATT.—In sad but loving memory of our dear son,
Private James Watt (Jim), who died of wounds in
France July 20, 1916, aged 19 years.
The flower of the family, he was loved and liked by
all.
Was chosen just twelve months to-day to answer the
great call.
Our hearts for him are lonely, we are lonely night
and day.
We miss him, yes, we miss him, more than words can
say.
His welcome steps and winning ways are pleasant
to recall,
He had a pleasant word for each, and died beloved
by all.
Inserted by his sorrowing mother and father, Mrs.
and Mr. G. Watt, 100 Curtis-road, Balmain.

*1The Memorium Notice in the SMH Sydney
Morning Herald (NSW : 1842 - 1954), Friday 20
July 1917, page 5*

Honour Roll 1914

Allan Edward Beeks

Contact address: 70 Short Street, Balmain

Service Number: 278

At 3am on 12 November 1916, Bombardier Allan Edward Beeks, of Balmain, Sydney, was asleep with five other artillerymen in a dugout near Flers. A shell hit the position killing six of them, including Beeks and Fairey. Sergeant Thomas Younger attributed these deaths to lack of sufficient sand-bag protection in front of the dugout. As Younger later wrote, this loss was deeply felt in the unit:



On Donkey and Camel Back.
ORIGINALLY we had Archibald in front and James in middle back in later picture the front line has been withdrawn, making another photo of the Egyptian campaign. As it stands it is right. Pte. Baker (Sydney), Pte. Womack (Gundahol), Cpl. Yale (Hillman), Pte. Reynolds (Queensland), Pte. Peckers (Ptes. Bruce, Queensland), Sgt. (Hillman) (Hillman), Sgt. (Hillman) (Hillman).

He [Beeks] was a very fine boy and I missed him very much. He and Corporal Ferry [Corporal Kenneth Fairey] were the heart of our battery ... Captain Taylor was very broken up when he heard about it and sent Sergeant Watson at once to get them out ... They put up crosses for Beeks and Ferry.

Australian Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau file, Bombardier Allan Edward Beeks, page 4

Both Beeks and Fairey had been awarded Military Medals for bravery and outstanding service during the Battle of Pozières in July 1916. Beeks medal recommendation, in part, read:

He was constantly under heavy shell fire, setting a splendid example to the men working with him and without his devotion to duty the work of the Field Artillery on this flank would have been impossible to carry out.
Australian Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau file,
Bombardier Allan Edward Beeks, page 4

Honour Roll 1914

Clive Huntley

Contact address: 1 Wharf Road Balmain (now Ballast Point Park)

Service Number: Unknown

This is the original grave marker of Lieutenant (Lt) Clive Neilson Reynold Huntley, 1st Field Company Division Engineers, at Lone Pine Cemetery on Gallipoli.

An engineering draughtsman from Balmain, NSW prior to enlistment, Lt Huntley embarked with the rank of Second Lieutenant from Sydney on HMAT Afric on 18 October 1914. Subsequently wounded in action at Gallipoli, he was transferred to HS Gascon where, on 4 May 1915 aged 30, he died as a result of his wounds and was buried at sea. He is commemorated on the Lone Pine Memorial.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H19350

Honour Roll 1914

Sydney Petterson

Contact address: Argyle Dock Road, Balmain

Service number: 1048

Sydney Leonard Petterson was a nineteen year old shopman, living in Balmain, Sydney, when he enlisted for service in the AIF on 14 November 1914.

He had previously served as a member of the militia with 30 Infantry Battalion. Petterson was allocated the service number 1048, with the rank of private, and assigned to E Company, 12 Battalion. The battalion sailed for Egypt from Melbourne on 22 December, aboard the transport A 38 'Ulysses'.

After training in Egypt the battalion took part in the landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. Petterson was killed in action there on 29 May. Before he left Egypt he purchased this embroidered souvenir and sent it home to his mother, Caroline Petterson. The 'with second AIF' on the souvenir refers to the fact that 12 Battalion sailed in the second troop convoy to leave Australia after the declaration of war.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

REL32977

Honour Roll 1915

Roland Grant Ward

Contact address: 37 Wharf Road, Balmain

Service number: 1907

This is a studio portrait of 1907 Private (later Sergeant) Roland Grant Ward, 13th Battalion of Balmain, NSW.

A bank clerk prior to enlisting, he embarked from Sydney aboard HMAT Kyarra (A55) on 13 April 1915.

According to Wisden on the Great War: The Lives of Cricket's Fallen 1914-1918, he played cricket for Balmain, and was considered a promising first-grade batsman in Sydney.

He was killed in action at Gallipoli, Turkey, on 27 August 1915, aged 23. He has no known grave and is remembered with honour on the Lone Pine Memorial, Gallipoli, Turkey.

On August 27th, 1916 Sgt Grant Ward's mother gave a memorial Altar Cross to the church during the morning Communion Service – which is on the altar today. At the evening service, members of his 13th Battalion who were in Sydney, attended to pray for their comrade who had been killed the previous year.



Honour Roll 1915

Tasman George Vale

Registered address: 18 Fitzroy Avenue, Balmain

Service Number: 776

Tasman Vale was born in Balmain, attended Birchgrove Public School, and attended church at St John's. His occupation on enlistment was a warehouseman, and he was 22 years of age. Five months after disembarking at Suez, he was promoted to the rank of Corporal and disembarked to France on 23 June 1916.

Tasman was killed in action on the fields of Fleurbaix on 20 July 1916 at the age of 22. He has no known grave. He is also commemorated on the Balmain Rowing Club Roll of Honour, where their entry on their website states:

MISSING Corporal Vale, The son of Mr and Mrs E H Vale, "Shirley", Fitzroy Street, Balmain, Corporal Tas VALE, No 776, C Company, 20th Battalion, 8th Brigade, has been reported missing since the 20th July this year. The last heard of him was from a comrade, through the Red Cross, who stated that they were both wounded in the fighting at Fleurbaix and were trying to get back across "No Man's Land" to their own trenches. He succeeded in doing so but did not know what became of Vale. Sydney Morning Herald - 16th December 1916



Honour Roll 1915

Sterling Napier Franki

Contact address: Montrose, Thames Street Balmain

Service number: 2166

Born in Balmain, NSW in 1892, Sterling Napier was the youngest son of James and Bessie Franki. He died of wounds received in action on 27 July 1916 Poziers France aged 23 and is buried at the Puchevillers British Cemetery



His father, James Franki was an engineer and ship builder who oversaw the development of shipbuilding at Mort's Dock for over 50 years. He was born in Switzerland and came to Sydney in 1855. In 9 January 1867 he joined Macarthur & Co. which was then operating at Waterview Bay, Balmain; he started as chief engineering draughtsman, was promoted to manager on Thomas Macarthur's death in 1869, and appointed general manager when the dockyard became a public company in 1872 under the name Mort's Dock & Engineering Co. Ltd.

The spectacular development of shipbuilding at Mort's Dock (the largest privately-owned dry dock in the southern hemisphere) continued. When he joined it, about 200 men were employed; by 1915 the company's three docks—Waterview dock, Woolwich dock and Jubilee dock—and its engineering establishment at Woolwich, had more than exceeded 1000, sometimes up to 1500. Franki was managing director from 1915 until his retirement in 1923.

A resident of Balmain for over fifty years he was an alderman in 1883, a justice of the peace from 1886 and a generous benefactor of local sporting and community associations. At the laying of the foundation stone for St John's, in 1882, he presented, on behalf of Mort's Dock, the whole of the stone required for the building.

Honour Roll 1915

William Scott Kemmis
54 Glassop Street Balmain
Service Number: Unknown

William Scott Kemmis, was born in Parramatta, but listed Balmain as home. His father was a priest who had six sons and two daughters. He was canon of the Armidale Cathedral from 1902 until 1924, and vicar of Tamworth, Quirindi and Port Macquarie. He retired in 1923.

William Kemmis was a dentist and married his wife Irene in May 1913. They had one child, William Scott Kemmis.

He enlisted in 1915 and joined the 19th Infantry Battalion in Pozieres. He was killed in action in France on 27th July 1916, aged 29. His has no marked grave but has a memorial at the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial (Australian National Memorial - France).

His father died in 1941 in Manly



Honour Roll 1915

Arthur Reginald Wilton
126 Short Street, Balmain
Service Number: 4325

Son of Arthur Reginald and Annie Ettie Wilton of 26 Campbell Street, Balmain, he was a Balmain storeman. In April 1915 his parents gave written consent to enlist in the AIF

He enlisted on the 11th September 1915 at Holsworthy, and prior had served 4 years with the Senior Cadets and 3 months in the Militia

He joined the 2nd Infantry Battalion. He was wounded in July 1916 with a shell wound to the head. On 14 February 1917 he was killed in action in France and buried in the Contalmaison Chateau Cemetery in the Somme.

His headstone inscription reads: *Sleeping far away from all who loved him.*



Honour Roll 1915

William Cynog Starr

Address: 71 Grove Street Balmain

Service Number: 1583

William Starr was enlisted on 12 April 1915 at Liverpool, and after starting as a Private, his last Rank was Lance Sergeant in the 18th Infantry Battalion. He was born in Bulli and went to school in Helensburgh. He was a wool sorter by trade.

On his enlistment records, he listed his next of kin as his mother on 55 Grove Street, which was later changed to 71 Grove Street.

He was killed in Action, France, 10 July 1918, aged 29 years and is buried at the Longueau British Cemetery.

"STARR.—Lance-sergeant William Cynog Starr, 18th Battalion. beloved son M. A. and S. Starr, of 71 Grove-street, Balmain, late of Helensburgh, Killed in action July 10, 1918, aged 29 years. On Active service three years and three months. He fought the good fight.

Beloved brother of Isabel and Albert H. Tildesley. Killed in action July 10, 1918 His duty done.

Beloved brother of Rowena and Henry Hall. Killed in action July 10, 1918.

Greater love hath no man than this."

Sydney Morning Herald 10 Aug 1918



Honour Roll 1916

Joseph Harry Clarke

Address: 366 Darling Street Balmain

Service Number: 2880

Joseph Clarke enlisted in the 12th June 1916, at the age of 24. His occupation is listed as a Business Manager, and his father was the Harry Clarke, originally from Lamrock Avenue Bondi, with his address on enlistment as the Town Hall Hotel. An interesting note to his records indicates that he was unable to read.

Joseph's 43-year-old uncle, Private Charles Clarke, was in the 1st Light Horse Regiment.

Joseph was a member of the 5th Machine Gun Battalion, and died of wounds on 1 October 1917 at Ypres, in Belgium.

He is buried at the Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Lijssenthoek, Flanders, Belgium

His brother, Charles, who was a bank clerk, enlisted a year later on 15 February 1917 as a Gunner, at the age of 21. Charles' unit embarked from Sydney, New South Wales, on board HMAT A15 Port Sydney on 5 November 1917, one month after this brother's death. Charles returned to Australia on December 24, 1918.



Town Hall Hotel, 366 Darling Street, in August 1930. (ANU Archives of Business and Labour)

Honour Roll 1916

Herbert Charles Arthur May
Address: 323 Darling Street Balmain
Service Number: 838

Herbert May was born near Peacock Point in Balmain, and his father died suddenly when he was ten years old. His mother re-married to a French mariner, and they lived on Curtis Road.

Herbert married Laura Bryant in Newcastle in 1903. They had one son, Charles Henry Herbert May, was born in 1906. When he enlisted, he gave his occupation as "selector and he was 40 years of age.

He listed as his next of kin his mother, who was living along Darling Street at the time, and Herbert's wife and son were staying with her during the war.

After performing some railway construction work, he joined his unit in May 1917. On 27 June 1917 he was killed in action at Messines in Belgium. He is buried at the Kandahar Farm Cemetery.

After his death, his wife and daughter moved to Queensland. His mother remained in Balmain and died suddenly in 1919 at her home. She was 64.



Honour Roll 1916

James A Witheridge, Frederick J Witheridge and William H Witheridge

Address: "Stafford Villa" Lincoln Street, Campsie

Harry and Annie Elizabeth Witheridge were residents of Campsie and had four sons that all went to fight in World War One. Before any of the sons went into battle, their father died on March 17, 1915. Gunner James Witheridge landed at Gallipoli on April 25, 1915 and was killed in landing.

Frederick Witheridge joined the Royal Navy in 1912, and over the years during the war he fought on many ships. He was Acting Lead Stoker on the HMS Vanguard in 1917 when an explosion hit the ship, and he was lost at sea. His body was never found.

Private William Henry Witheridge, after enlisting in 1916 at the age of 18, went to the Western Front. He died on the fields of Ypres.

Below is a note of William's death by Harold Witheridge. Harold fought on the 19th battalion and returned to Australia on 10/1/1918. He later married Nellie Heard in 1925, and they lived at 32 Cameron Street. Nellie later died in 1993 at the age of 104.

18th Batta
AIF

WITHERIDGE
W.H. 5408

"Killed Sep. 20th 1917"

W. H. Witheridge is my brother. I have a letter from Chapln Higgins he tells me that my brother was killed in action in a stunt on Sep. 20th after objective had been taken, being killed through an ammunition dump being exploded by the enemy. We have been detailed to carry ammunition from the dump and that he is buried on the field.

Witness:- H.H. Witheridge 4556
18th Batta
Wentham

W.A. Dood
London.
18.1.18



Private H.H. Witheridge (at the front), J.F. Witheridge (H.M.S. Vanguard), and H.W. Witheridge (enlisted), sons of Mrs Witheridge, Lincoln Street, Campsie. The eldest son of the family, who enlisted in Victoria, has been killed. (Daily Telegraph 5/11/1916)

References

The information for this comes from a variety of sources, which include:

- They linger lightly : concerning the War Memorial in St. John's Church, Balmain / by Vernon Kemp. (available at Leichhardt Municipal Library).
- St. John the Evangelist. Birchgrove. Balmain North. 1882 – 1982.
By John K. Wright
St John's Balmain Centenary Committee. 1981.
- Newspaper articles archived at the National Library's Trove website
<https://trove.nla.gov.au>
- The AIF project from the UNSW Defence Force Academy:
<https://aif.adfa.edu.au/>
- Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour:
<https://www.awm.gov.au/>
- Virtual War Memorial List for Balmain:
<https://vwma.org.au/explore/places/2452775/people>
- *Canterbury's boys : World War I & Sydney's suburban fringe*, Muir, Leslie, 2002

*"To those who else were dismal in the cold;
But the vine standeth out amid the frost;
And after all, hath only his grace left,
That it endures in long, lone steadfastness
The winter through :- and next year blooms again
Not bitter for the torment undergone,
Not barren for the fulness yielded up ;
As fair and fruitful towards the sacrifice,
As if no touch had ever come to it,
But the soft airs of heaven and dews of earth; -
And fulfils itself in love once more."*

From *Ugo Bassi's Sermon at a Hospital* by Harriet Eleanor Baillie-Hamilton King

Read at the unveiling of the World War Two War Memorial at St John's Church.
The unveiling of the World War Two memorial also occurred on Remembrance Day, November 11, 1950.

