



HELM



Heritage of East Lake Macquarie

NOVEMBER 2018

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1918 - 100 YEARS - 2018



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

A03267

REMEMBRANCE DAY



Left: An unidentified photographer capturing the last shots to be fired before the armistice on 11 November 1918.

Originally known as Armistice Day, November 11, 1918 marked the end of WWI - 11th hour, 11th day, 11th month. In 1914, Australia's population was only about 4 million. During the war, 414,000 Australians had voluntarily enlisted. By 1918, almost 62,000 had died in Gallipoli, Europe and the Middle East. Over 2,000 men from the Hunter Valley gave their lives. Many more men, women, families made great sacrifices to defend our freedom. No one knew how bad the war would be or that it would take 4 years. Many thought it would be over in a few months. There was a strong loyalty to Britain, and supporting the British Empire. Some saw the war as being an adventure to fight for their country; and it was portrayed as an opportunity to see the world. Some signed up because their friends were going. Some did not want to be labelled cowards. For some, pay was the incentive (about 6 shillings a day). And so the phrase "six bob a day tourists" was coined.



- Armistice WWI 1
- Recruitment 2
- Local Heroes 3-4
- Nurses in WWI 4

We are now on **FACEBOOK!** Check us out at:
HELM (Heritage of East Lake Macquarie).
 If you have interesting stories or photos,
 please contact us and help keep our heritage.

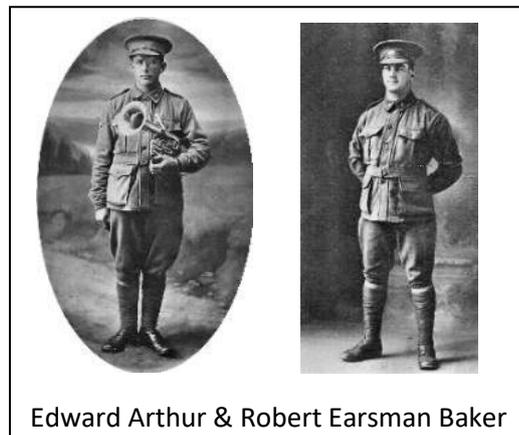


Kindly supporting the community – including Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club; this edition of HELM newsletter.

4972 1066 - NOW AT SWANSEA!
SWANSEA PLAZA ARCADE
Near Coles and Blondies.

HONOURING SOME OF OUR LOCAL WWI HEROES

Catherine Hill Bay. **Edward Arthur Baker**, 21, engineer at Wallarah Colliery enlisted soon after war broke out, joining the 19th Battalion; transferred to field ambulance stretcher bearers; and sailed from Melbourne on "HMAT Ceramic". Later that year, November 1915, he died from leg wounds at Lone Pine Gallipoli, caused by a bomb; and was buried in Shrapnel Gully, Gallipoli. On Arbour Day 1916 a tree was planted in his memory in an avenue to remember the fallen at Catherine Hill Bay School. His brother, **Robert Earsman Baker**, student, aged 19 years 6 months joined the AIF after the tragic death of his brother, departing Sydney on the "SS Makarini", bound for England, then France. Wounded in action in both legs, he recovered and rejoined his battalion. Further hospitalisation was required for impotego, influenza and scabies; eventually returning home in 1919 to a relieved family. He became a teacher of mathematics, married, raised a family, and lived to be 86 years old.



Edward Arthur & Robert Earsman Baker



Swansea. **Wilfred John Crittendell**, blacksmith, had a shop on the site of the present Mandarin Restaurant and had built charabanc type buses; and a grab bucket for Boyd's shipbuilders. He enlisted in the 5th Field Artillery as a driver, then farrier. Wounded in France, he recuperated from a serious knee injury in Cairo; before rejoining his unit. He was quickly promoted to Sergeant, returning in April 1919. **Thomas Henry Robert Crittendell**, aged 19 years, followed in his brother's footsteps to become an apprentice blacksmith, then enlisting as a farrier in May 1916. Accidentally wounded in the arm and chest in France; he returned in September 1918 on the "Boonah". Their father, Thomas Henry, kept the blacksmith business operating, as well as working at Wallarah Colliery until his sons returned.



Crittendell's blacksmith shop and bus; Thomas Henry Robert in Egypt 1916.



Joseph Henry Fox Born at Catherine Hill Bay, the fair-haired and blue-eyed Joseph enlisted in 1915 at Newcastle, aged 19 years 6 months. No medical conditions were found and he was noted fit for active service with the 30th Battalion. In November 1915, he sailed from Sydney on the "Beltana" to England then to Marseilles. Suffering serious abdomen wounds, he was evacuated to



the English military hospital at Edmonton, dangerously ill. After returning to Australia in 1917 he married, raised a family of four children and was employed at Wallarah Colliery.

Walter Hancock. His family came to Catherine Hill Bay, living at Mine Camp, as his father had gained employment at Wallarah Colliery. Walter began working in the Wallarah mine when he was 14, then moved to Sydney working as a fisherman. Aged 26 and 6 months, he enlisted in 1916 in the 1st Pioneer Battalion, serving as a stretcher bearer at the Western Front until suffering injuries from the poisonous gases used by the Germans. Walter returned to work at the Wallarah Colliery, as a hostler at the large stables.



David Watkin Humphreys #3064 from Swansea enlisted at the age of 26 years 4 months at Liverpool, giving his occupation as miner. He was the brother of Tom Humphries, who was renowned for his boat building skills. Assigned to the 1st AIF Battalion, after a brief training period, Dave was sent to Gallipoli, then on to Egypt and later France. On the Western Front he received serious gunshot wounds to the right shoulder and his side. After convalescing in England he returned to his unit in France, but was affected by the German gassing actions. He married Jessie May in 1919, whom he met whilst recovering. He returned to Australia on “SS Zealandic” in October 1919; and set up home with Jessie in Park St, Swansea to have a family of 4 – including son, Gordon. He resumed his mining occupation, but died at the relatively early age of 50, no doubt accelerated by his terrible war injuries.



Brother, **Percy James Humphreys**, #5759 enlisted at Charlestown, in May 1916, aged 25 years and 10 months.



A labourer at Catherine Hill Bay, he became a sapper with the 1st Tunnelling Company, Newcastle Depot Battalion. After further training with the miners reinforcements at Seymour, Vic., he embarked on the “Ulysses” to England, then the “Arundel” to France. The Tunnellers on the Western front played a vital role, exploding German tunnels and artillery points. Sometimes toiling underground for months in torturous conditions beneath no man’s land: claustrophobic, flooded trenches, cave-ins, breathing foul air. Not only facing the danger of blowing themselves up with their extensive explosive charges, but with the added danger of the enemy sneaking in behind and setting fire to the tunnel. To cover their back door, Percy, who was a crack shot, was often set up as a sniper in a strategic position. Percy returned home on the “Aeneas”; and was discharged in August 1919. He resumed working in the mines; with brother Tom building small boats during WWII; and Uncle James Boyd’s shipyard. *George and Noelene Boyd; awm.*



Medals: 1914-15 Star for all Gallipoli veterans
1914-18 British War medal
1914-19 Victory medal



Lake Macquarie nurses in WWI.

Nurses played a vital role in WWI, attending to the sick and wounded, working long hours in adverse, difficult and appalling conditions. To enlist in the reserve unit of the AIF, Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) nurses had to be between the ages of 21 and 40, unmarried, and have completed at least 3 years training. The first group of nurses left on a troop ship, in Nov 1914, sailing to Egypt and then Gallipoli. They bravely tended a huge volume of casualties, which did not seem to diminish, even though the locations changed. They worked in hospitals, on ships, on trains, in clearing stations. Two Lake Macquarie nurses served overseas – Mary Ann May Martin from Martinsville, and Kathleen Byrne from Swansea.

Kathleen Byrne. Her father, James moved the family to Swansea in 1915, transferring as a teacher to Swansea Public School. Kathleen enlisted in June 1915, aged 32, and served in England, on hospital ships and in the field in France; being promoted to Sister in December 1918. She returned to Australia in April 1919 and resigned shortly afterwards, as was mandatory then, because she intended to marry Angus McKenzie. They started a family in Newcastle before moving to Launceston, in 1922; becoming heavily involved in the RSL Club. Kathleen passed away in January 1964, aged 81. *LMCC Lib.*



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WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR MORE OF YOUR HERITAGE STORIES!!!