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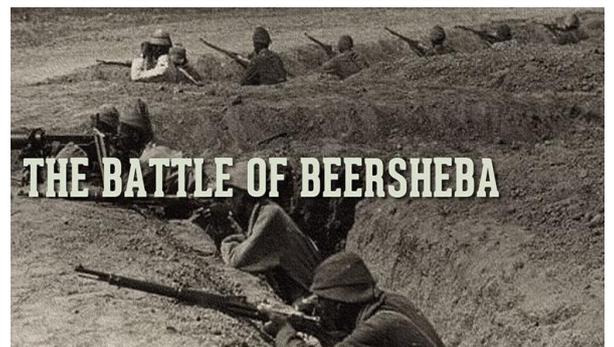
SALUTE TO THE LIGHT HORSE

“Across the burning sands of Beersheba
They fought and rode so well
Their raw courage and their valour
Our history books now tell

Astride their faithful ‘Waler’ mounts
Bred from station mares hardy and game
They mounted the last great cavalry charge
This world shall ever see again.

At racing pace ‘cross the burning sand
Oblivious to rifle and machine gun fire
They charged straight over the Turkish trenches
Through the barriers of brutal barbed wire.

Though that gallant charge at Beersheba
Is now long gone, we must never forget it of course
For our nation owes so much and then more
To those brave mounted heroes, “The Australian Light Horse”
Excerpt from “The Australian Light Horse” by B. Skelton



On the 31 October, 1917, as daylight faded across the Negev Desert, Australian Light Horse Divisions secured the town of Beersheba, bringing to a close a crucial battle in the Sinai Palestine Campaign of World War One. The Battle of Beersheba was a pivot upon which turned the fortunes of Allied efforts against the Ottoman and German Empires in the Middle East Theatre of the war. It demonstrated the success of Manoeuvre Warfare in the region, and the power of mounted troops to rapidly redefine the outcome of a battle. Decisive victory at Beersheba fell to one of the last great charges of mounted troops in history. As Australian Light Horse Divisions captured the town and secured crucial water wells, their success also marked the beginning of the end of the war in the Middle East. This end came a year to the day after Beersheba.

Source: ABC Story of the day



Beersheba 1-3
Local Light Horsemen 3-4

VISIT THE NEW HERITAGE CENTRE- ST PETER'S CHAPEL IN ARTEAS
COMMUNITY HUB, JOSEPHSON ST, SWANSEA. FRIDAYS 10am-2pm.



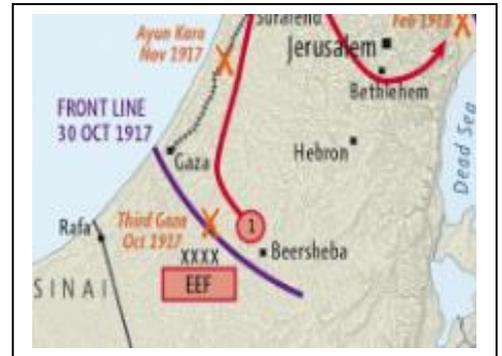
first national
REAL ESTATE | Andrew McGrath

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.



The 12th Light Horse Regiment was raised at Liverpool in March 1915 and sailed in June. They reinforced the British garrison at Aden in July, then were deployed to Gallipoli in August as dismounted infantry, returning to Egypt after the Gallipoli evacuation and resuming their mounted role. They joined the forces defending the vital supply route-Suez Canal, May 1916, and engaged in action in the Sinai Desert and Gaza on the Mediterranean. In 1917, Gaza was the key to the defence of Southern Palestine, against a strong Turkish defence line starting near the small town of Beersheba. Two previous attacks on Gaza had



failed. In a surprise tactical manoeuvre the 4th and 12th Light Horse were to move in on Beersheba from the Negev desert in the east; while infantry and artillery approached from the south and west. The cavalry attack was to capture Beersheba, a heavily fortified town 43km south-east from the Turkish bastion of Gaza, and its vital water wells - the only reliable source of water in the region, desperately needed for the 60,000 Allied troops. As part of the plan, false information was planted to make the Turks think another attack was coming at Gaza. An officer rode out to within Turkish range on the pretext of taking notes. When fired upon, he feigned being wounded and rode off leaving behind his rifle and blood-stained (horse blood) haversack which contained a fake letter from home and the dummy plan of attack. The Turkish command were taken in by this ruse. At dawn the British attacked but made little headway. The attack was running behind time and daylight was running out. Around 5pm, October 31, the extended charge formation of about 800 horsemen broke from a trot into a gallop after crossing the ridge, yelling stockmen's cries and cooees; spurred on by the promise of water. (The horses had travelled about 50k, many without water, at night time for three days). The 4th from Victoria were on the right, the 12th from NSW on the left – the 11th mainly from Qld in reserve. They had to cover some 3 km as they charged towards the Turkish trenches. The Turks had set their rifle sights for the longer range where they expected the attack; they did not have time to reset for the surprise tactic. The Light Horse speed was too great for the gunners. Most of their bullets went overhead and were ineffective against the widely spaced horsemen riding 5 metres apart. Using their bayonets as swords, they charged the unwired trenches, crouching low on their horses necks, straight over the top of the front and main trench. Some dismounted and engaged with the Turks from the rear; some galloped ahead to seize the rear trenches, while other squadrons rode into Beersheba. Nearly all the wells were intact, despite being wired for destruction in case of attack. The attack was so swift they did not have time to activate more than two. The water supplies had been saved; the rail bridge was intact; the enemy had surrendered. The Gaza-Beersheba line had turned. The Light Horse had suffered casualties – 31 men killed, 36 wounded; 70 horses killed, 60 injured. The Turks had some 1000 killed or wounded, another 1000 taken prisoner.

Right: The Beersheba Town Square
Far right: Australian soldiers in the ruins of a pumping plant used to pump water from the wells blown up by the Turks shortly before the town was captured. Engineers had to erect a derrick over a well with a rope and bucket to clear the well and get water flowing again.



Sources: AWM, ABC, ANZAC 100 Qld.gov.au. ALHA

THE LIGHT HORSE AFTER THE BATTLE OF BEERSHEBA



1. Day after- surveying damage; 2. Nov 1917 – dry waterbed, railway bridge in background that Turks didn't have time to destroy; 3. Marching in Jerusalem, December 1917; 4. "The Great Ride" – Chauvel in Damascus, November 1918. AWM

A LIGHTHORSEMAN AND HIS HORSE.

In return for the friendship, the horse never failed him throughout the stern years that followed. Man and horse became one, each knew the other's exhilaration, thirst, dog-tiredness, laziness, expectancy or sense of imminent danger. The feel of the man in the saddle, the pressure of knees or rein, his tone of voice told the horse exactly what was doing.

Trooper Ion L. Idriess, 5th Light Horse.

In action, a horse and rider are one. A horse is a trooper's faithful companion, his pride and joy, his ally and friend, and on occasion, his salvation. *Patrick Hamilton*

Water was sometimes scarce. Men needed a litre a day, but a horse needed 22 litres a day to stay in condition. All depended on the supply of clean water. When in the lines, horses were groomed 3 times daily, watered twice, fed 3 times and exercised twice. Even on the move they were ridden for 40 minutes, led for 10 minutes and rested for 10 minutes each hour. Cases of heat exhaustion and sun stroke were common.

Source: Ian Jones

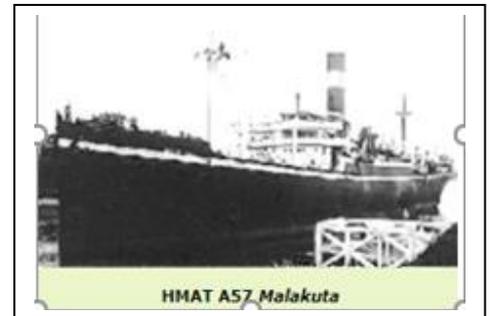


CLOSER TO HOME: 6 LIGHT HORSEMEN FROM SWANSEA AND CATHERINE HILL BAY IN WWI



Herbert William LUNN: #2112

The 21 year old labourer from Swansea who enlisted in August 1915 was assigned to the 7th Light Horse regiment as a Private in 1916. He was 6 ft 1 inches tall with fair complexion, blue eyes, and fair hair. He sailed from Sydney on the Malakuta, March 1916, to join forces in the Middle East, participating in combat in many locations and many skirmishes. Like many, he was admitted to hospital in England for gastro enteritis, a recurring problem. He returned in July 1919 and married Mary Manson in 1920. He died in 1962, having moved to Belmont, aged 68.



Donald John Alexander McKELLAR: # 17520

The 30 year old letter carrier and postal assistant from Swansea, was born in Glasgow, Scotland and married to Alexandrina. He was noted to be 5 ft 10 inches tall, fair complexion, blue eyes, dark brown hair. He enlisted in September 1916, into the 1st Cavalry Wireless Signals Squadron, and embarked in Sydney on the ship HMAT A15 Port Sydney, on the 9th of May 1917, arriving in Basrah, Egypt in June. He rose quickly through the ranks, from Driver to Corporal. He was then despatched to France, June 1917, and nearly a year later was promoted to Sergeant, before final discharge in October, 1919.



Driver Walter HAM

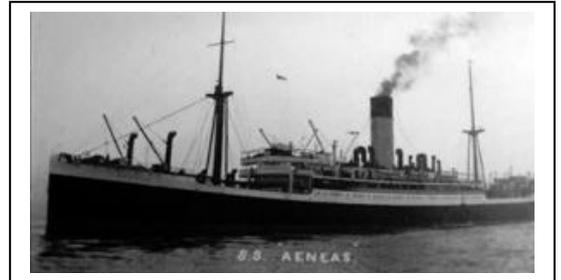
#1652

Walter was born at Belleview Plains, (now Caves Beach) and worked as a miner. He enlisted in August 1915, joining the 7th Light Horse regiment and leaving on the ship Persic. The fair, 5 ft 9 tall Private with grey eyes and light brown hair arrived in Maadi, Cairo, in December 1915. After promotion to Gunner, he was transferred to Marseille and served on the Western Front. Soon afterwards he became a Driver. Most of Dec 1916 and Jan 1917 were spent in hospital. Soon after his return home in June 1919, he married Nellie Forbes and lived a long life until he passed away aged 90 in 1983, Nellie the year after aged 88.



Private George Christopher WARREN: # 1961

The Swansea fisherman was only 18 when he enlisted in July 1915 to the 6th Light Horse Regiment. The ship Aeneas carried the 5 ft 5 inches tall lad with blue eyes and brown hair to Maadi, Egypt, January 1916. He was admitted to hospital in Abbassia; re-joining his unit on 22nd April; and then hospital again in May at Heliopolis with heart trouble. He returned from Suez in July and was medically discharged due to "Myocarditis" in September, 1916. He eventually married Susie Duncan in 1925, and lived until 1977.



Private William George BAKER #3561

The blacksmith at Wallarah Colliery was born in 1886 and was an avid member of the rifle club at Catherine Hill Bay, and a member of the Cornstalk Lodge. He married local girl Ivy Dunn in 1907. Despite her opposition, he enlisted in April 1917 embarking from Melbourne on the ship HMAT "Commonwealth" (A73) in November,



bound for Suez, where he requested to be transferred to the Light Horse Regiment, and was assigned to the 1st Light Horse; then served as 2nd Lieutenant in the camel Transport Company. In March 1919, he embarked at Kantar on the "Ulimaroa" for the journey home to be discharged in May 1919. Tragically Ivy passed away in 1920. In 1930 William was married



again to Lily Mitchell and had 3 children. William died in 1944, aged 59.

Private/Driver Albert George MINSLOW #1638

Albert was born in Hinton, near Morpeth. He enlisted at the age of 35, in August 1915, listing his occupation as horse trainer, and consequently was assigned to the 1st Light Horse Regiment. Being single, his mother was listed as the next of kin – Mrs Lydia Fox of Mine Camp, Catherine Hill Bay. He was described as being 5 ft 7 inches tall – with a dark complexion, grey eyes and dark brown hair. Embarking on the ship "Beltana", he arrived in Egypt in January 1916. A number of occasions were spent in hospital for a variety of conditions including septic ankle and thrombosis veins. Albert returned home in March 1919 and received a medical discharge, suffering from malaria. He passed away relatively young, in May 1936, aged 57.

AWM; UNSW; National Archives



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WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR YOUR IDEAS FOR MORE HERITAGE STORIES!!!