

## Stories from the Honour Boards

Stories of those who served and are remembered on the Honour Boards in the Merrington Anzac Memorial Peace Chapel at Saint Andrew's Uniting Church

Booklet Number 128

# **FREDERICK CHARLES HARLEY**

**1890 - 1968**



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Corner Ann and Creek Streets  
Brisbane QLD 4000  
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## **Gunner Frederick Charles Harley**

Fred Harley was born in Brisbane on 5 June 1890, the only son of Charles Henry Harley and Eliza Ellen née Fox. Fred had four sisters and the family lived at Shafston Road, Kangaroo Point before moving in about 1915 to Kennedy Terrace, Paddington.

Fred's father, Mr CH Harley was a master printer and prominent in Masonic circles. It was largely through his initiative that the United Grand Lodge of Queensland was inaugurated in 1921. When he died in 1930, it was said, "His genius for organisation, his unfailing tact, and his most driving and guiding power were invaluable. His interest never waned, and to the end he was ever keen in all the affairs of the Masonic movement, and earnestly studious of the welfare of his brethren."<sup>1</sup> Standing just a few metres along the footpath from Saint Andrew's Uniting Church, the Ann Street Masonic Memorial Temple is still the home of Queensland Freemasonry, although the name has recently been changed to Masonic Memorial Centre. Mr Harley also served in the life and work of the Wharf Street Congregational Church where he was appointed a deacon in 1915 and remained in that office till his death in 1930.

Fred had worked as a draper before the Great War of 1914 – 1918. At the age of 25 he enlisted in Brisbane on 20 July 1915 to serve overseas in the Australian Imperial Force. He was given regimental number 1534 and assigned to reinforcements for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse Regiment. His unit embarked from Sydney on board HMAT<sup>2</sup> *Suffolk* on 30 November 1915 and arrived in Heliopolis on 1 March 1916. At Serapeum in Egypt on 16 April he was transferred to the 4<sup>th</sup> Division Artillery Brigade.

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1. *The Queenslander*, 2 October 1930, page 54

2. His Majesty's Australian Transport

Field Artillery Brigades were formed to support infantry brigades. On arrival in France, each FAB was equipped with 12 x 18 pounders and 4 x 4.5 inch howitzers. There was initially a lack of howitzers available to meet the establishment. In WW 1 on the Western Front, artillery dominated and defined the battlefield. Along with the weather, it turned the terrain into a pulverised devastated quagmire that caused discomfort, disease and death.

On 7<sup>th</sup> June Gunner Harley sailed with the 11<sup>th</sup> FAB from Alexandria to Marseilles and travelled by train to the Western Front where it participated in battles at Bullecourt, Messines, Menin Road, Polygon Wood, Passchendaele, Villers Bretonneux, Hamel, Amiens, Albert and the Hindenburg Line. Gunner Harley of the 41<sup>st</sup> Battery was not involved in all of these; he was ill in hospital at Havre for a lengthy period in the second half of 1917 and he was wounded in action in April 1918 when he suffered gunshot wounds to the back and right arm. He rejoined his unit in the field in June 1918 but again needed hospital treatment in Rouen and Havre before and after the Armistice on 11 November 1918. Gunner Fred Harley remained in France till mid-March 1919 when he crossed the Channel to Weymouth but again required treatment in hospital at Hurdcott before return to Australia per HMAT *Swakopmund*. On the voyage in July 1919 he was again admitted to the ship's hospital with jaundice for four days. After disembarking in Australia on 2 August 1919, Fred Harley's war service came to an end. It was marked by extreme danger under fire on the battlefields of the Western Front and periods of hospitalisation for treatment of wounds and illnesses.

Assisted and encouraged by the care of his family and the comfort of home at Kennedy Terrace in Paddington, Fred Harley was able to settle to civilian life again. Over the next ten years he resumed his occupation as a draper. His father died on 29 September 1930 when Fred had reached the age of 40.

A new chapter in the life of Frederick Charles Harley began on 1 November 1930 when he married Ada Joyance, the youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs WR Waugh of Third Avenue, Wilston. The marriage was conducted in St Barnabas Church, Ashgrove by Canon David Garland, the Anglican World War 1 chaplain who with Rev Dr Ernest Merrington of Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church, made a significant contribution to the future commemoration of Anzac Day. Fred and Ada Harley turned to fruit growing on a property called Diddillibah in the Nambour district.



*An orchard at Diddillibah*

They lived there till about 1955 when they moved to Maroochydore and later Woombye. Fred Harley died on 4 March 1968, aged 77 years. His remains were placed in the Nambour Lawn Cemetery. His widow died in Nambour in 1994.

## **Bibliography**

Australian War Memorial, unit histories and World War 1 Embarkation Rolls

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*Queenslander*, 2 October 1930, page 54

*Queensland Figaro*, 13 December 1930, page 14

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Written by Noel E Adsett

Brisbane

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*Lest we forget*