

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 148

WILLIAM HUGH McCLYMONT 1885 - 1967



Quinn's Post, 1915

This booklet remains the property of Saint Andrew's Uniting Church.
Please see a Guide if you would like a copy.

Cover Illustration: *Quinn's Post, on the Gallipoli Peninsula at a fairly early stage. (c May 1915) There is an extensive use of sandbags around the dugouts.*

William was in C Company of the 15th Battalion and they moved up to Quinn's Post and held the hazardous position despite a determined Turkish attack on 1 May.

Sergeant William Hugh McClymont

Quinn's Post on the Gallipoli Peninsula was a crucial position of incessant danger and ferocious, desperate fighting. One futile foray on 9-10 May 1915 resulted in 207 Australian casualties, among them Frank Armstrong (booklet no.4) and Graham Wareham (booklet no.1).

One of the wounded on that night – also commemorated on the Honour Boards in Saint Andrew's Church in the Brisbane CBD – was William Hugh McClymont, aged 29 and an insurance manager prior to enlistment, who was shot in his upper left arm.

Official historian Charles Bean wrote of the aftermath:

This Sunday attack, like that made by the same brigade on the same day of the previous week, was completely fruitless. The troops had been heavily tried...The report of the annihilating fire which swept every exposed portion of this crest became widespread, and the memory of it had a marked effect upon most of the troops who had been subjected to it...a man may bear some heavy trial, but, having successfully borne it, ever afterwards shudders at any symptoms or circumstances which remind him of it.

William McClymont survived his physical wounds, and was discharged medically unfit in 1916, but his life seems to have drifted to a sad end.

Early life

William was born on 18 November 1885 in Kirkmichael in the County of Ayr, Scotland. His father was Charles Dalrymple Ferguson McClymont, a farmer, and his mother Agnes nee Stewart. Charles and Agnes had married in 1876, and William was the second of their six children.

One of William's younger brothers – Edward Victor – also served in the 1st AIF, in the 42nd Infantry Battalion (1916-1919).

William attended Brisbane Grammar School 1899-1901 and was a member of the Cadet Corps there. On leaving school he was a grazier at Wyalla, near Nanango from 1903 until 1908. This was probably on or near a property owned by his uncle also named William Hugh McClymont – an early settler in Queensland and who died in 1910.

From 1909 William was the manager of the Warwick branch of the New Zealand Insurance Co. Ltd. He was active and popular – ‘a general favourite with everybody’ - and in May 1914 the Mayor convened a meeting in the Council chambers to recognise William's contribution in Warwick. Those present spoke of his ‘ready assistance in all matters of good citizenship, his interest in sport, especially football, and his acquiescence in all projects for forwarding the progress of the town’.

Enlistment

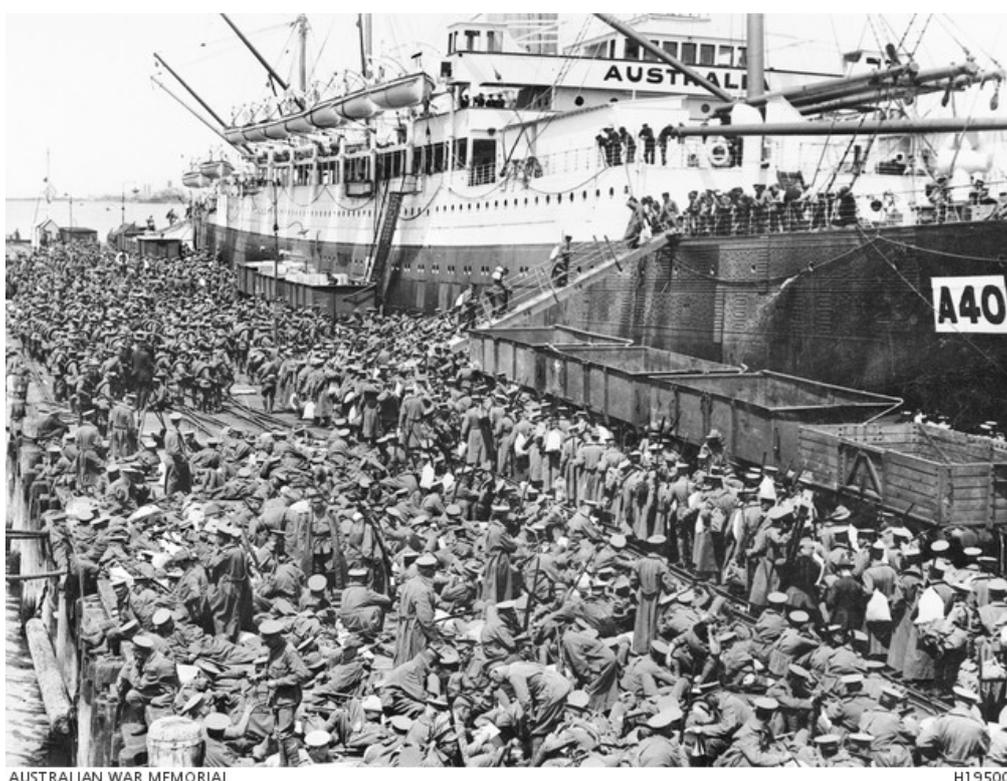
William enlisted in Brisbane on 20 October 1914, one month short of his 29th birthday. His father had died in 1895 and he gave his mother – who was living at Didcot via Maryborough – as his next-of-kin. His religion was Presbyterian. Standing tall at 178cm and weighing 65.3kg, William had a dark complexion, blue eyes and brown hair.

He was placed as a Private in the 15th Infantry Battalion, and embarked in Melbourne on HMAT *Ceramic* A40 on 22 December 1914.



(RELAWM13307.107)

The colour patch of the 15th Infantry Battalion of the AIF.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H19500

*Troops embarking on the HMAT Ceramic,
22 December 1914*

Service

After training in Egypt, Australian forces first went ashore at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. William was in C Company of the 15th Battalion and that group landed late morning on the 26th.

Over the first three days C Company worked on constructing saps, surviving an intense shrapnel bombardment, repelling part of a major Turkish counter-attack at sunset on the 27th, and protecting one flank near the beach on the 28th.

They then moved up to Quinn's Post and held the hazardous position despite a determined Turkish attack on 1 May.

An attempt at relief on 5 May was thwarted by C Company having to rush back up to aid the relief party of Royal Marines who were at risk of being overwhelmed by a strong Turkish onslaught. On the night of 9-10 May an attack by the Australians saw some shallow Turkish trenches taken, but holding them proved untenable, despite the bravery of the Australians.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

C01135

The path up to Quinn's Post, Gallipoli Peninsula, seen from a sap (a deep narrow trench) leading down to the gully. August 1915

In this fighting William received a gunshot wound in his left upper arm. He was evacuated to Alexandria in Egypt where he underwent two operations for sepsis. In an era without antibiotics wounds could readily be fatal because of blood poisoning, but William survived his ordeal.

He was repatriated to England in early July 1915 and spent three weeks in the Australian hospital at Harefield.

William then did some administrative work in Headquarters, and in February 1916 was promoted temporary Sergeant.

Back in Australia William's older brother, Charles Stewart McClymont married in March 1916 and a report of the wedding said:

Both the bride and bridegroom are popular members of well-known families who have long resided in the district. At the express wish of both, the wedding was very quiet, only immediate relatives and a few friends being present on account of the war and the fact that Mr McClymont's brother had been wounded recently at Gallipoli.

In May 1916 the ulnar nerve in William's left arm required suturing to re-join it, an operation performed in Wandsworth hospital. There was improvement in finger movement but there remained some limitation in extension of his left forearm and wasting of the muscles of the upper arm and forearm.

William left England on HT *Marathon* in August 1916, arriving back in Australia the next month. In Brisbane at the train station – the final leg after disembarking in Melbourne - William was 'met by many friends and cordially welcomed'. He was discharged medically unfit on 18 October 1916 with a rating of 25% impairment of earnings capacity.

Post war

By 1919 William was living in the Didcot area, where family included his mother and younger brother Edward Victor (who had returned to dairy farming).

His occupation in electoral rolls for the early 1920s was given as clerk. After Didcot William was in Bundaberg listed as a labourer, then employed by his older brother Charles Stewart McClymont at Nanango, and spent six months in 1930 as an overseer on Haqita Plantation in Papua. In 1931 he was back in Brisbane and underwent surgery to remove a neuroma on the ulnar nerve of his left arm.

The electoral rolls 1938 - 1958 inclusive record William as living at Amity Point, a very small settlement on North Stradbroke Island, and his occupation as clerk.

In 1963 William was living in Redcliffe, and the following year Brisbane. In the second half of 1967 he spent time in the Noosa District Hospital at Cooroy, and in October received a letter from the Deputy Commissioner for Repatriation in Queensland saying bluntly that his hospital bills from earlier in the year would not be paid:

As the condition for which you were admitted to hospital and the subsequent conditions arising therefrom were, to the certain knowledge of this Department, a direct result of an excessive intake of alcohol on your part, responsibility for payment of any treatment afforded you in this instance cannot be accepted as a Repatriation liability.

One wonders what Bean would have thought of it, or what a modern diagnosis taking into account the psychological impacts of trauma might conclude, but William was probably beyond caring. He was re-admitted to the hospital and on 28 December 1967 died, aged 82. The causes of death were recorded as cirrhosis of the liver and alcoholism.

He was buried in the Nambour Garden Cemetery, with Presbyterian rites administered by the Rev Scott McPheat (who two years later accepted a call to be the Minister at Saint Andrew's Church).



Photo of Warwick War Memorial Gates. Source: Dennis Stocks

Memorial Gates, Warwick

KEMP J.J.	MORGAN C.	PEEL H.
KEOCH H.	MORGAN H.	PEEL R.R.
LABBATT A.J.	MORGAN R.	PERRIN F.W.
LAMB R.	MORGAN S.S.	PETERSEN J.A.
LAMB ROBT.	MUNCHOW O.	PHILLIPS G.A.L.
LANCASTER H.	MURSELL B.A.	PHILLIPS O.F.
LANC R.	Mc.CLYMONT W.H.	PICKSTONE J.
LAW D.	Mc.DONALD S.C.	PORTER J.M.
LEE A.J.	Mc.DOUGALL D.W.	PORTLEY B.
LEE T.R.	Mc.DOUGALL M.	PORTLEY J.
LEFRANCKE C.	Mc.DOUGALL M.W.	POWER G.W.
LEGGETT W.J.	Mc.GIFFIN G.	PRICE D.

Detail

Select bibliography

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Written by Ian Carnell

Buderim

November 2016.



Lest we forget