

DUNCAN BERTRAM CORFE M.C.
Trooper 516 – 6th Light Horse / Lieutenant – 2nd Field Coy Engineers /
Lieutenant – 1st Tunnelling Company

Duncan Bertram Corfe was born on 23 November, 1879 the son of Charles Carteret and Emily Hudson (nee Evison) Corfe in Christchurch, New Zealand. His father gained his Batchelor of Arts (BA) in Cambridge, England in 1869 and went to teach at Christ's College in Christchurch, NZ in 1871 and was headmaster there from 1873 to 1888. He married in December, 1874 in Melbourne, Victoria at St Paul's Cathedral to Emily Hudson Evison. The family moved to Queensland when he became headmaster at the Toowoomba Grammar School from 1890 to 1900 then occupied relieving positions in Australia and New Zealand.

Duncan completed his education at the Toowoomba Grammar School and accepted to study Engineering at Sydney University in 1899.

This news was reported in the:

Darling Downs Gazette (Qld) Saturday March 18, 1899:

TOOWOOMBA GRAMMAR SCHOOL

We see by the "Sydney Morning Herald" March 16th that the following Toowoomba Grammar School boys have been successful in the recent University examinations: D.B. Corfe passed the entrance examination for the Department of Engineering.

Some of his results were published in the:

Darling Downs Gazette (Qld) Saturday December 30, 1899:

OUR BOYS AT UNIVERSITY

We are pleased to note that our boys continue to make progress at the Sydney University. In the December examinations Mr D.B. Corfe passed the first year in the department of mining and metallurgy securing passes in mathematics and physics. *Article abridged*

Queenslander (Brisbane) Saturday April 7, 1900:

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS – QUEENSLAND PASSES

Engineering: Passes first year – Department of Mining and Metallurgy: D.B. Corfe (Toowoomba) *Article abridged*

Daily Telegraph Saturday March 30, 1901:

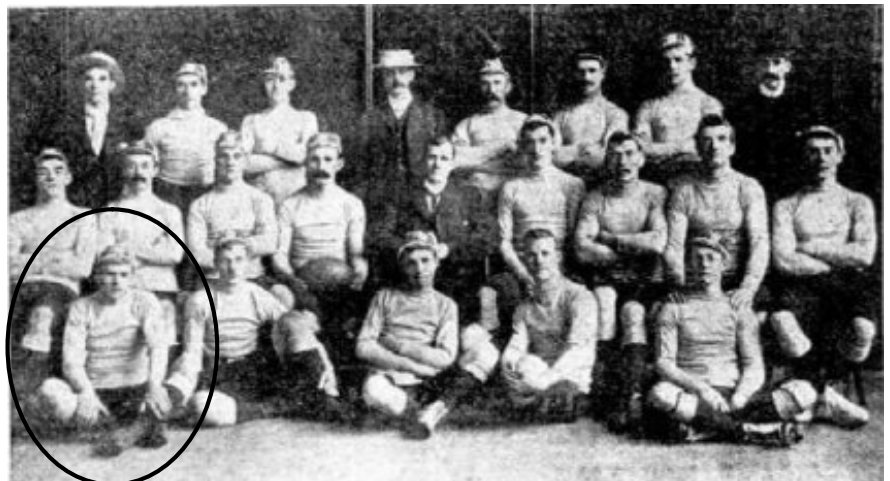
DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING

Second Year Examination: Passed – Civil Engineering: D.B. Corfe

Applied Mechanics, Design and Drawing and Surveying: Pass – D.B. Corfe *Article abridged*

He was a member of the University Football team and was mentioned numerous times in results of their games.

He played for New South Wales in the Interstate Match in August, 1901 against Queensland and the following photo was published in the:



NEW SOUTH WALES TEAM

Back Row: P. Walsh, L. Finn, Ross Brown, J. Quinlan, A. Ferrier, N. Street, C.S. Browne, C.A. Hill
Central Row: A. Wilson, P.V.J. Macnamara, J. Manning, J. O'Driscoll Captain, P.M. Lane (Manager), H.F. Blaney, J.E. Joyce
Front Row: **D.B. Corfe**, St A.W.L. McDowell, F. Roberts, R.L. Challoner, P.J. Higgins.

Further results of his courses were published in the:

Sydney Morning Herald Thursday April 10, 1902:

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY – EXAMINATION RESULTS

The following additional examination results have been posted at the University:

FACULTY OF SCIENCE – DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING – 3rd YEAR EXAMINATION

History of Architecture – Pass: D.B. Corfe

Building Construction – Pass D.B. Corfe

Article abridged

He graduated in 1903 with a Bachelor of Civil Engineering (BE). He took a job with the Gold Mine Company at Beaconsfield, Tasmania as a surveyor and draughtsman. Many friends were made and a valued member of the Tennis Club competing in many local tournaments during his time there.

His departure from Beaconsfield was reported in the:

Daily Telegraph (Launceston) Wednesday May 29, 1907:

BEACONSFIELD – POPULAR CITIZEN’S DEPARTURE

At the Tasmania company’s office to-day, in the presence of the staff, Mr D.B. Corfe, who is leaving the company’s employ to take a position near Sydney, NSW was presented with a gold albert and pendant as a mark of esteem. Mr C.F. Heathcote, superintendent of the mine, made the presentation on behalf of the staff. Mr Corfe has for some years occupied the position of mine surveyor and draughtsman. At the conclusion of the tennis tournament on Saturday Mr H. Evens, the secretary, referred to the fact Mr Corfe would be to the club, he being one of the foremost players. Mr Corfe leaves many friends among the townspeople.

Commenced work with the Public Works Department at Muswellbrook, NSW on construction of the railway from there to Merriwa and was a licensed keeper of explosives registered as “rackarock” up to 1914. His residence in 1913 was Eaton’s Hotel, Muswellbrook with the occupation of civil engineer.

After the outbreak of World War I, the single thirty-four-year-old civil engineer applied to enlist for active service abroad at Liverpool, near Sydney on 13 November, 1914 and passed the medical examination.

Attestation forms were completed and describe him as 173cms (5ft 8ins) tall, weighing 66.8kgs (147lbs) with a chest measurement of 97cms (38ins). Religion was Church of England and next-of kin nominated was his father Charles Cartiate Corfe of New Plymouth, New Zealand.

He was allotted to the 6th Light Horse Regiment, 2nd Military District for training until departure abroad. His rank was trooper with the regimental number 516. The Regiment embarked from Sydney, (2nd Military District) on 21 December, 1914 on board the transport A29 HMAT *Suevic* under Master of the Ship Commander Stivey and then on to Melbourne arriving the following day.

Albany, Western Australia was next port on December 28 and sailed from Australian waters on 31 December. Aden was reached on 20 January, 1915 and departed on January 23 reaching their destination at Alexandria on 3 February and disembarked the following day. The troops proceeded to join the Military Expeditionary Forces at Gallipoli on 15 May, 1915. Due to his qualifications, he was offered a Commission with the 2nd Field Engineer Company and was to be Second Lieutenant from 26 July, 1915 and transferred on July 31 at Gallipoli. His appointment was published in the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* issue No. 140 dated 1915.

His name was published in the Muswellbrook and District Enlistments – Roll of Honour in the:

Muswellbrook Chronicle Saturday August 7, 1915:

MUSWELLBROOK AND DISTRICT ENLISTMENTS – ROLL OF HONOUR

ROLL OF DUTY – AT THE FRONT OR ON THEIR WAY

Trooper D.B. Corfe

Article abridged

He developed nervous debility and sent on 15 August, 1915 to the 1st Casualty Clearing Station and transferred to Mudros then entered the 19th General Hospital in Alexandria on August 25 suffering diphtheria (other records show enteric fever) and moved to the Convalescent Hospital.

His condition worsened and by 12 October was reported dangerously ill until 1 November when he was removed from this list.

Base Records advised his father on 10 October, 1915 he was reported dangerously ill.

His name was among those in the Casualty List published in the:

Express and Telegraph (Adelaide) Monday November 1, 1915:

NEW SOUTH WALES

Dangerously sick—Lieutenant G.D.B. Corfe

Article abridged

Was promoted to Lieutenant on 1 December, 1915. This was recorded in the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* No. 44 dated 6 April, 1916.

A letter to a friend in Muswellbrook detailed his service from arrival in Egypt and published in the:

Muswellbrook Chronicle Saturday December 4, 1915:

LETTER FROM THE FRONT

Lieut. D.B. Corfe, writing to a friend in Muswellbrook from Deaconnessen Hospital, Alexandria, says:

I am afraid I haven't kept my promise very faithfully of writing to you now and again. But war and Mr Censor don't inspire to make one write much more than post cards. Well, my old regiment trained hard and groomed their horses well and faithfully and when able to obtain leave swaggered about Cairo with a wallaby fur around its hat and wonderfully polished leggings and belt, and we call ourselves the smartest regiment in Egypt. Of course, there were a dozen other regiments that thought the same of themselves. Still, we had the infantry, who wore putties and couldn't get a shine up, or clink their spurs, very jealous. Thus we worked in intolerable dust and swanked in the sun from February till the beginning of May. Now during that period for a fortnight sixty picked men were sent to Cairo to act as military police.

The civilian police cannot interfere with a soldier boy, and the work of policing the city was done by a special body of picked men, ex-London police &c., called Red Caps. However, they didn't understand Australians, and so when all the Australian troops were in Cairo the Australians furnished additional bobbies to look after their own men. Those men were called not police but town patrol. I was picked for my singing I suppose. We camped at the Kes-el-nil barracks, built by Napoleon on the bank of the Nile. We ran in many drunks, had many scuffles and saw every part of this vice-stricken city, and altogether saw Cairo properly, and gained praise for the manner in which we carried out our duties. Then came work of the landing at Gallipoli. Now, we wanted fight, volunteered to leave our horses and a week saw us on the way to the firing line. We luckily have had no desperate fighting, but are always being shelled. Most letters from soldiers at the front are lies. The official correspondents sometimes tell the whole truth. Biscuits, cheese, jam and bully beef served in small quantities forms our diet. Our sleeping apartment is about 3ft x 2 ft and one learns to sleep anywhere, tucked up like a trussed hen. One gets a wash with fresh water—never; in salt water, at the risk of being shot-occasionally. One changes one's clothes never. No leggings and polish now. Our smart riding pants are cut off at the knees and we wear putties and carry packs and are called "The Lost Horse." Still, in spite of all I was quite happy and was recognised as a toiler and non-growler. Then came word from the Engineers offering me a commission. My heart was with the 6th, so many rattling good chaps. However I took the commission and am now Lieut. Corfe, 2nd Field Artillery Engineers A.R.T. We prepared for an attack and took some Turkish trenches and saw the excitement and gruesomeness of war. Then a few weeks afterwards I disgraced myself by getting fever, was sent here and have spent the last ten weeks on the broad of my back puzzling the doctors and with a high temperature. I am rather a wreck now and may be sent to Australia to recuperate. I feel somewhat disgraced as a soldier so many of my pals have honourable wounds to show. Still, perhaps I am better off. My South African brother is at home training with an English regiment, second in command. So if you see Major Corfe gets a V.C. don't think it's me. Show this scrawl to Cyril. Lying in bed here I often think of the many happy Sundays I spent at your home. I wonder how my old railway is getting on. How I would have enjoyed that job if I had been the contractor's boss instead of Government boss.

On 17 December, 1915 was transferred to the Enteric Convalescent Camp at Port Said from Alexandria.

He appeared before the medical board on 22 December, 1915 at the Enteric Convalescent Camp by order of the General Officer, Commanding in Chief the Force in Egypt, on his disability due to enteric (fever.) The board found that he had a severe attack following diphtheria - not proven, and marked asthenia (weakness due to underlying medical condition) followed but picking up slowly. Will probably require more than three months rest, is weak now and that he be transferred to Australia.

Unfit:	three months
Caused by:	military service in the Dardanelles

Lieutenant Corfe embarked from the Suez for a change of three months to Australia due to enteric on 3 January, 1916 on board the troopship *Ulysses*. He was struck off strength the same day.

His father was again notified on 14 January, 1916 by Base Records that his son was returning to Australia on board the transport *Ulysses*.

News of those returning was published in the:

Sydney Morning Herald Wednesday January 19, 1916:

THE WOUNDED – VESSEL TO ARRIVE NEXT MONTH

District Headquarters stated yesterday that a cablegram had been received conveying the information that a transport had left Suez for Australia on January 3 with wounded and sick soldiers from the Dardanelles. She was due on January 14 and should reach Fremantle on January 26 and Melbourne on February 2, arriving at Sydney a few days later.

Among those on board are:

RETURNED FOR CHANGE

Lieut. D.B. Corfe 2nd No. 2 F. Coy Engrs.

Article abridged

The ship docked in Sydney on 8 February, 1916.

A month later he visited Muswellbrook which was reported in the:

Muswellbrook Chronicle Wednesday March 29, 1916:

RETURNED SOLDIER

Lieutenant D.B. Corfe, who was for some time Engineer in charge of Muswellbrook to Merriwa railway, before enlisting, visited Muswellbrook last week. The lieutenant became ill after a few weeks in the trenches at Gallipoli, and eventually was sent back to Australia to recuperate. He has now apparently quite improved.

He appeared before the medical board at No. 4 Aust General Hospital, Sydney, NSW on 5 May, 1916 and his case reported:

Urine test – negative 3 occasions

Quite recovered

Fit for active service

Confirmed: 15/5/16

A memo dated 10 May, 1916 stated:

Details Camp.

Georges Heights

I have this day examined Lieut. D.B. Corfe, 2nd Field Engineers and certify that he is Fit to return to duty

W.A. Mead

Major A.M.C.

The Staff Officer for Returned Soldiers, Victoria Barracks wrote the following memo to Base Records on 11 May, 1916:

Lieutenant D.B. Corfe, 2nd Field Engineers

This officer having been examined by a Medical Board is recommended for return to duty and has been instructed to report to the O.C. Engineers Depot, Moore Park to-day.

E.W. Evans
Captain Staff Office Returned Soldiers

He was returned to duty on 11 May, 1916 and allotted to the Instructional Staff, Engineers Officers School, Sydney.

Lieutenant Corfe, now thirty-six years of age, re-attested on 23 October, 1916 and allotted to the November, 1916 Reinforcements to the Tunnelling Companies who were training at Seymour, Victoria. Next-of-kin nominated was his father Charles Cartriate Corfe, Bank NSW, Wanganui, New Zealand.

The 516 Reinforcements departed Melbourne, Victoria on October 25, 1916 at 1.30pm aboard the transport HMAT A38 *Ulysses*. The Australian coastline disappeared from view on October 30, 1916 with the port of Durban reached at 11.30am on November 13, 1916. Windy weather was experienced going around the Cape and arrived at Cape Town at 7am on November 19. Sierra Leone was the next port of call but their departure was delayed until December 14, 1916 as it was not safe to proceed further.

Arrived at Plymouth, England on December 28, 1916 after 65 days at sea, with the troops disembarking at 1.30pm at Devonport and detrained to the station at Tidworth and marched in to Perham Downs the following day for further training for the front at the Aust. Details Camp. Lieutenant marched out of Nos 6 & 7 camps at Perham Downs on 3 April, 1917.

Lieutenant proceeded from the UK Depots at Tidworth to France on 13 April, 1917 arriving at the Aust General Base Depot in Etaples on April 16 and marched out to report for duty with the 1st Anzac Entrenching Battalion on 23 April. This Battalion was an advanced section of the Base Depot that organised works near the lines and through duties, usually of ten days duration, would accustom the reinforcements to war conditions before being assigned to a company in the field.

On 21 September, 1917 left for the 1st Tunnelling Company in the field and taken on strength the same day.

Base Records replied to a letter from Solicitors Messrs Tatchell, Dunlop, Smalley and Balmer of Williamson Street, Bendigo dated 14 December, 1917 concerning the late 2nd Lieutenant R.J.S. Finlayson, 1st Tunnelling Company stating that all matters in connection with pay will be dealt with by the District Paymaster, Victoria Barracks, St Kilda Road Melbourne on receipt from the Staff Paymaster, London of deceased's pay-book and Cash Statement.

It was suggested further communications on this subject be addressed to the first named Officer - Lieutenant Duncan Bertram Corfe, 1st Tunnelling Company, abroad.

He went sick on 16 December, 1917 to the 15th Aust Field Ambulance with Laryngitis progressing to the 1st Casualty Clearing Station then transferred to the 2nd C.C.S. on December 20. Was moved to the Red Cross Duchess of Westminster Hospital at Le Touquet on December 23 until transferred to the 8th Michelham Convalescent Home on 8 January, 1918.

Blue Chevrons were issued to wear on his uniform for serving twelve months abroad.

Marched out on 5 February, 1918 to Havre classed "A" fit arriving to the 4th Army then re-joined his unit the next day. On 1 March was temporarily detached to the 167 Aust. Troops Coy.

He was recommended for the Military Cross for his work on 29 September, 1918 during the Hindenburg Line Offensive.

His citation was written on 3 October, 1918:

Lt Duncan Bertram Corfe 29 September, 1918 Citation for Military Cross

For conspicuous gallantry and untiring devotion to duty. On 29th September, 1918, during the operations against the Hindenburg line, near Bellicourt, he was engaged in erecting a water point immediately in the rear of the jumping-off line. He worked for over twenty-hours on end under heavy shell fire and successfully completed the work. The water point so erected was of great value to the troops engaged in the operation.

On the 29th and 30th of September, 1918, elements of the 1st and 2nd Australian Tunnelling Companies, supporting the Infantry attack on the Hindenberg Line at Bellicourt and Bony, charged with the usual Engineer tasks of clearing enemy mines and booby traps from roads and dugouts following the attacking Infantry, clearing and maintaining the tactical roads, clearing wells and setting up water points. When the attack stalled and became disorganized, the Sappers continued with their assigned tasks, assisted to re-organise the line, captured prisoners, carried messages for their own and other units, organized a party of American Infantry, helped feed an artillery battery with ammunition, assisted and carried wounded, all being achieved under heavy shell and machine gun fire and while their own sections suffered 50 and 75% casualties

The following is an account taken from *My Story of the Great War* written by Captain O.H. Woodward, MC+2bars:

At 5 a.m. on the 29th September, I arrived at Benjamin Post with 82 men of No.4 Section and 65 men of the 102nd "B" Company U.S. Engineers. The attack was launched at 5.50 a.m. and shortly after we commenced work on repairs to the road. When we approached Quennet Copse and Guennemont Farm we were held up by machine gun fire, owing to the failure of the Americans to "mop up" these positions. Before we realised what had happened, we lost one officer and one sapper killed and twenty others wounded. At 9 a.m. I received an order from the C.R.E. Australian Corps to report immediately on the condition of the road leading to Hargicourt, and then as far as possible toward Bellicourt. I took Sapper Mooney with me and left the Section with instructions to proceed with the repairs to the road to Bony as early as possible. We had a particularly exciting task inspecting these forward roads since they were subjected to heavy artillery and machine gun fire. It was not until 6 p.m. that I completed the inspection and again returned to Benjamin Post.

The Unit War Diary records:

Cartigny 62c P.2.J.4.4

September	28:	Much rain – Road work being proceeded with.
September	29:	Fine – misty morning, Offensive started. Sections carry on in accordance with instructions Appendices 2 & 8. Lt Johnson severely wounded, 18 Sappers wounded. 1 Sapper died of wounds.
September	30:	Wet & cold. Sections carrying on Road work as above. Lt Johnson died of wounds. 1 Sapper wounded. Lt Thomson left for English leave.

It is a matter of history that five of the Tunnellers who embarked on *Anchises* were transferred to the 5th Pioneer Battalion. All were from South Australia. 7614 Spr James Thomas Dixey and 7622 Spr William Edward May were killed in action on 29 September, as were 7280 Spr Francis William McDonell, originally a Tunneller transferred to the 3rd Pioneer Battalion, and 1395 Spr Thomas Arthur Vernon of 2ATC.

During the action on the Hindenberg Line on 29/30 September 1918, the 5th Pioneers lost 3 officers and 61 other ranks; 105th Regt lost 2 officers and 46 other ranks; 1st Aust. Tunnelling Coy lost 1 Officer and 2 other ranks and the 2nd Aust. Tunnelling Coy lost 1 other rank. The Australian Tunnelling Companies were awarded 10 Military Crosses, 2 Distinguished Conduct Medals and 12 Military Medals for their support of the Infantry attack that day.

This was submitted on 4 October, 1918 and passed on 31 October, 1918.

He was still detached to the Aust Troops Company when Peace was declared.

The Tunnelling Companies remained on the front as part of the Army of Occupation assisting with rehabilitation of their districts by clearing roads and bridges of booby traps and delayed action mines left by the enemy.

On 7 December, 1918 Lieut. Corfe was awarded the Military Cross.

He re-joined his unit from the 238th Aust Troops Company on 7 March, 1919 and the following day official notification of the Military Cross was announced.

This news was shared in the following:

Referee (Sydney) Wednesday March 12, 1919:

PERSONAL

Lieutenant D.B. Corfe, the Sydney University three-quarter back, who played for New South Wales against Queensland about 18 years ago, has been awarded the Military Cross on active service with the Australians.

Maitland Daily Mercury Monday March 24, 1919:

WINGHAM AND OTHER NOTES

(By 'THE WANDERER')

Amongst the Military Cross winners in the big war was D.B. Corfe, who was with Messrs Smith and Timms, at Wingham, in the early days of railway construction. He was also employed by the Government, and will be remembered by many hereabouts as a genial chap, who made hosts of friends.

On 2 April, 1919 was granted leave to England for the completion of Investiture disembarking at Folkstone the next day.

His father wrote to Base Records on 10 April, 1919 from Summer, N.Z. asking if they could supply him a copy of the official notice of the decoration awarded to his son who left with the unit of the Aust. Light Horse and was invalided from Gallipoli and afterwards was attached to the 1st Australian Tunnellers. At the time of receiving his decoration he was with a company of the English Royal Engineers, he wrote.



Base Records replied on 24 April, 1919 acknowledging his letter but had no advice to date that his son had been awarded a Military Cross. Should such information come to hand he would be officially notified. If he required any further communication forwarded to the undermentioned address instead of C/o C.R. Corfe, Bank N.S.W. Wanganui kindly advise their office in order that records may be amended accordingly.

Was granted Non-Military Employment (NME) from 28 April, 1919 with pay and subsistence with Allenos, Fairweather & Ranger of 18 Browton Street, Holborn until 28 June, 1919. On expiration of NME marched out to the Deputy Assistant Adjutant General's Office, London for disposal on June 30 which was to the No. 2 Group at Sutton Veny to await his voyage home.

Base Records had much pleasure in forwarding a copy of the extract to his father from the Second Supplement No. 31219 to the *London Gazette* dated 8 March, 1919 relating to the conspicuous services rendered by this member of the A.I.F.

AWARDED THE MILITARY CROSS

HIS MAJESTY THE KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the above award to the undermentioned in recognition of gallantry and devotion to duty in the field. The acts of gallantry for which the decoration has been awarded will be announced in the *London Gazette* as early as practicable.

Lieutenant DUNCAN BERTRAM CORFE

The above has been promulgated in *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* No. 75 dated 17th June, 1919.

After demobilisation Lieutenant Corfe embarked for Australia from Liverpool, England on 9 August, 1919 on board H.T. *Ceramic* and was struck off strength.

Base Records advised his father on 29 August he was returning home.

His father wrote again on 15 August, 1919 to Base Records thanking them for their reply and may he ask to advise him as early information as possible with reference to the date of his son leaving England and the name of the ship in which he sailed.

Base Records wrote to his father at 20 Head Street, Summer, Christchurch, N.Z. on 9 September, 1919 enclosing a Commission form covering the appointment of his son as temporary 2nd Lieutenant in the regular forces of the British Army for retention against the time of his return from active service. This referred to his first appointment to Commission and not to his present rank. His father receipted delivery of the Commission Letter on 22 September, 1919.

The transport docked in Sydney on 3 October, 1919 with news of their arrival reported in the:

Sydney Morning Herald Saturday October 4, 1919:

SOLDIERS AND WIVES – BY THE CERAMIC

A warm welcome was given to the soldiers who arrived by the Ceramic yesterday. Many of the men were accompanied by their wives. The New South Wales contingent consisted of 367 men, 150 wives and dependents and 49 children.

Among the decorated soldiers were Lieutenant D.B. Corfe (M.C.)

Article abridged

His appointment was terminated in Sydney (2nd M.D.) on 2 December, 1919.

On the 4 February, 1920 Base Records forwarded with much pleasure to the ex-soldier, care of his father's address in Christchurch a copy of the extract from the Second Supplement No. 31583 to the *London Gazette* dated 4 October, 1919 relating to the conspicuous services rendered by him whilst serving with the Aust Imperial Force.

AWARDED THE MILITARY CROSS

With reference to the award conferred and announced in the *London Gazette* dated 8th March, 1919 the following statement of service for which the decoration was conferred:

Lieutenant DUNCAN BERTRAM CORFE

For conspicuous gallantry and untiring devotion to duty. On 29th September, 1918, during the operations against the Hindenburg line, near Bellicourt, he was engaged in erecting a water point immediately in the rear of the jumping-off line. He worked for over twenty-hours on end under heavy shell fire and successfully completed the work. The water point so erected was of great value to the troops engaged in the operation.

The above had been promulgated in *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* No. 10 dated 29 January, 1920.

To accompany the Military Cross, Lieutenant Duncan Bertram Corfe, 2nd Field Engineers / 1st Tunnelling Company was also issued to wear the 1914/15 Star (3882) British War Medal (5916) and the Victory Medal (5784) for serving his country.

He was employed as an engineer with the Copmanhurst Shire Council until 1922 when the following was reported in the:

Daily Examiner Thursday November 9, 1922:

PRESIDENT'S PREROGATIVE – INSTRUCTIONS TO AN ENGINEER – COPMANHURST SHIRE TROUBLE

MR D.B. CORFE RESIGNS

"If the president cares to do the duties of the engineer I don't care. He can please himself." This remark, made by Mr D.B. Corfe, engineer to the Copmanhurst Shire, at the meeting of that body yesterday, practically explains the reason for his resignation.

Mr Corfe reported that written instructions were received from him from the president to replace all decking planks, except 17, on the Bayldon's Creek bridge. The report went on to state: "As this would have entailed an additional expenditure of approximately £25 and all planking not replaced would last from three to five years, many indeed being equal to new, I refused to carry out his instructions. The president might explain on whose advice these instructions were issued."

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Continues

When this passage was read the president, Cr. J.N. Short, told the council there must be some misunderstanding. He had made an inspection and was informed that some of the planks were not fit to be nailed down. He had understood that it was the view of the council that new planks were to be used and that the old planks would be made use of elsewhere. The engineer had written asking for his instruction in the matter.

Mr Corfe: It is usual to get the advice of the engineer—not go to his carpenter.

Cr Short: I did not go to the carpenter. I inspected them myself.

Mr Corfe: It amounts to asking the council to spend £25; an expenditure absolutely unwarranted.

When the engineer's resignation was before the council at a later stage Cr. Boorman expressed keen regret that the engineer had decided to resign. He thought there was no better officer in the State. Mr Corfe denied himself much that the shire might be saved expense. In ability Mr Corfe almost stood out on his own.

Cr. Amos stated that at a meeting at Myrtle Creek a few nights ago ratepayers who had heard Mr Corfe intended to resign expressed regret that the officer was leaving. They considered the shire, in Mr Corfe and his predecessor, had been fortunate in having two of the best engineers in the State.

Almost a year later he took an appointment with the Harwood Shire Council which was announced in the:

Daily Examiner Tuesday September 18, 1923:

PERSONAL

Mr D.B. Corfe, late engineer of Copmanhurst Shire, has been appointed to the Harwood Shire.

He was listed in the Register of Tunnelling Company Officers – Roll of Honour – Australian Engineers in 1925 as Corfe, D.B. Lieut. 1 Coy, Shire Engineer, Maclean N.S.W. Also the Topographical Index for New South Wales: Corfe, D.B.

In 1928 his name in directories was the shire engineer at Harwood, NSW and resided at Styles Hotel, Maclean in 1930 working as a shire engineer.

By 1936 was at Maclean Hotel with the occupation of civil engineer.

News of his retirement was published in the:

Daily Examiner Friday February 10, 1939:

RETIRING – HARWOOD SHIRE ENGINEER – DEPARTURE OF MR D.B. CORFE – FIFTEEN YEARS OF SERVICE

MACLEAN, Thursday.

At the conclusion of the business of the meeting of the Harwood Shire Council to-day, opportunity was taken by the president, Cr J. Wiblen, and members to make a presentation to the shire engineer, Mr D.B. Corfe, who, after 15 years of service to the council, resigned his position.

He had commenced work with the council on November 12, 1923. Mr Corfe had proved himself a most efficient and courteous officer, was straightforward and had at all times carried out all that he was asked to do. There were also occasion when Mr Corfe had been called out at all hours of the night to attend to road matters to safeguard the public, and the engineer himself had taken a pick and shovel to rectify matters and had placed lanterns in position. Such things showed that he was a man with interests of the shire and the travelling public at heart. He was very sorry that the time had arrive for him to take his departure and he wished him good health and prosperity in his retirement.

Cr. N.J. Cameron said his associations with the engineer were longer than those of any member of the council, as he and Mr Corfe had both joined the Harwood shire about the same time. One had only to look round the shire to see what improvements had been made since that time. Apart from the main and other road improvements, road of access had been provided where previously, it was impossible to travel. Mr Corfe, he said, had made good since coming to the Harwood shire and the shire to-day, taking everything into consideration, compared favourably with any other shire.

Cr Taylor had always found Mr Corfe to be a real good fellow, and he appreciated the way he had often explained matters to him, giving him a good insight into the workings of the shire.

Contd.

Continues

Cr. Archer said Mr Corfe had done a lot of good work for the shire and had done it well. Fifteen years was a long time for an engineer to remain with one council, and this in itself sowed that Mr Corfe must have done his work satisfactorily.

MR CORFE'S RESPONSE

In responding, Mr Corfe said he wished to thank the members sincerely for the presentation and for their many kind references. After 15 years, he stated, one felt it keenly, pulling up one's roots and starting elsewhere. Before joining the Harwood shire, he generally looked round, after three years, for another job, but on coming to the Lower Clarence, he never felt like wandering.

This district was one of the finest in New South Wales, and one could not find a better district anywhere in which to settle. Regarding the working of the shire, he referred to his first job on coming here, which was the construction of the Mororo ferry. He had favored a motor-powered ferry for this service, but owing to lack of funds, a hand power ferry was installed. With reference to other work, he said no one knew the work of an engineer. In the training of an engineer, only one thing was lacking and that was that they did not train them to have skins like a rhinoceros.

On Saturday afternoon last the shire employees present Mr Corfe with a fine travelling rug

News of his successor was announced in the:

Daily Examiner Tuesday May 2, 1939:

PERSONAL

Mr S.G. Calderwood, the recently appointed engineer to Harwood shire, in succession to Mr D.B. Corfe, arrived from Sydney yesterday and has commenced duties.

In 1943 the Electoral Roll shows him at 107 Wycombe Road, Neutral Bay as a civil engineer. He also made return visit to Maclean and reported in the:

Daily Examiner Tuesday June 29, 1943:

PERSONAL

Mr D.B. Corfe, who for many years filled the position of engineer to the Harwood shire, is visiting Maclean.

His letters to the editor were published in the:

Sydney Morning Herald Wednesday November 17, 1948:

VEGETABLE PRICES

Sir, —The "Herald's" leading article of November 15 dealing with the high price of vegetables omitted one important factor, viz., the 40-hour week.

When Mr McGirr thrust the 40-hour week on to the people it was similar to the throwing of a stone into a pool of water; it set up a circle of waves extending in every direction. So industry has been upset in every direction and now must be readjusted in all its branched.

The vegetable grower no longer wants to work on Saturdays, Sundays and on proclaimed holidays. He no longer wishes to rise before daylight and cart his vegetable (or cut flowers) to market or to railhead and then return to hoe and water his garden until dusk.

If he employs labour, the labourer expects to be paid at increased rate for time worked over the 40 hours and for all holidays. He can now find easier work, shorter hours, more leisure, and higher pay in secondary industries.

We may therefore expect high prices for vegetables and also the shortage to continue unless the man on 40-hour week grows his own vegetables in his increased leisure hours.

The Government evidently either did not foresee all the complications that must arise from the 40-hour week, or, if they did, made no plans to meet them.

This is now shown by their own difficulty in deciding how to meet additional cost and additional man-power required to run Governmental services such as transport and water supply.

D.B. CORFE

Sun (Sydney) Monday October 16, 1950:

MORE MEANS LESS

Is it not rather superficial to complain about increased dividends by many public companies? True, many firms give shareholders more “pieces of paper” (called pound notes) than formerly; but these give shareholders no greater share of necessities of life nor greater purchasing power than they received before increased wages and shorter hours were introduced.

It does not necessarily mean, either, that the company gives shareholders a greater share of the firm's products, because the cost of the product has risen so much. We must always take into account that the present £ is merely a piece of paper and its only value is, and always has been what it will purchase. —

D.B. CORFE, Neutral Bay.

Duncan Bertram Corfe passed away on 25 August, 1952 aged 76 years. Announcement and arrangements were published in the:

Sydney Morning Herald Tuesday August 26, 1952:

DEATHS

CORFE, Duncan Bertram—August 25, 1952, at Neutral Bay, aged 76 years.

FUNERALS

CORFE—The Funeral of the late DUNCAN BERTRAM CORFE will leave our Funeral Home, corner Miller and Falcon Streets, North Sydney, This Tuesday at 1.30 p.m. for Northern Suburbs Crematorium

WOOD COFFILL LIMITED

Cremation took place in Northern Suburbs Crematorium, Sydney.

Notice in connection with his Estate was placed in the:

Daily Examiner Thursday September 11, 1952:

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES, Probate Jurisdiction—IN THE WILL of DUNCAN BERTRAM CORFE, late of Neutral Bay, in the State of New South Wales, Gentleman, deceased. APPLICATION will be made after fourteen days from the publication hereof that probate of the last Will and Testament dated the twenty-sixth day of January, 1945 of the abovenamed deceased may be granted to PERMANENT TRUSTEE COMPANY OF NEW SOUTH WALES LIMITED THE SOLE Executor named in the said Will and all notices may be served at the undermentioned address. All creditors in the estate of the deceased are hereby required to send in particulars of their claims to the undersigned. J.R. COEN, F.B. LITTE & COEN, Proctors for the Executor, 2-12- Carrington Street, SYDNEY.

An Obituary and Remembrance were published in the:

Daily Examiner Friday September 19, 1952:

OBITUARY – D.B. CORFE

MACLEAN, Thurs—The death occurred in Sydney of D.B. Corfe, who was Harwood shire engineers from 1927 until 1939. He was a Sydney University graduate, a contemporary of Col. M.F. Bruxner, and was a railway construction engineer before coming to Maclean. He served in World War 1. His father was headmaster of Toowoomba Grammar School, and later headmaster of Christ College, Christchurch (New Zealand).

His name is commemorated on the Toowoomba Grammar School's Honour Board for Bravery Deeds and their Honour Board of students who served in the Great War.

Daily Examiner Monday December 22, 1952:

ABOUT PEOPLE

Members of the Harwood Shire Council office and field staffs stood in silence in memory of a former shire engineer at a Christmas get-together. The engineer was Mr D.B. Corfe, who died in Sydney. He had been engineer at Harwood for 15 years.

He is commemorated on the Toowoomba Grammar School WW1 Bravery Deeds and the Toowoomba Grammar School WW1 Honour Board.



Toowoomba Grammar School's Honour Boards – WWI
Photos sourced from Qld War Memorial Register website

He is commemorated on the Sydney University Beyond1914 Book of Remembrance -

<https://heuristplus.sydney.edu.au/>

Duncan Bertram Corfe:

M.C., B.E. : Lieutenant, 6th A.L.H. Regt., 2nd Field Coy. Engineers and 1st Australian Tunnelling Coy., A.I.F., Gallipoli and France. Enlisting 13th November, 1914, in 6th A.L.H. Regt. and sailing 19th December, was commissioned 16th July, 1915, and transferred to 2nd Field Coy., Engineers, on 31st. Served at Gallipoli until invalided to hospital, being promoted lieutenant 1st December and invalided to Australia 3rd January, 1916. Re-embarking 25th October with 5th Reinforcements Tunnelling Coys., joined 1st Coy. at Ypres, where gassed, but served until demobilisation. Awarded M.C. 17th August, 1918, and Mentioned in Despatches. Early education at Toowoomba Grammar School.

His two brothers also served.

ARTHUR CECIL CORFE D.S.O. 2 Bars
South African Defence Force / Lieutenant-Colonel Royal West Kent Regiment

Born Christchurch, New Zealand on 5 December 1878 and educated at Christ's College. He became a bank officer at New South Wales Bank, Christchurch.

Arthur was active in most athletic sports and was a member of the Australian rugby team that played against England during their 1899 tour.



An Australian rugby international and career army officer. His one rugby Test was against the British Isles in 1899, the first time a representative Australian team played and he was involved in the Second Test in Brisbane. He had earlier played in the Queensland team which defeated the tourists. He fought in the Anglo/Boer War and WWI and was awarded the DSO with two bars for his bravery and leadership on the battlefield. He achieved the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Photo of 1899 Queensland team (back row 2nd from right)
sourced from: www.findagrave.com/
added by Tim Reynolds

His debut game was against Great Britain, at Brisbane, on 22 July 1899 during the 1899 British Lions tour to Australia. Three weeks earlier he had made a state appearance for Queensland against those same tourists.

Two of Arthur's four other brothers were also exceptional rugby players; Anstey (TGS 1890-94) played in representative teams, whilst Duncan (TGS 1890-99) played for New South Wales against Queensland in 1901 when he was a student at Sydney University.

Corfe served 16 months as a Private with the Queensland Mounted Infantry (3rd Queensland Contingent) in the Boer War in South Africa.

He served in the Boer War in South Africa leaving as Captain and Adjutant of 10th Contingent N.Z. sailing on *Norfolk* on 19 April 1902 remained there after the war, enlisting just 4 days prior to embarkation.

At one time he was ADC to the great South African, General Smuts.

In the First World War he served in the Royal West Kent Regiment, Commanding the 11th Battalion in 1916, 1917. and 1918, and the 10th Battalion in 1918 until captured by Germans in May, 1918 and returned to England about March, 1919. He was wounded twice and awarded the DSO and two Bars. After the war he received the Croix de Guerre in December 1919.

He received the Distinguished Service Order in the 1917 Birthday Honours, Gazetted 4 June 1917, for service as a major with the South African Defence Force, while commanding the Royal West Kent Regiment.

He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in 1917.

The citation for the first bar to his

DSO in the Gazette of 9 January 1918: "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when in command of his battalion. By the prompt and skilful measures which he took on encountering serious opposition, he was able to attain his objective, and by his personal example and cheerfulness the moral of his men was maintained during a very trying period and under most adverse weather conditions."

(Cited from: <http://www.militarian.com/threads/arthur-corfe-rugby-player.8112/>)

This action near Zandvoorde during the Third Battle of Ypres on 20 September 1917 is described by Sapper Albert Martin, 41st Signal Company, Royal Engineers:

"The Hants could get no further. They had lost all their officers and a great many men. Colonel Corfe of the Kents tried to rally the men but was soon hit by a bullet in the shoulder, but he held on until the post had been outflanked. Then he collapsed."

The citation for his second bar was in the Gazette of 19 March 1918: "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when in command of his battalion during an attack. The assaulting troops in front were checked by heavy rifle fire from a strong point. He at once went forward, and by his inspiring presence and personal leadership reduced the strong point and killed the occupants. He was severely wounded, but continued to advance until exhausted from loss of blood. His splendid example was of the highest value at a critical moment."

(Cited from: <http://www.militarian.com/threads/arthur-corfe-rugby-player.8112/>)



Private Arthur Cecil Corfe
The Queenslander, 03 March 1900



Photo sourced from:
<https://classicwallabies.com.au/>

Mentioned in the:

Brisbane Courier Wednesday April 2, 1919:

PERSONAL NOTES

When Lieut.-Colonel A.C. Corfe, D.S.O., Royal West Kent Regiment, reached Leith on repatriation from Germany, he had in his possession a bag containing 86,000 German marks (£1800), and was loudly cheered by his fellow passengers as he passed down the gangway. Colonel Corfe was captured by the Germans in May, 1918, and was sent with 600 other British officers to the prison camp at Grandenz in West Prussia. The Germans robbed the British officers of their money when they captured them, but after the Armistice the officers made a determined attempt to get it restored, and the result was the 86,000 marks of which Colonel Corfe became custodian. Colonel Corfe has two bars to his D.S.O.

He returned to service following his injury and he was attached to the South Wales Borderers. He remained in the reserves until 1933 when he reached the retirement age of 55.

Brigadier-General Arthur Cecil Corfe DSO was a member of the League of Nations commission for the repatriation of Greeks & Bulgarians.

Arthur Cecil Corfe died in London on 30 January, 1949 aged 70 years and leaving his widow, Violet Georgina Corfe, to mourn.

He was buried at Brookwood Cemetery, Woking Borough, Surrey, England.

Probate:

CORFE Arthur Cecil of 9 Chalcot-Square London N.W.1 died 30 January 1949 Probate London 4 October to Violet Georgina Corfe widow. Effects £2336 7s. 10d.

Headstone of Arthur Cecil Corfe
Photo sourced from www.findagrave.com/
added by Tim Reynolds



ANSTRUTHER JOHN CORFE **Captain – Australian Army Medical Corps**

Born 3 January 1876 in New Zealand and received further education at Toowoomba Grammar School and at the Sydney University for medical studies. Trained in Hong Kong returning to practice at Peak Hill, NSW and then came to Glen Innes with house and surgery at Wentworth and Macquarie Streets.

Enlisted for service aged 40 years on 6 November, 1916 with the Aust Army Medical Corps leaving his wife Bertha Campbell Corfe of Strathbogie Station, Emmaville, via Deepwater, NSW and embarked from Brisbane on 17 November, 1916 on HMAT A55 *Kyarra*.

Served as medical officer at Tidworth, Lark Hill and Harefield hospitals, England and No. 2 Aust General Hospital, Boulogne, France, No. 2 Aust Casualty Clearing Station, Steenwerck, Belgium then with the 44th British Casualty Clearing Station at Poperinghe, Belgium and the 56th Hospital at La Bahaine.

Image sourced from Sydney University Beyond1914 Book of Remembrance



Returned to Australia on 10 April, 1919.

He died in 1942 at Glen Innes aged 66 years and was buried within Inverell Cemetery, NSW.



Photo sourced from www.findagrave.com/
added by TLH

He is commemorated on the Sydney University Beyond1914 Book of Remembrance -

<https://heuristplus.sydney.edu.au/>

M.B., Ch.M. : Captain, A.A.M.C., A.I.F., England and France. Enlisting and sailing in November, 1916, was at Tidworth, Lark Hill and Harefield Hospitals and No. 2 Australian General Hospital, Boulogne. Then, joining 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station, Steenwerck, served as member of special surgical team, working at 44th (British) C.C.S., Poperinghe and 56th, La Bohaine, and until demobilisation. Early education at Christ's College, Christchurch, New Zealand, Brentwood (England) and Toowoomba Grammar Schools. Later at St. Paul's College.