



# CHINESE ANZACS

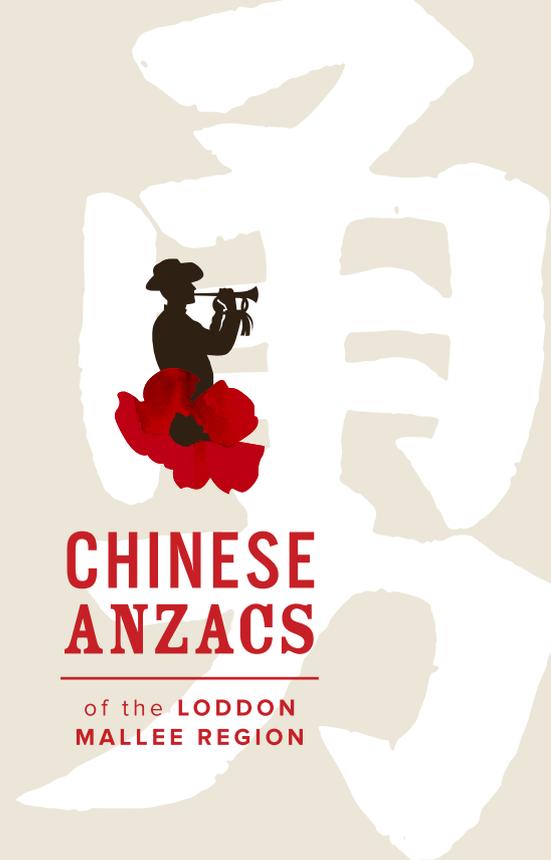
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of the LODDON  
MALLEE REGION





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# CHINESE ANZACS

of the **LODDON MALLEE REGION**

# Introduction

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As the centenary of the Great War comes to a close we hope to provide with this publication a history of service and sacrifices of Australians of Chinese descent from our region who enlisted in the First World War. Men and women of Chinese descent living in post-Federation Australia were often subject to both legal and informal discrimination. This even extended to those who wished to serve their country in the armed forces. According to a 1909 amendment to the Defence Act, those ‘not substantially of European origin or descent’ were to be ‘exempt’ (i.e. barred) from combat duties (but could be enlisted ‘for duties of a non-combatant nature.’) This was to be determined by the ‘medical authorities’ who decided on the fitness of recruits during the enlistment process.<sup>1</sup> In 1917 these official restriction were eased to allow recruitment of those who had a least one parent of European origin. The interpretation of these rules in practice, though, seems to have been quite subjective, depending on the prejudices or pragmatism, of the individual recruiters and officials. Many young men of Chinese descent in the Loddon Mallee must have had experiences similar to that of Ballarat’s Oscar Sing, who was told by the Recruiting Sergeant: ‘We don’t want any yellow Chows fighting for us’.<sup>2</sup> Sing walked away furious and never attempted to enlist again. It is perhaps telling that the number of soldiers of Chinese parentage or descent from Bendigo in WWII, when such racial restrictions had been scrapped for military service, was much larger than in the previous conflict, despite the fact that the Chinese community was much smaller at that stage.

This project of chronicling the lives and service of WWI soldiers of Chinese descent originally focused on

the regional centre of Bendigo, but has come also to embrace the surrounding country towns of the central Victorian goldfields and the wider Loddon-Mallee region. Soldiers whose life stories and family histories intersected with the old gold towns of Rushworth, St Arnaud, Avoca, Maryborough and Castlemaine, as well as river settlements such as Kerang, Echuca, and Mildura, also feature here. Such groupings will always be arbitrary to some extent. The life stories of many of the individuals covering in this book do not fit snugly into any regional or demographic category. Due to these regional constraints on the size of the project I have not covered the quite substantial number of servicemen whose Chinese ancestors were mostly resident at that other great goldfields city Ballarat (and in nearby towns such as Creswick).

Hostilities between Germany and Great Britain (and her empire, of which Australia was a part) began on 4 August 1914. Between then and the armistice of 11 November 1918 416,809 Australian men enlisted, of whom more than 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed, or taken prisoner. This was a significant contribution, and a significant human toll, especially for a nation of then five million people. What follows below are biographical sketches of some second and third generation Australians of Chinese descent who were amongst the almost half a million of their countrymen who decided to answer the call of King and Country and serve in active combat in one of the bloodiest wars ever fought. They did this in spite of the often unfair and discriminatory treatment that they received because of their racial background. Lest we forget.

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<sup>1</sup> Alastair Kennedy, *Chinese ANZACS*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Chinese ANZACS*, p.20.



▲ A Chinese youth in an unidentified military style uniform 1875-1891 by N. White, Sandhurst (Bendigo). Collection Dennis O'Hoy.



▲ Trainee soldier: Roy "John" Lougoon, in his cadet's uniform, in the garden at his family home in Myer's Flat, near Eaglehawk. (Collection Golden Dragon Museum).

## Chinese-Australians and the Military before the Great War

Pre-federation Australia was defended by various rifle brigades, militias, and light horse units. Some Australians of Chinese background are known to have joined such localised colonial era military groups, examples being Herbert Kong Meng of Euroa and Coto of Gippsland. Evidence from the Loddon Mallee region is much thinner on the ground. A photographic print in the collection of Dennis O'Hoy which was taken c.1880 in the studio N. White of Sandhurst (Bendigo) shows a lad of Chinese appearance in an unidentified military style uniform. Whether he actually had any associations with the colonial military as a cadet or was simply the member of a well dressed band (military or civilian) is unknown, at the moment, as his identity.<sup>3</sup>

After the implementations of the overhaul in Australia's defense structure in 1909 many second and third generation descendants of Chinese migrants were inculcated into the world of the cadets during their school years. (As the testimony of the likes of Sam Tong Way of Ballarat makes clear, though, this was not true of all Australian children of a non-European background – he was intentionally excluded from military training at the school that he attended). Like countless others of their comrades these young men, often still teenagers (and some underage), would list these years of cadet training under previous military experience on their Great War enlistment forms.

Older members of the community often joined rifle clubs, which were also quasi-military organisations set up to aid the home defense of the new Australian commonwealth. Several soldiers whose stories are told in this book were frequent competitors in shooting competitions in the years before the war. The Louey Lock family of Bendigo, for example, were very

3 The photographer White was active in Bendigo from 1875 to 1891, and the style and format of the card mount in the author's opinion place the image in the earlier part of that date range. A similar photo of an adult individual in the same uniform by the same photographer, and also without identifying information, can be found in the collection of the State Library of Victoria, Accession no(s) H2005.34/2827. Digitised version available at: <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/73178>



THE EAGLEHAWK RIFLE CLUB TEAM, WINNERS OF THE ANDREW SHIELD.  
Back Row—Messrs. H. Kirkwood, P. Ford, W. Lock, R. Suggett, and R. Ellis.  
Front Row—Messrs. P. Baldock, T. Rogers, H. Lock, J. H. Stewart (captain),  
J. Stewart, and T. Widdy.  
(Photo by A. G. Levy.)

▲ Brothers William (centre, back row) and Harry Lock (seated, third from left) were prominent in the world of the pre-war rifle clubs. Here they are pictured in a newspaper photograph with fellow Eaglehawk Rifle Clubs members in August 1914. Early enlistees in the war effort are featured on the same page of the Bendigonian. Although they were prominent figures in the quasi-military world of the rifle clubs, neither saw active service in the coming war – it is unknown if like many others of Chinese background they were rejected at the recruiting office for not being 'substantially European'. Harry's 18 year old son John enlisted in 1916. (State Library of Victoria)

# The Butler / Ah Kew

## 亞九 Family

### Frederick William Ah Kew / Tucker

(1882-1950)

Frederick Ah Kew was born at Echuca in 1882. His parents Ah Kew (亞九) and Elizabeth Butler were married at Castlemaine in 1876, and it was there that they had started a family in the 1870s. The pronunciation “Ah Kew” that Fred’s father gave for the characters with which he signed his name is in accordance with the Sei Yap dialect of Cantonese. This indicates that he had originated from one of the four counties of that region (Toi Shan, Yan Ping, San Wui, and Hoi Ping) – however his exact place of origin, and his Chinese clan name, are now unknown.

The Ah Kew family encountered a period of great hardship in the 1880s. Ah Kew disappeared from the scene while mother Eliza went through a period of illness. The family was then living in poverty in Shinbone Alley, a poor part of Echuca near the wharves and the banks of the Murray in the area now known as the Banyule Forest. At this time the younger children in the family were removed and sent to industrial schools and into foster care. Young Frederick was adopted by the Tucker family of Tyrrell Creek, a farming district near Dumosa and north of Wycheproof. From 1903 to 1913 Frederick is listed in the electoral roles as a farmer at Tyrell Creek. In 1908 he married Mary Hooper. Although he had relocated with his wife to Ballarat by 1914 his name later appeared amongst a regularly published list of volunteers from the Wycheproof Shire who had enlisted in the Great War.

Tucker joined up at the Ballarat recruitment office on 26 June 1916.<sup>4</sup> He arrived in France as part of reinforcements for the 8th Battalion AIF on 10 February 1917. Fred was wounded in action at Belgium on 20 September 1917, receiving a gun shot wound to the knee.



▲ Frederick William Tucker (born Ah Kew). Brother of George Butler (Ah Kew), and uncle of Arthur Butler, he had been raised by the Tucker family of Tyrrell Creek. (Courtesy of Paula Herlihy).



▲ Fred Tucker with son Max, Max’s fiancée Joyce Day, and Mary Tucker, at Ballarat, c.1945. (Courtesy of Paula Herlihy)

4 NAA: B2455, TUCKER FREDERICK WILLIAM

It was on this date that the Menin Road action began during the third Battle of Ypres, an offensive for which the 8th Battalion was awarded battle honours.<sup>5</sup>

Tucker's wound saw him sent off to hospital in England, and then back home to Australia in March, 1918. Private Frederick Tucker was discharged as medically unfit on 26 June 1918.

Tucker enlisted again during the Second World War in 1941 at the age of 59. He was assigned to guard duty on the home front rather than overseas service, including time at Myrtleford and at the army camp at Bonegilla near Albury which also housed Italian prisoners of war from 1944. In his sixties and with some health issues this second stint of service evidently took its toll on Tucker. Fred was discharged as medically unfit due to "constitutional inadequacy (age change)" and "senile deafness" on 25 May 1944.

During this period his son Max was also serving in the military, though also on Australian soil.

Frederick William Tucker passed away in 1950, and was survived by his wife Mary and adult family.

## Arthur Harold Butler (Ah Kew)

(1897-1959)

Arthur Butler was born at White Hills in 1897, his parents being George (b.1870) and Lydia Butler (nee Wallace). Arthur's paternal grandparents were Chinese born George Ah Kew (亞九) and his English born wife Elizabeth Butler – Arthur's father was the elder brother of fellow Great War serviceman Frederick William Tucker, who had been adopted out at a young age during a period of family crisis (see above). In the years afterwards most of Elizabeth's children would end up using their mother's surname regardless of who their father was and whether or not they had been born in wedlock. This included George Ah Kew Jr. and his descendents.

Around 1890 Elizabeth and some of her children moved from Echuca to Bendigo, by which stage



▲ Arthur Harold Butler (Ah Kew)  
(Courtesy of Margot Butler)



▲ Arthur Butler aged 14  
(Courtesy of Margot Butler)

5 <https://www.awm.gov.au/unit/U51448/> [accessed 22/12/2015]

6 'Proposed Tobacco Plantation', Bendigo Advertiser, 13 December 1892, p.2.



▲ | Arthur (at front). About this picture his son later recounted that “He was...waiting to go out on manoeuvres. The photograph was taken in Charleroi, Belgium during the winter of 1917.” (Courtesy Margot Butler)

they were all known by the name Butler. George Jr. and older half-brother Joseph selected land at Grassy Flat in 1892, on which they announced plans to grow tobacco.<sup>6</sup> Their mother Elizabeth Butler / Ah Kew lived nearby.

Young Arthur spent his early years on the family property in Strickland Road, where the family experienced a number of tragedies. Arthur’s infant brother George Joseph died in 1898, and his mother and her infant daughter Lydia Maud both passed away in early 1900. All are buried at White Hills Cemetery. In the wake of this loss George Butler later shifted north to Diggora and then Bamawm, remarrying and fathering a family with his second wife. Arthur, however, stayed in Bendigo with his grandmother Elizabeth and his half-brother William Wallace Cameron Butler. He completed his schooling there in the years before the First World War.<sup>7</sup> Although Arthur would soon leave his hometown permanently, his daughter could still say

a century later that “he was a Bendigo boy”.<sup>8</sup> By the time of Arthur’s enlistment he and the family were living in Abbotsford, Melbourne.

When Arthur Butler enlisted in the AIF on 11 May 1916 to join the fight overseas he was already serving in 23rd Battery Albert Park, having had four years experience as a senior cadet and one year with field artillery. With this background it is not surprising that during his overseas service Butler was assigned as a driver in the 3rd Australian Field Artillery Brigade. Although this was not a role that required him to “go over the top”, it was not without its dangers during times of active fighting. While stationed with a howitzer battery Arthur was actively involved in loading the guns in the midst of combat: “During artillery bombardments he transported shells from the ammunition dump which was located a quarter of a mile away and then he would help load the shells into the artillery piece” his son later recalled. Private Arthur Butler sustained no physical

7 *Arthur Harold Butler*, unpublished typescript by Geoffrey J. Butler.

8 Private correspondence with Margot Butler.

wounds that are noted in his service record, but he was hospitalised twice due to influenza.

Arthur was not the only member of his family to join up during the war – as we have seen, his uncle Frederick Tucker (Ah Kew), also served. But his half-brother William Wallace Cameron Butler, the son of Lydia Butler and her first husband, also fought in France, where he was killed in action at Fromelles. His father's half-brother Horace Reuben Butler (b.1892) also enlisted, and served with the Imperial Camel Corps in the Middle East. In addition George Thomas Butler / Davenport (1900-1967), Arthur's step-brother, was also serving with the AIF. Arthur's grandmother Eliza would have had to endure the emotional strain of having two sons and two grandsons (who she had raised) away for years fighting in the war, one of whom tragically did not come back.

Before the War Arthur's grandmother had encountered two missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. She and her family were converted, and were baptised at the Bendigo City Baths.<sup>10</sup> Arthur became an active member of the church, later holding leadership positions in its Australian missionary wing in the 1940s. It was through the church that he also met Edith Moon, whom he married on 21 June 1924. They were to have three children.

In his professional life Butler worked in the accountancy departments of a number of large Australian and international firms. A planned relocation to America was delayed by the Second World War, but by the early 1950s he and his wife had established themselves in Salt Lake City, Utah. Arthur Butler was employed in the office of the Utah Secretary of State at the time of his death in 1959. Arthur and Edith Butler are buried in Salt Lake City.



▲ William Wallace Cameron Butler. He was killed in action at Fromelles in 1916. Although a lifelong Bendigo resident, his name is sadly missing from the main war memorial in Pall Mall. (Courtesy of Paula Herlihy and Margot Butler)



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10 Geoffrey J. Butler, AHB



▲ The Chong family's slab hut, which was shifted in the 1970s from Whroo to its current location at Emu Bottom Homestead near Sunbury. With thanks to Hedley Elliot.

## The Chong Brothers of Whroo

Chinese born gardener Ah Chong and his wife Emma Branson were married at Golden Square, Sandhurst (Bendigo) in 1875 in a Wesleyan ceremony which was witnessed by the Anglican missionary Ching War and Ellen Ah Cheong. Emma was 17 years old and had been born at Inkerman near Dunolly. Ah Chong was 30 and had originally come from “Sun Wee” (Sun Wui county) in China – he gave his address at time of marriage as “Moora beyond Rochester”. They raised a family on a market garden near the mining town of Whroo near Rushworth. Ah Chong's presence on the electoral rolls show that he had been naturalised at some point before the mid-1880s when this option

became closed to Victorian residents of Chinese origin. Ah Chong, who was also known as Thomas, passed away at the age of 76 on 25th April 1911.<sup>11</sup> By the time of his decease some of his sons had begun seeking better prospects in Western Australia, though they still returned for stays at the family home. After her husband's passing Emma also spent time in the West, relocating permanently by the end of the Great War.

### Alfred Chong (1888-1964)

Alfred Ah Chong was born at Rushworth to Ah Chong and Emma Branson. He was a gardener at nearby Moora in the years before the First World War. As of the time of writing Alfred's 1915 service record has not been viewed, but it does belong to a series which “consists of records for those

11 “Rushworth Court of Petty Sessions”, Murchison Advertiser and Murchison, Toolamba, Mooroopna & Dargalong Express, 7 July 1916.

12 See series details in the catalogue entry for NAA: MT1486/1, CHONG/ALFRED.

individuals who applied to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force, and were either rejected, discharged while still in training, or went on to serve within Australia only [usually as depot troops or camp guards].”<sup>12</sup>

Alfred spent the rest of his life in Rushworth and the surrounding region, working as a gardener and wood cutter. Alfred Chong passed away at Mooroopna in 1964 and was buried at Rushworth Cemetery.

## **Arthur Chong** **(1881-1952)**

Arthur Robert Henry Ah Chong was born at Rushworth to Ah Chong and Emma Branson. In the 1903 and 1908 electoral roles Arthur was listed as a gardener at Whroo, alongside his father Ah Chong and mother Emma who also lived in this hamlet near Rushworth. Mr Arthur Chong departed Melbourne on the ship “Kyarra”, arriving at Fremantle, Western Australia on 6 February 1908. A note beside his name under the nationality column on the ship’s passenger list reads “Half-caste Chinese”.

Arthur subsequently earned his living in the forestry industry in the state’s south west. By 1909 Chong was listed as a hewer at Bush Landing, Kirrup, and in 1913 he was living with his brother Calvin at Collie, both being engaged in the same wood cutting profession. In his last appearance in the Australian electoral roles in 1916 Arthur was listed as a contractor at Holyoke.

Chong enlisted at Perth on 30 April 1917. His service record shows that he took “long leave” for a couple of months before rejoining the army again at Langwarrin, Victoria, and then Seymour, where he first had the rank of Private in the Pioneers, and then Sapper in the Tunnelling Company. It was February 1918 by the time that Chong arrived in England, where he was stationed at camps at Parkhouse and Tidworth for much of what remained of the war. In March his record shows that Arthur was diagnosed with a pre-existing valvular condition of the heart, which had been the cause of the shortness of breath and palpitations which he had suffered for at least five years beforehand (this must have been a real handicap for a man who had worked at such physical professions as timber cutting, mining, and farming). He was consequently declared fit for “home duties” only, and so did not directly participate in the campaigns being fought on the Western Front in the final months of the war. Sapper Arthur Chong was discharged in London on 17 July 1919.

By the time of his discharge Chong was also a married man – he had tied the knot with Lizzie Jane Gillman at the Bristol registry office on 5 April 1919. He stated that his intended place of residence was at 158 Church Road, Redfield, Bristol. According to research conducted by Alastair Kennedy this family changed its name and the Chinese connection apparently “forgotten”. Arthur and Lizzie went on to have four children and remained in Britain.

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<sup>13</sup> NAA: B2455, CHONG A

<sup>14</sup> Chinese ANZACS, p.84.

## James Palmer Chong

(1893 – 1956)

James Palmer Ah Chong was born at Rushworth to Ah Chong and Emma Branson.

James was a sleeper hewer when he enlisted at Blackboy Hill, Western Australia, on 27 October 1915.<sup>15</sup> He joined the Field Artillery Brigade at Maribyrnong, Victoria for training in 1916, before being embarking for England on 20 May, having been assigned as a gunner in the 107th Howitzer Battery of the 23rd Field Artillery Brigade. After some time in Britain, which included around two months total hospitalization due to venereal disease, Chong arrived in France on 29 May 1917 (It seems that it was this episode that saw his photo published in West Australian newspapers amongst the other casualties, where he was listed as “Ill in hospital, London”). Appointed a Driver on 2 June 1917, Chong’s time at the front was to be very short. On 16th June he received a gun shot wound which saw him invalided back to England. James was admitted to the 2nd New Zealand General Hospital at Walton-on-Thames with severe wounds to his chest, left shoulder, and arm. He was sent back to Australia on 27 September and was discharged on 24 April 1918.

According to the electoral rolls in 1919 Chong was living in West Perth with his mother Emma, and by 1925 was farming at Dalwallinu in the Western Australian Wheatbelt.

James Chong enlisted again in the Second World War, signing up at Booloogooro Station, Western Australia, (located about 90 km from Carnarvon), where he was working as a station hand.<sup>16</sup> The severity of his Great War injuries seems not to have kept him from leading a physically active life. James Palmer Chong passed away at Perth in 1956.



▲ Gunner J. P. Chong. The Sun (Kalgoorlie), 6 May 1917, p.6. (National Library of Australia)

<sup>15</sup> NAA: B2455, CHONG J P

<sup>16</sup> NAA: B884, W77088 The WWII service record of J. P. Chong has not yet been digitized nor its access status determined.

# Bendigo's Currie brothers and their cousins: The Four ANZAC Grandsons of Lee Jacgung 李則忠

Lee Heng Jacgung had come to the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s after having spent some time in the gold rich American state of California. His English language skills that he had picked up enabled him to become an interpreter in the Castlemaine region and he also became a naturalised British subject in 1859. Lee married Irish born Katherine Hornick in 1861 and their growing family were based at Fryerstown and then Vaughan near Castlemaine in the 1860s and 1870s before relocating to the farming district of Jeeralang in central Gippsland. By the time of Lee Jacgung's death in 1913 he had a large family of descendants in Gippsland, Melbourne, and Bendigo.

Jacgung and Katherine's daughter Maud Ellen Frances Lee Jacgung married Thomas Ewing Currie in 1889. Over the next two decades the family lived in Macedon, Oakleigh, Heathcote, and Bendigo where Currie worked as a crown lands bailiff. Maud and Thomas had four children, of whom only two survived childhood – Francis (Frank) and Hugh. Hugh was still living with them as a student at the family's Tyson's Hill home in the years before the war, then joined the civil service, working in the Bendigo office of the Lands Department.



▲ Lieut. Frank Currie of the Australian Flying Corps (Courtesy of Lindsay Jacgung)



▲ *The Bendigonian*, 9 May 1918, p.17. This clipping was kept by Hugh's cousin Lindsay and passed on to his descendants. (Courtesy of Lindsay Jacgung)

## Francis Thomas Currie

(1894 – 1986)

Prior to enlisting in the Australian Imperial Force Frank Currie had had four years military experience serving as a volunteer in the Royal Australian Navy.<sup>17</sup> Currie enlisted as an Able Seaman Driver in the Royal Australian Naval Bridging Train on 1 October 1916.<sup>18</sup> By the 13th October he was transferred to the 2nd Squadron, Australian Flying Corps, with the rank of Private. After training in England Currie graduated and appointed a flying officer (pilot) and 2nd lieutenant on 19 November 1917 – he was promoted to lieutenant the following year on 19 February. His promotion to an officer was prominently reported in the local Bendigo papers. Currie would have been one of the few (perhaps only?) commissioned officers of Chinese descent in Australian forces in WWI. From the beginning of March through to the end of July Frank was serving with his unit in France, followed by another stint from early August through to the start of October 1918. Currie spent the rest of the war on duty in England. It was also in that year that Frank endured the loss of his only surviving sibling Hugh who fell in battle on the Western Front. In peacetime Frank Currie settled down to married life in Melbourne and worked as salesman. He passed away in 1986 aged 92.

## Hugh Roy Currie

(1889 – 1918)

Hugh Currie was born in Macedon but grew up in Melbourne, Heathcote, and at Tyson's Hill, Bendigo. Before the war Hugh worked as a clerk in the deeds branch of the Bendigo office of the Lands Department, which was located in historic Dudley House in View Street. He was also secretary of the civil service rifle club. Hugh enlisted, and was accepted, at the Bendigo Recruiting Depot on Wednesday 26 April 1916.<sup>19</sup> Currie fought in France

with the 60th Battalion AIF, taking part in action at Baupaume, Bullecourt, and Polygon Wood. He died of wounds near Corbie, on 5 April 1918.

Hugh Currie is commemorated on the Lands Department Honour Roll (now located at the Department of Natural Resources, Melbourne).<sup>20</sup>

**CURRIE.**—On the 11th April, at 20th Casualty Station, France, of wounds received in action. No. 2002, Private Hugh (Boyrie), 60th Batt., dearly loved eldest son of J and Maude Currie, of Bendigo, only brother of Lt. F. T. Currie (Aust. Flying Corps), cousin Private Rupert Wilson (Camel Corps), of Private Lindsay Jacgung (38th Batt.), and Lance-Corporal A. Webster (3rd Aust. Gen. Hospital, France) on active service, aged 28.

▲ | The Age, 22 April 1918, p.1.

The Curries' first cousin Lindsay Lee Jacgung was close to his Bendigo relatives and is believed to met up with them in either of France or England when the opportunity presented itself. He was the son of Ernest George Lee Jacgung, and like other members of his family carried the full Chinese name of his grandfather. When the 18 year old Lindsay came to enlist at Morwell in 1916 he had the details of his racial heritage scrawled out in a note on his enlistment form ("European Grandmother / born in China naturalized / g f father born in Victoria / mother British born").<sup>21</sup> No such inquisition was noted on the forms of his cousins with fully European names. In a familiar story Lindsay's health was severely damaged by the war and his exposure to gas – he passed away at Traralgon at the age of 75 in 1973.

Another cousin who enlisted was Rupert Allan Wilson Jungjohann who was the son of Minnie Louise Lee Jacgung and her husband Frederick Wilson Jungjohann who was born in Denmark. Rupert seems to have dropped his Germanic surname around the time of the war. Rupert Allen Wilson was assigned to the Field Ambulance in the Camel Corps in the Middle East.

17 NAA: B2455, CURRIE F T

18 The unit's unusual name came from the fact that it "was intended to be a horse drawn engineering unit attached to the Royal Naval Division (RND), then serving as infantry on the Western Front", following "in train" with provisions and materials. This land going naval force was manned by RAN reservists who could not be billeted on any serving ships. See: John Perryman & Commander Greg Swinden, RAN, The 1st Royal Australian Naval Bridging Train, <http://www.navy.gov.au/history/feature-histories/1st-royal-australian-naval-bridging-train> [accessed 06/01/2016]

19 "Bendigo Depot – Eight Men Accepted", Bendigo Advertiser, 27 April 1916, p.4.

20 <http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/190661> [accessed 11/04/2018]

21 NAA: B2455, JACGUNG LINDSAY LEE



▲ Lindsay Lee Jacgung taken at Glasgow while on overseas service. (Courtesy of Lindsay Jacgung)

He was born and grew up in Melbourne where he seems to have lived most of his life – he is recorded as having passed away in Bendigo in 1962 and is buried in the Bendigo lawn cemetery, coincidentally next to the Lone Pine planted in memory of the WWI diggers.



▲ Rupert Egge (Courtesy of the late Rupert John (Jack) Egge)



▲ Maisie, William, and Rupert Egge as children in Mildura. (Courtesy of the Egge family)



▲ Lindsay Lee Jacgung taken at Glasgow while on overseas service. (Courtesy of the Egge family)

## The Egge Brothers

Rupert and William Egge were the grandsons of John Egge (original Chinese name unknown), a former seaman from Shanghai who had come to Australia as a young man in the 1850s and later made his living as a riverboat captain along the Murray and Darling Rivers. Rupert and William grew up in the river town of Mildura – their mother died while they were still children and with their father apparently unable to properly care for them they and their sister Maisie were separated and placed with different foster families in the district. By the time that elder brother Rupert enlisted during the early months of the Gallipoli campaign in July 1915 he was a 23 year old cycle and motor mechanic. His complexion was described as dark, his eyes brown, and hair black. William enlisted in April the following year – he was 18 years old and described as a horticulturist. Likewise he was also dark and black-haired but with blue eyes. He had previously been rejected on account of his teeth, but not it seems on account of his racial background. Both brothers served in France, with some time spent in

England. Rupert was in Egypt from March to June 1916 when he was shipped to France. In August that year he suffered a gunshot wound to side and back and spent most of the rest of the war at hospitals in England or on non-combat duty as an NCO. Rupert returned to Australia before war's end in 1918, by which time he was serving as a Temporary Quarter Master Sergeant. His brother William was likewise wounded during his service in France and was frequently sent to hospital due to illness. After the war William's health was never good and he lived his life as an invalid who was loved by his family as a kind and gentle man. Known by the nickname Mick, he changed his surname by deed pole to Edge – his descendants speculate that it was to hide links to the family's Chinese heritage. His brother Rupert, who kept the family name, had a more mysterious fate: he was never seen again after leaving his family in 1936. His subsequent history is still unknown.

# James Fooke

(1887-1917)

James Fooke (or Ah Fooke) was born at Myrtle Creek, a small mining and farming community between Lyal and Sutton Grange, in 1887. His miner father George had been born in China, and was one of a number of miners and gardeners of Chinese origin who settled in the mainly agricultural district of Lyal. Amongst these was Henry Ah Gooley, whose children attended the small Lyal school with James – two of these, William and Charles, would also later serve ‘King and Country’ in the Great War. As James and his siblings grew up they started to move away from their rural background. Older brother George (b.1872) shifted to Bendigo where he married Ruby Ah Poo in 1908 – Ruby’s family was a prominent one in Bendigo’s Chinese community, her late father James having been a long serving government interpreter and one of the founders of the famed Chinese Easter Parade. James too had evidently also made the shift from Lyal as less than a year later, on 21 July, he was also married at Bendigo, giving his permanent address as 42 Lucan Street and his occupation as miner.<sup>22</sup> James’s bride was 26 year old widow Margaret May Elizabeth Sutton (nee Hudson), who had been born (and widowed) in Tasmania. The wedding took place at St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church Manse, where on the same day James was also baptised by the officiating minister, the register containing the note ‘Adult on profession of faith’.<sup>23</sup>

It was also during this period that Fooke began his association with the military, serving in the Citizens Forces (the pre-war volunteer army) at Bendigo.<sup>24</sup> In 1912 Pte. Fooke was mentioned in the Bendigo Advertiser in a list of competitors in a shooting competition, a sport at which he was to compete until his enlistment.<sup>25</sup>



▲ (Collection Australian War Memorial  
- Photograph by Darge)



**PRIVATE JAMES FOOKE**  
**Killed in Action.**  
**Husband of Mrs. M. E. Fooke,**  
**14 Hodgson-terrace.**

▲ (National Library of Australia)

22 St Andrews Bendigo, marriage register, entry no.137.

23 St Andrews Bendigo, baptism register, entry no. 196.

24 See James Fooke’s Roll of Honour Circular, a form which was sent to the deceased soldier’s family for them to fill out with selected details ‘for the Nation’s Histories’ about his life.

By the time that he joined the A.I.F. on 28 February 1916 Fooke and his wife and two young children had re-established themselves in the Melbourne suburb of Richmond, where he was an active member of Richmond Rifle and A.N.A. shooting clubs.<sup>26</sup>

When Fooke enlisted his Chinese background did become an issue – a scribbled note on his enlistment form states “Father born in China and naturalized in Australia. Mother born in Australia”. Another note beneath that declares that the examining official was “satisfied” that Fooke was of “substantial European origin”.<sup>27</sup> Unlike others at this relatively early stage of the war, James Fooke was not turned away from active service because his racial background.

After enlistment James was assigned to the 23rd Battalion A.I.F., with which he fought in France and Belgium from September 1916 until he was hospitalised in England with influenza in May 1917. That month he was assigned to the 67th Battalion at the Wind Mill Hill depot, before fatefully rejoining the 23rd in France in September. Shortly thereafter Private James Fooke was killed in action at Passchendaele Ridge, during the Third Battle of Ypres, on 6 October 1917. The recollections of his comrades, collected by the Red Cross several months later, paint a vivid, and moving, picture of the scene: “He was being bandaged for a head wound

when a piece of shell hit him on the side killing him instantaneously. I have his belt in my possession with the hole the shell made though it. He was buried in a field near Passendall [sic] by Ptes. Gorrie, Coppard and myself and we made the cross. I wrote the inscription on it.”<sup>28</sup> “He was buried on the field at Ypres. Pte. D. Gorrie and myself buried him and his death was a blow to us as he left Victoria with us....He died peacefully, never spoke a word and we buried him as best we could under shell fire.”<sup>29</sup> “His cobber, Dave Gorrie...told me he saw him killed at Ypres, took his wallet off and his watch and sent them to his wife”.<sup>30</sup> James Fooke’s remains were later reinterred at Poelcapelle British Cemetery, at Poelkapelle, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

Back home James’s passing was marked by an obituary in the local Richmond newspaper (he was “liked for his quiet disposition and cheery manner.”)<sup>31</sup> and a death notice inserted in the Bendigo Advertiser and the Argus by his sister Louie that stated “Killed in action. The saddest and noblest death of all.”<sup>32</sup>

His widow Margaret thereafter shifted to New South Wales and passed away at Newtown, Sydney in 1926.<sup>33</sup>

25 ‘Sporting – Rifle Shooting’, Bendigo Advertiser, 21 June 1912, p.8.

26 Richmond Guardian, 8 December 1917, p.2.

27 NAA: B2455, FOOKE J

28 Statement of Freser, A. J. Pte. 4697, 1DRL/0428, Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War.

29 Statement of 4678 Pte. J. W. Coppard, B.Coy. 23rd Battn. France 31.1.18., 1DRL/0428, Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War.

30 Statement of Pte. H. Jolly. 4714. B.Co. Etaples. 19.1.18. , 1DRL/0428, Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War.

31 Richmond Guardian, 8 December 1917, p.2.

32 ‘For Freedom’s Cause’, Bendigo Advertiser, 13 December 1917, p.7.

33 New South Wales Deaths Reg. No. 8253/1926.



▲ | (MF2947 Collection Golden Dragon Museum)

## Frederick Foon (1892-1944)

Frederick Foon was born at Kangaroo Flat on 29th December 1892 to Elizabeth Jane Stevens (c.1855-1913) and market gardener William Foon (or Ah Foon).<sup>34</sup> The Foons lived along Bullock Creek Road (now McKenzie Street West) and would have had their garden on the flats there beside the Bendigo Creek in the area which had historically been known as the Kangaroo Flat / Golden Square Chinese Camp. By the time of his enlistment in the A.I.F.

in October 1916 Foon was working as a woodcutter and resided in Kangaroo Flat. Both of the 23 year old's parents were then deceased, his closest living family being a brother Thomas, and a sister Louie whom he listed as his next of kin on his enlistment form.<sup>35</sup> He left Melbourne on the 'RMS Osterley' in February 1917, arriving at Plymouth two months later. After a further two months in England, Private Foon was shipped to Camiers, France, where he served in the 10th and then 2nd Machine Gun Companies. His time at the front was short: he had been deployed in the field in France for only four months when he was badly wounded on 25th October 1917. Suffering from severe head, arm, and leg wounds, Frederick spent several months in hospital and was shipped back to Australia in early 1918. Foon was discharged as medically unfit on 9th May 1918, his head injuries having resulted in paralysis of his right side (right haemiparesis).<sup>36</sup> After the war Foon received assistance from an army pension - it was said that he 'never fully recovered from the wound, which greatly impaired his health.'<sup>37</sup> Despite the severe long term health effects of his war service Foon managed to live another quarter century after the armistice, during which time he started his own family and was involved in his local community. He married Una Dulcie Carter in 1929 and they had two sons. During this time Foon was also a leading member of the Golden Square Band, serving as the musical group's vice president and librarian. Frederick Foon died at his home in Panton Street, Golden Square in 1944, and was buried at Kangaroo Flat Cemetery.<sup>38</sup>

34 It appears that Frederick's parents were not married at the time of his birth and his father's name does not appear on his birth record – he was registered under the name Stevens. There is a baptism record though for Frederick Foon at St Paul's Bendigo for 11th June 1893 where his parents are named as Ah Foon and Eliza Jane Stephenson (sic). Information on Frederick and his family can be found in Family File 35, Ming Yeung Library, Joan Jack Research Centre, Golden Dragon Museum.

35 NAA: B2455, FOON F

36 NAA: B2455, FOON F

37 'Obituary', Bendigo Advertiser, 24 March 1944.

38 'Obituary', Bendigo Advertiser, 24 March 1944.



▲ Private William Foon (State Library of Victoria.  
With thanks to Rod Giri)



▲ View from the Australian lines towards no man's land near Broodseinde Ridge on 4 October 1917. (Australian War Memorial)

## William Foon MM (1900-1974)

William Foon was born under the name Denis King at Queenscliff, the son of Chinese born ship's steward Low King and his wife Frances Mahoney.<sup>39</sup> Sometime after Low King's decease in 1904 his widow Frances met Bendigo herbalist William Yee Foon and the Kings afterwards adopted his name: Frances King was known as Mrs Foon in Bendigo years before the pair were officially married in 1922 and her son was renamed after his stepfather, the young Dennis King becoming William Foon. Although the younger William Foon acknowledged the late Mr King as his biological parent<sup>40</sup>, he also chose to name Yee Foon as his father and next of kin when he enlisted in the AIF during World War I, indicating the parental role that the Bendigo herbalist had come to fill for his stepson. Little is known for certain about William's life between his biological father's death and his enlistment in early 1916 when he, his stepfather, and mother, were all

living at Howard Place across the creek from the Bridge Street Chinatown. Being only 15 years old William Foon lied to recruitment officers about his age in order to enlist for active service in the A.I.F. – the Annals of Bendigo later stated, that 'Pte. W. Foon....celebrated his 16th birthday in the trenches.... and was probably the youngest Bendigionian serving in the war'.<sup>41</sup> Foon joined the 6th Battalion in France on 30 July 1916, during operations at Pozzières. Over the following year William saw action at Ypres and the Somme. He was wounded in action on 4th October 1917, a day on which his battalion was awarded battle honours for its capture of the village of Broodseinde during the Third Battle of Ypres, an event which was described as 'a significant defeat for the German forces'.

Suffering from a severe gun shot wound to the shoulder Foon was shipped out from Boulogne back to England, where he was hospitalized for almost two months. After his recovery Foon was put into training at signaling school in England, before rejoining his unit in the field on 10 July 1918. On 23 August he was once more put out of action, this

39 See Low King and Frances Mahoney's 1899 marriage reg. no. 1706.

40 See e.g. Foon's 1932 marriage certificate, reg. no. 6886, where he names his father as 'Denis King'.

41 George Mackay, *Annals of Bendigo 1910 to 1920*, Cambridge Press, Bendigo, 1926, p.441.

time with a gunshot wound to the left thigh, and was invalided back to England. William spent the remainder of the war in Britain before returning home to Australia on 31 March 1919. In addition to his youth, Foon's service record is also notable both for his being awarded the Military Medal for his bravery, and for his court martial. The former occurred following his action in fighting at Lihons, France on 10 August 1918:

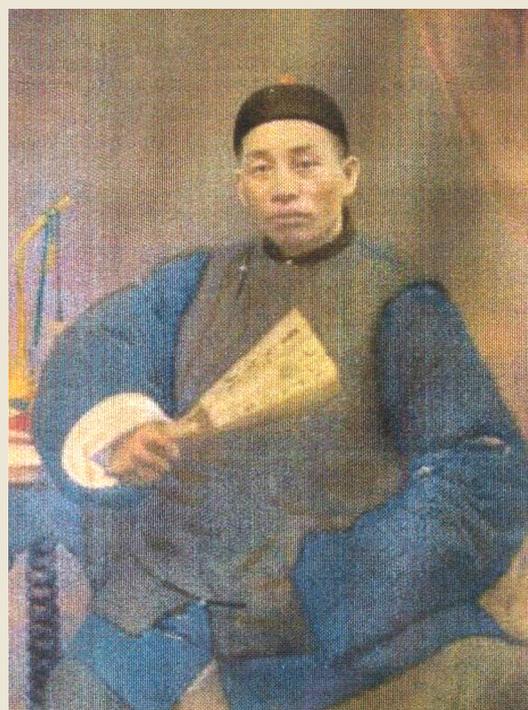
"This soldier acted as a Company Runner, and during the attack showed wonderful courage and coolness while carrying messages from front to rear over an exceptionally flat and open space of country swept by a hail of Machine Gun and rifle bullets. On one occasion, when a Runner forward had been mortally wounded in advance of our main line this soldier crept forward to the wounded man, secured his despatches, and succeeded in carrying them safely to Battalion Headquarters."

The latter event occurred when he refused to take orders from a corporal who, as things escalated, called Foon "a little Chow bastard". William was found guilty and sentenced to 56 days punishment. The case is a glimpse into some of the attitudes and language that Private Foon must have all too often encountered as a Chinese Australian.

After the war William Foon worked as an employee of the railways and was based for many years at Ouyen in the Mallee where he married Josephine Mulraney in 1934. He passed away at Geelong in 1974.



▲ Fred Goon signed this photograph four days before he left Australia on the H.M.A.T. A29. A copy of the same photo was published in the Bendigo press when news reached home that Goon had been hospitalized after exposure to poison gas. (MF1130 Collection Golden Dragon Museum)



▲ Louey Fong Goon, father of Fred and step-grandfather of Herbert. (Collection Golden Dragon Museum)

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42 [https://www.awm.gov.au/units/event\\_42.asp](https://www.awm.gov.au/units/event_42.asp)  
[accessed 30 June 2014]

# Bendigo's Goon Family 雷

## Frederick Goon

(1893-1941)

Fred Goon was the son of Long Gully, Bendigo, storekeeper Louey Fong Goon 雷逢源<sup>43</sup> / 雷槐道<sup>44</sup> and his wife Elizabeth Johnstone. He enlisted in the A.I.F. at Dubbo on 12 January 1917, where he was working as greengrocer and residing at Talbragar Street.<sup>45</sup> Originally assigned to the 1st Battalion Pioneers as a private, and then a lance corporal, Frederick was transferred to the 20th Battalion as a private shortly before his departure from Australia in June 1917. He remained with this unit for the rest of the war, and was made acting lance corporal on two subsequent occasions before joining his unit in Belgium as a private on 26 December 1917. Goon's first stint at the front was relatively short. He was loaded onto a field ambulance in Belgium on 9 March 1918 suffering from exposure to poison gas, and was later hospitalized at the Australian Military Hospital at Dartford for a period of 76 days as part of his road to recovery. Back home Goon's photo, under the stark headline 'GASSED', was published in both the Bendigo Advertiser and the Bendigonian to inform the public that the 'son of Mrs E. Goon, 140 Hargreaves-street, Bendigo' was 'suffering from the effects of gas poisoning'.<sup>46</sup> By August Fred was deemed well enough to rejoin his unit in France, which he did on 12 September 1918. He would then have taken part in the action at Montbrehain on 3 October, which proved to be the battalion's last battle of the war.<sup>47</sup>

After his return to Australia Goon settled down in Sydney, where most of his Bendigo born brothers and sisters were then living. Frederick Goon passed away at Surrey Hills, Sydney on 12 March 1941, aged only 47. It would seem likely that, as with so many others of

his generation, his life was shortened by the effects of his war service. He was survived by a wife, Emma, and children.

## Herbert Henry Goon

(1896-1934)

Herbert Goon was born in 1897 to Emily Kim Goon (b.1880) and an undisclosed father. Emily (later Mrs. Little) was the half-sister of Frederick Fong Goon, their fathers being the first and second husbands respectively of their mother Elizabeth Johnstone. Emily's father Kim Goon (or Jim Goon) was a hawker at White Hills who had married Elizabeth at St. Pauls Church of England in 1879. After the couple had had three children he disappeared from the scene around 1885, following which Elizabeth became involved with and later married Louey Fong Goon. Herbert seems to have been raised as the child of his grandmother and step-grandfather Louey Fong Goon: he named Elizabeth Goon of 141 Hargreaves Street as his mother and next of kin when he enlisted in the armed forces. Fong Goon was by that time deceased.

Herbert had served as a senior cadet for 3 ½ years while living in Bendigo prior to his enlistment in the A.I.F. at Sydney on 23 October 1917.<sup>48</sup> At the time he was working as a tram driver. Goon was assigned to the 1st Battalion Pioneers, an engineering and technical corps, and arrived in England in February 1918, where he was to spend the rest of his overseas service. Not long after arriving Goon's pre-existing condition of 'flat foot' worsened, and this seems to have curtailed the length of his deployment overseas.<sup>49</sup> Goon nevertheless had a clean record and was appointed Acting Lance Corporal on 12 September 1918. He boarded a ship for Australia in December that year after the end of hostilities. In the post-war years Herbert Goon worked as a linesman at Sydney, and was tragically killed when struck by a train while walking between the tracks on 3 January 1934.<sup>50</sup> He left behind a wife and children.

43 Cantonese: Leui Feng Yun, Mandarin: Lèi Féngyuán. The characters 逢源 appear to be what Fong Goon intended when he signed his name in Chinese on his marriage certificate.

44 Cantonese: Leui Wai Dou, Mandarin: Léi Huáidào. These are the characters on Louey Fong Goon's bilingual gravestone in the Anglican section of the White Hills Cemetery.

45 NAA: B2455, GOON F

46 Bendigonian, 27 June 1918, p.13.

47 [http://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit\\_11207.asp](http://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit_11207.asp), accessed 15/04/2014

48 NAA: B2455, GOON HH

49 NAA: B2455, GOON HH

50 'Railway Employee Killed', The Sydney Morning Herald, 4 January 1934, p.10; the funeral notice appeared in the same paper on page 7.

## Charles and William Gooley

Charles Gooley (1892-1972) and William Gooley (1894-1940) were born in the agricultural district of Lyal to gardener Henry Ah Gooley and his wife Emily (nee Heffer). Both went to school at Lyal with James Ah Fooke, another person of Chinese descent who later served in the First World War. Like the members of the Fooke family, the younger Gooleys too were drawn to the nearby city of Bendigo to find work. It was here that younger brother William first attempted to enlist on 11 September 1914, a little more than a month after the British Empire had declared war on Germany. His application was not successful, though there is no explanation written on his form as to why: his details are simply crossed out. Gooley's height and other measurements seem have met the minimal requirements (the doctor signed the form declaring him fit for active service), so one wonders if his racial heritage was a significant factor in his rejection.<sup>51</sup> In June 1916 Gooley again attempted to enlist in Melbourne (but giving his address as 355 Barnard Street, Bendigo), and this time was successful. William Gooley



▲ | Charles Gooley (Courtesy of Tom & Kay Cook)

became a private in the 13th Light Horse Regiment, with which he served in France until his transfer in November 1917 to the 104th Battery of the 4th Field Artillery Brigade as first a trooper, and then a gunner. He was appointed a driver on 3 January 1918, and after a period of illness was transferred to the Australian General Base Depot in June. After that Gooley served in the 2nd Divisional Ammunition Column from late June until September, when he returned to the 4th Field Artillery Brigade, in which he served out the rest of the war as a driver. He appears likely to be the "H. Gooley" commemorated on the Bendigo R.S.L.'s cast metal honour role.

Older brother Charles had a somewhat different war experience. He enlisted in August 1915 and having passed the racial test (the doctor declared him "substantially European") was assigned to the 5th Battalion A.I.F.<sup>52</sup> However he was discharged "for family reasons" on 6 January 1916, and re-enlisted on 10 January for "Home Service". After the war Charles and his wife Sybil eventually made a home for themselves in Redesdale, where Charles owned and operated his own timber mill.<sup>53</sup> Although his army service was relatively uneventful Charles Gooley unfortunately did not entirely escape the tragedy of war – two of his sons were killed in New Guinea during World War II.<sup>54</sup>



▲ | Bill Gooley with niece at Redesdale, c.1926. (Courtesy of Tom & Kay Cook)

51 NAA: B2455, GOOEY W

52 NAA: B2455, GOOEY C

53 Ken James, *Chinese miners and market gardeners of Lyal and Myrtle Creek, Central Victoria*, Published by the author, Camberwell, 2005, p.43.

54 Ken James, *ibid.*

## Edward Bert Hem 溫

(1891-1972)



▲ Bert Hem  
(Private collection. With thanks to Bev Hanson)



▲ Bert Hem taken during his second stint of service during WWII. (Courtesy of James Loy)

Edward Bert One Poy Hem was born at Grassy Flat gardener Won Poy Hem 溫沛添 and his wife Mary (nee Railton). Edward Hem enlisted in the A.I.F. in Sydney on 6 May 1916. Before this he had apparently served one week in the 'Expedition (sic) Force' earlier in the war, from which he said he had not been discharged.<sup>55</sup> After leaving Australia Hem served in France in the 30th Battalion A.I.F., staying in the same battalion until the end of the war. He was wounded during the Battle of Amiens on 8 August 1918 (for which the 30th was awarded battle honours), and was invalided back the U.K. With this his time of front line fighting was over. Hem returned to Bendigo after the war, but in the following years spent some time in Queensland and New South Wales. According to the recollections of one family member Bert lived an unsettled life, having been deeply affected by his time on the Western Front. He was in Rockhampton when he enlisted for service during the Second World War. The files in the National Archives concerning his second time in uniform are not yet publicly available, but like many other Great War veterans who reenlisted it is likely that he served out the war without seeing action overseas. Later in life Bert Hem came back to Bendigo, and passed away at the Home and Hospital for the Aged in May 1972. His wife Julia and one of his two children had predeceased him. Edward Bert Hem was laid to rest at Bendigo Cemetery.



▲ Henry Ah Gooley, father of Charles and William.  
(Private Collection)

55 NAA: B2455, HEM E B 3821

# Harry Edward Hoy Ling 譚

(1876 – 1970)

Harry Edward Hoy Ling was born in 1877 at Vaughan in the Central Victorian goldfields, the son of Ham Hoy Ling and Emma McCloude. In the following years Ham Hoy Ling was to make the move to Melbourne. He was an influential figure in the city's Chinese community and was part of the Qing dynasty reformer and politician Liang Qichao's travelling party during his tour of regional Victoria. Before the war Harry Hoy Ling lived and worked in the Melbourne region as a Chinese language interpreter, and had married Roma Neville in 1906. Hoy Ling enlisted soon after the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914. He began the war with the rank of Driver but was soon promoted to greater responsibilities as a Company Quartermaster Sergeant and Warrant Officer (Class I). Late in the war Hoy Ling was promoted to Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant and his record notes that he was "brought to the notice of the Secretary of War for valuable services rendered". Harry served in the Army Service Corps, providing transportation support to the army in the field. In this capacity he saw active service in Gallipoli, Egypt, and France, as well as at transportation depots in England. Hoy Ling had an unusually long (and fortunate) enlistment period, returning to Australia in 1920 when he was in his early 40s (on his enlistment form he had taken 5 years off his actual age).

After the war Harry Hoy Ling shifted to Queensland where he was as a grazier in the Western Downs at a property that was named "Mont Kemmel" after a WWI battle near Ypres. Harry was still farming in 1939 (with the same altered birth year of 1882!) when he enlisted again at the age of 62. In his mid to late 60s Hoy Ling once again served the duration of a war – he was discharged March 1945 having attained his old rank of Warrant Officer. This time though the majority of his service was in Queensland, but with over a year spent "in the field".



▲ Quartermaster Sergeant Harry Hoy Ling (left) at El Bangush, Egypt, 1916. (Collection Australian War Memorial)

Harry Edward Hoy Ling passed away in Brisbane at the age of 93 in 1970.

In a 1973 letter to the Department of Army Harry Hoy Ling's daughter Beryl gave an eloquent testament to some of the struggles which he faced that are not revealed in the pages of his service records:

"...my father Mr. Harry Edward Hoyling...was a person whose life revealed great courage in the way he dealt with personal inter-racial problems, he being by birth a mixture of East and West. To me personally, the way he dealt with the frustrations of his situation act [as] an example which I try to extend in my own generation, with a view to decreasing racial tensions and misunderstandings."<sup>57</sup>

57 NAA: B884, Q187318

# John Robert Joseph Huey

(1885-1921)

John Ah Huey was born at Castlemaine on 30 March 1885 in Forest Street, Castlemaine to James Ah Huey, a Chinese born miner, and his wife Annie Evans, who had been born in Tasmania. Annie and James had married at the Castlemaine registry office in 1870. In 1887 due to family circumstances John was made a ward of the state and fostered out to the Sing Song family at Daylesford. By the 1890s the Ah Huey family had shifted to Morwell in Gippsland, where Annie passed away in 1905. In 1914 John shows up on the electoral rolls as a labourer at Cora Lynn, a locality near Bunyip in West Gippsland, having once again rejoined his birth family in the same region.

John Huey enlisted at Warragul in November, 1916. He saw active service in France with the 59th Battalion the following year, during which time he would have taken part in the third battle of Ypres (also known as the Passchendaele Offensive), but was hospitalized in December 1917 and shipped back to England with paratyphoid fever in January 1918. Huey developed pleurisy in his lungs and was sent home to Australia before the end of the war, never to regain his health. John Huey passed away at his sister Rosetta Donovan's residence at North Monegeetta in 1921 and is buried in an unmarked grave at Romsey Cemetery.



▲ | Harry Edward Hoy Ling (Australian War Memorial)

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- 58 1885 Victorian Birth Certificate reg. no. 8654. John was originally registered with the middle name Richard.
  - 59 Of Hokkien (Fujianese) origin, this family had settled in Canton (Guangzhou) in the late 18th century. Their actual surname was Ng, 'Howqua' being the title of their business concern. According to Chinese custom this could also be adopted as a personal name of the business owner, but in the case of the Howqua family it seems to have been handed down as a surname, at least when presenting themselves to an English speaking population.

# The Grandsons of Ah Kin Howqua 伍

Ah Kin Howqua, a publican and interpreter at Percydale near Avoca in the last decades of his life, was an influential figure on many of the Victorian goldfields (including Bendigo) in the early years of the gold rush. The Howqua 浩官 family had been one of the richest in the Chinese empire in the first half of the nineteenth century, their wealth having been built on the Canton tea trade.<sup>59</sup> Ah Kin seems to have been the only one of his prominent family to have permanently settled in Australia. Two of his grandsons, the children of his daughters Clara and Ellen, enlisted in the AIF during the Great War – one was to make the supreme sacrifice.



▲ | Harold William Davies MM  
(Australian War Memorial)



▲ | Soldiers' mothers – sisters Clara and Ellen Howqua.  
(Family File 51, Ming Yeung Library, Golden Dragon Museum; Mikkelsen Family Tree, Ancestry.com)

## Harold William Davies MM

(1893-1918)

Harold Davies lived for most of his short life in the Victorian goldfields region. He was born at Homebush, near Avoca, to Daniel Davies and his wife Ellen Howqua. As a child he shifted with his family to Sebastopol near Ballarat. Attending school there he became a 'pupil teacher', following which he spent two years at Teacher Training College in Melbourne. At the time of his enlistment on 27 July 1915 this young teacher was the head at Yandoit Hills State School, between Castlemaine and Daylesford. It was in the recruitment office at the latter town that he filled out his enlistment form and was medically examined. Davies was noted by the examining officer to have been of fair complexion with blue eyes and brown hair. It is now unknown if the Chinese part of Davies' ancestry was ever made known to or was noted by his war time contemporaries.

On the night of 23/24 November 1916 Harold showed great bravery under fire, an act which drew the attention of his superior officers. Davies received two recommendations for bravery awards, one for the DCM and the other for the Italian

60 'The Roll of Honor – Ballarat and District Men – Corporal H. W. Davies (M.M.)', *The Ballarat Courier*, 8 May 1918, p.5.

Bronze Medal for Valour. The paperwork for the DCM citation shows that while it was granted, the “DCM” was crossed out and changed to “MM”, the Military Medal, which is one grade lower. The Military Medal had at that time been only recently instituted as an award for acts of bravery of a level which earlier in the War had been deemed worthy of the Distinguished Conduct Medal. It was hoped in this way to maintain the prestige of the DCM, which was an award second only to the Victoria Cross. Perhaps the case of Davies shows that there was still some confusion as to proper award for different displays of courage. Both recommendations for awards were made by General E. E. “Pompey” Elliott. The Bronze Medal does not seem to have been awarded.

Corporal Harold William Davies MM of the 58th Battalion AIF died of wounds on 5 April 1918 and was laid to rest at La Neuville British Cemetery, Picardie, France.

## Albert Oscar Hughes

(1895-1956)

Albert Oscar Hughes was born in Percydale, near Avoca, in 1895, his parents being a land surveyor of Welsh extraction named William Senna Hughes, and Clara Howqua. Albert was working as a letter carrier when he enlisted at Melbourne on 20th July 1915. His father, residing in Northcote, was listed as his next of kin on the form. In answering the question of his religious affiliations he gave the unusual reply of “Welsh”. He was described as having a dark complexion with black hair and brown eyes – he was of moderate height, standing at 5 ft 7 ½ inches.

Hughes spent most of his overseas service attached to the Australian Army Postal Corps, mainly in France, but also at headquarters in London. Originally he had been assigned to the 23rd Battalion AIF, but was transferred to the 58th Battalion at Tel-el-Kabir, Egypt, soon after which he was hospitalized for two weeks due to an undisclosed illness.

After leaving Egypt for England Hughes was transferred to the Postal Service of the 5th Division AIF at London, before serving in the same capacity at headquarters in the field. After the 1918 Armistice Pte. Hughes stayed on duty for a further nine months in England, during which time he was promoted to Transport Corporal. He also survived a bout of influenza, likely the infamous “Spanish” flu, which hospitalized him in November 1918. Perhaps it was during this last extended stay in Britain that he met the Scottish lass who became his wife: Cpl. Albert Hughes married Agnes Carmichael at Glasgow, Scotland on 9th June 1919. Hughes returned to Australia with Agnes in the second half of 1919, almost a year after the end of hostilities.

Albert Hughes passed away at Healesville on 30 June 1956 at the age of 61. He was survived by his wife and three children.



# Leslie Henry Kew-Ming MM 蔡

(1897-1960)

Leslie Henry Kew-Ming was born near St Arnaud in 1897. Leslie's parents were Kew Ming Lock (sometimes called Ah Loch Kew Ming and Toy Lock) and Louisa Cum Moon. On his gravestone at Echuca the name of Leslie Kew Ming's father is given as Toy Lock in Roman letters, while in Chinese the inscription reads 蔡廣隆 (Choi Gwong Lung). From this it is clear that the family's clan name was 蔡, which is pronounced Toy in their native Toishanese dialect and Choi in standard Cantonese<sup>61</sup>. Kew Ming was a gardener and publican who had been born in the county of Toishan 台山 in China's Guangdong province<sup>62</sup> and Louisa, who was born in Percydale near Avoca, had come from the Wimmera town of Minyip, and was the daughter of a Chinese born father and a mother of Scottish background. The Kew Mings lived in the "Chinese Camp" at North St Arnaud (also known as New Bendigo), where Louisa was the licensee of the All Nations Hotel. After completing his schooling young Leslie spent time in Minyip with his maternal grandfather Cum Moon 金滿, learning the profession of boot making from the older man. Even in his teenage years Les seems to have already been community minded, being a member of the Minyip branch of the Australian Natives Association (the president and members of which regretted his loss and wished him safe return upon his enlistment in May 1916<sup>63</sup>) and of the Minyip Fire Brigade, which later inscribed his name on a beautifully carved and illuminated Roll of Honor which still hangs in the Minyip Fire Station.

Kew Ming began his active service in the 2nd ANZAC Cyclists Battalion, before being transferred to the 6th Training Battalion, and then to the 23rd Battalion AIF upon his arrival in France in April 1917.

In June 1917 a letter from Gunner Cecil O'Rourke that was published in the Minyip Guardian mentioned the arrival of new reinforcements joining his battalion in France, including fellow Minyip local Les Kew Ming.<sup>64</sup> O'Rourke mentions that at the time of his writing that they were camped within sight of the Cathedral of Albert on the Somme, 'well behind the firing line, and out of range of the guns.' Three months later at Broodseinde Corporal Kew Ming kept his men steady and focused on completing the task of digging a communications trench while under heavy shell fire and while he himself was wounded. For his bravery and leadership in this situation Les was awarded the Military Medal the following month.

By the war's end Kew Ming had been promoted to Sergeant. After the war Kew Ming found some fame as a champion athlete and footballer, being one of the first Asian Australians to play in the VFL. He also played in the Bendigo league for a time and settled in Echuca where his father had established himself as a market gardener. Kew Ming enlisted again in 1940, serving as a sergeant in training and works units on the home front until 1945. Leslie Kew Ming passed away at Melbourne in 1960 aged 63.

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61 As is often the case the Chinese name on the gravestone otherwise bears little resemblance to the one written in Roman letters, or to other known versions of the deceased's name. This may be due to a number of factors, including the fact that at that time it was common for a Chinese man to be addressed by different personal names at different stages of life or in different social situations.

62 Kew Ming's gravestone at Echuca cemetery, which had a bilingual inscription, has unfortunately been damaged, and so has the readability of some of the Chinese characters on the inscription.

63 'ANA', Minyip Guardian and Sheep Hills Advocate, 30 May 1916, p.30.

64 Soldiers' Letters – Gunner Cecil O'Rourke', Minyip Guardian and Sheep Hills Advocate, 19 June 1917, p.2.



▲ | (Photograph by Darge. Collection Australian War Memorial)



▲ | Minyip Fire Brigade WWI Roll of Honor. (Photographer Tim Fitzgerald)



▲ | Cigarette card from 1922 featuring Kew Ming in his North Melbourne jersey. (North Melbourne Football Club)

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▲ | (MF1126 - Collection Golden Dragon Museum)



▲ | John Lougoon (2nd from left) carrying pearl in front of Sun Loong, Easter 1973. (AP0310 - Collection Bendigo Chinese Association)

## Albert Roy (John) Lagoon / Lougoon 雷 (1898-1975)

Albert Roy Lougoon, known as Roy or John, was the son of Myers Flat market gardener Samuel Louey (雷) Goon and his wife Mary Ellen Maher. When Roy Lougoon enlisted for active duty on 5 August 1916 at the age of 18, he had been a member of Area 68A (Eaglehawk) cadets for four years, with which he was then still serving.<sup>65</sup> Lagoon left Melbourne on the troop ship 'Nestor' in October 1916, and arrived at Plymouth in mid November. He initially assigned in France to the 60th Battalion (which he joined in mid June 1917), but only two weeks later was marched out to join the 46th. Later that year Lougoon's unit took part in the battles of Messines and Passchendaele in the Ypres sector

and was rotated in and out of front line duties throughout the following winter.<sup>66</sup> In mid March Roy received in an accident a severe injury to his left hand which proved sufficiently serious to end his time of active service in France. On 30th November 1918 John Lougoon was welcomed home with a celebratory evening at his parents' Myers Flat residence, during which his character was praised and he was presented with a wallet by the chairman of the Welcome Home Committee.<sup>67</sup>

Lougoon served again in the Second World War. He was assigned as a guard at the Murchison Prisoner of War Camp. Roy also was involved in the annual Easter Parade and as an elderly man was still able to lead the dragon Sun Loong on his processional route through Bendigo's streets. Albert Roy Lougoon passed away in 1975 and was buried at the Eaglehawk Cemetery.

65 NAA: B884, V5151

66 [http://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit\\_11233.asp](http://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit_11233.asp) Accessed 15/04/2014

67 'Returned Soldiers', Bendigonian, 5 December 1918, p.13.



▲ | Alfred Lee in peacetime (Chris Lee - Private Collection)

## Alfred John Edward Lee MM 李

(1895-1964)

Alfred Lee Wah was born at the Ironbark Chinese Camp in North Bendigo in 1895. He was the seventh and youngest child of Church of England catechist James Lee Wah 李華 and his wife Mary Victoria Hubbar. Although the elder Lee Wah was transferred to Maryborough while Alfred was still young, Lee would later remember a childhood and youth spent between the two towns, participating in sporting events in Bendigo and carrying the dragon's tale in the Easter parade. Alfred was a 22 year old plumber and gas fitter when he enlisted on 2 January 1918 in the last year of the war. While serving with the 58th Battalion in France Lee was wounded on 29 September and invalided back to England. The incident in which this occurred resulted in Alfred being recommend for the Military Medal:

'For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during operations N.E. of BELLICOURT between 29th Sept. and 1st October 1918.

This man volunteered to go out in daylight under intense shell and Machine Gun fire to bring in a wounded comrade who was lying in an exposed position. On the way Pte. LEE was blown up by a shell and wounded in the thigh but continued on and brought back the wounded man safely. Although again wounded Pte. LEE refused to go out to the Dressing Station until ordered to do so by the N.C.O. in charge of his Platoon.'<sup>68</sup>

The war ended little over a month after he was wounded, but after leaving hospital Lee, promoted to Extra Regimental Corporal, remained on duty in London until mid 1920 when he returned home to Australia. In civilian life Alfred took up a soldier settlement block at Redcliffs near Mildura where he grew wine grapes but eventually went back to his original trade as a plumber. He married Christabel Armstrong in 1935 and passed away in 1964 at Heidelberg at the age of 69.

68 Extract from Private Alfred John Edward Lee's recommendation for a Military Medal, Australian War Museum.

# George Vincent Lee Kim MM 李

(1897-1984)

A son of Hong Kong born immigrant William Lee Kim (李錦興) and his wife Ellen Plowright, George Vincent Lee Kim was born at Grassy Flat, where his father had a market garden, on 12 January 1897. A year later he was baptized into the Church of England by Rev. R. C. M. Kelly at the mission church at the Ironbark Chinese village.<sup>69</sup>

As a teenager Lee Kim joined the army cadets, and by 1914 he was a corporal in the 67th Infantry Regiment in Australia's part-time pre-war military.<sup>70</sup> George enlisted for active service, with the legal consent of his father, at the age of 19 in July 1916, two months later he embarking for England on the troop ship HMAT Shropshire as a private in the 60th Battalion AIF, the unit with which he was to remain throughout the course of the war. Lee Kim arrived in France early in the new year of 1917, and by year's end had been promoted to corporal after almost 12 months of service in the field. A small glimpse of the horrors that he must have witnessed during the conflict was conveyed in a letter to his mother which was quoted in the Bendigo Advertiser: 'A bursting shell from the German guns killed Private J. Forrest and another Australian, while Lieutenant Power, formerly of the Bendigo camp, was seriously wounded by fragments of the shell. Private Forrest was killed instantly, and was buried in a military cemetery in France by his old pals. He was one of the best, and was very popular with his comrades.'<sup>71</sup> The Roll of Honour circular for John Forrest states that he was killed in action on 17 March 1917 at Bullecourt, France.

In the final months of the war his bravery in the field resulted in Lee Kim being awarded the Military Medal. His citation reads: 'For conspicuous gallantry



▲ | (MF2778 - Collection Golden Dragon Museum)

and devotion to duty during operation on 30th August - 5th September 1918. On 2nd September 1918 near PERONNE when his platoon officer was rendered a casualty, this N.C.O. took charge of the platoon and although badly shaken he set a splendid example by his initiative and bearing in leading the platoon forward to its new position.'<sup>72</sup>

Operations around and at Peronne by Australian troops were carried out from 29 August to 2 September. The town itself was located at the confluence of the Cologne and Somme Rivers, and was surrounded by sturdy seventeenth century ramparts. After several days of intense fighting in and around Peronne the town finally fell to the Australians on 2 September, the day of Lee Kim's notable bravery and show of leadership. George was likely engaged in fighting around the heights of Mont St. Quentin at the time, which overlook the

69 St Paul's baptism register, no. 10566.

70 'Sporting Intelligence - Rifle Shooting', Bendigo Advertiser, 26 May 1914, p.3.

71 'Killed in Action - Private Jack Forrest. How he died.', Bendigo Advertiser, 18 June 1917, p.5.

72 'Commonwealth Gazette' No. 115, 10 October 1919. Lee Kim's World War I service record is held at the National Archives of Australia:

NAA: B2455, LEE KIM GEORGE VINCENT



▲ George's parents Ellen and William Lee Kim with his elder brother Richard (b.1885) (AP0988 – Collection Bendigo Chinese Association)



▲ George Lee Kim receiving his Military Medal. (MF2776 – Collection Golden Dragon Museum)

town of Peronne,— it was for actions at this location from 31 August to 3 September 1918 that his 60th Battalion was awarded one of its battle honours.

Later that month Lee Kim was hospitalized with a 'mild' gunshot wound and was returned to Australia in March 1919. He married Gerte Powell soon afterwards in 1920.

When George Lee Kim settled back into civilian life he resumed work at his father's Grassy Flat market garden, the ownership of which he took over in the mid 1920s. George enlisted again in the Second World War, serving for a time as a sergeant in a garrison battalion at Tatura. George, along with his son George Jr, was also involved with the Chinese procession in the Easter Fair and had a prominent role carrying and accompanying the parade dragon Loong.

George Vincent Lee Kim died in 1984 and was buried at White Hills Cemetery.



▲ George V. Lee Kim with Yar Loong, c.1939. AP0026.2 negative (Collection Bendigo Chinese Association)

# John Henry Lock 雷

(1898- 1987)

Son of Albert Henry Lock (1876-1926) and Annie Catherine Rasmussen of Derwent Gully, an historic mining locality near St Just's Point and the suburb of Long Gully, which lay outside the city boundary in the then Shire of Marong. Albert's father was Louey Sam Lock alias Quock Sam or Ah Sam (雷阿三), a Chinese born miner who also resided at Derwent Gully. It was here that John grew up, working as a miner until he enlisted in the AIF on 11th January 1916 just a day after his 18th birthday.<sup>73</sup> At the time of his enlistment he had already served for four years in the senior cadets.

After training in Egypt Lock was sent to France to join with the 57th Battalion. Kidney disease put John out of action in 1917, and by the final year of the war the heavy fighting that he had witnessed had taken a devastating psychological toll. Suffering from "traumatic neurasthenia" he was sent home in mid 1918.

Upon his return from the war Lock initially settled back into life at Derwent Gully, and was recorded there in the 1919 electoral roll as a railway employee. By 1924 John had moved to Melbourne, where he was to reside at various localities for the rest of his life. He married Eleanor Hudson in 1925. With the outbreak of the Second World War Lock enlisted again, serving as a sergeant at 2 Central Ordnance Depot in Melbourne from 1939 to 1948. John Henry Lock passed away in 1987.



▲ John Henry Lock in Darge's photographic studio at the Broadmeadows training camp. (Australian War Memorial)



▲ Australian soldiers at Tel-EI-Kabir, Egypt 3rd July 1916. John Lock had completed his month long training here a couple of weeks previously. (Australian War Memorial)



▲ Detail from John H. Lock's page in the illuminated book commemorating soldiers from the Shire of Marong who fought in the Great War. This book was originally displayed on a shelf beneath a memorial plaque in the former council chambers.

<sup>73</sup> Lock's service records give his enlistment date as the 11 January 1916 and his age as 18, and his entry in the Shire of Marong soldiers' book, while giving his date of enlistment as 20 January, states that his birth date was 10 January 1898.



▲ | (AP0397 – Collection Bendigo Chinese Association)



▲ | Percy Long as a child in Bendigo.

## Percy Goldspring / Kum Fook / Long 邵 (1887-1963)

Percy was born 1887 at Maryborough, to Minnie Goldspring who later that year married Kum Fook. In 1895, now a widow, Minnie Cum Foo [sic] married Peter Long 邵良悅<sup>74</sup>, a Chinese born miner who resided at Sheepshead Reef, Golden Square, Bendigo. Percy thereafter took his stepfather's anglicized surname. He would likely have attended school for a time in Bendigo before the Long family left the district after 1898.

Percy's parents attained some notoriety in the Australian press in the years before the war when both were separately charged with the murder of two young women who had died as a result of illegal abortions conducted under their auspices. Peter Long was then (in 1910) trading as a herbalist under the name Yee Lee at Ballarat, while Minnie was

managing operations in Melbourne. The charges against Peter were not proved, but Minnie was found guilty and initially sentenced to death. Her punishment was later commuted to time in prison.

Percy Long was a 29 year old labourer when he enlisted at Brunswick on 3 March 1916.<sup>75</sup> He listed his mother Minnie, who had been released from jail at that stage, as his next of kin. Percy served in France with the 24th Battalion, and was wounded in action on 4 October 1917, being afterwards transferred to Berrington War Hospital near Shrewsbury with a gun shot wound to his left hand. Long briefly returned to France in March 1918 before illness resulted in him being hospitalized once again in England.

Percy Long returned to Australia in 1919 – he married Martha Westbrook in 1921 and together they raised a family in Melbourne where he worked as a carpenter. Percy Lawrence Long (he later added the middle name) passed away in 1973 and was laid to rest at Fawkner Cemetery.

74 (Cantonese: Siu Leung Yut, Mandarin: Shào Liángyuè). Peter Long's Chinese name is given in: Wong Kin (comp.), Chinese International Business Directory of the World, Chinese International Business Directory Co., San Francisco, 1913, p.1236.

75 NAA: B2455, LONG PERCY



▲ | Sam Loy with his wife Aggie. (Courtesy of James Loy)

## Samuel Arthur John Loy (1880-1971)

Samuel Loy was born at White Hills to Grassy Flat miner and gardener Ah Loy and his wife Elizabeth (nee Chapman). The prematurely grey haired Loy enlisted on 9 December 1915 at the age of 36, one of three people to present themselves at the enlistment depot in Pall Mall that day (all of whom were accepted).<sup>76</sup> After completing his training at Broadmeadows Loy was farewelled alongside Private H. Tattersall at a send off at the Green Gate Hotel which was attended by friends and a number of dignitaries including Bendigo city councilors and the local Member of Parliament.<sup>77</sup> He was presented with 'a safety razor and shaving outfit from his friends, a gents' wallet from Mr. and Mrs. V. Lock [his nephew], and a gold ring from his brother and sister.' Six days later Loy departed Melbourne on the HMAV Suffolk on 1 April 1916, and arrived at Marseilles, France (via Suez and Alexandria) on June 4. He was

assigned to the 7th Battalion A.I.F., a unit which was about to see action at Pozzières in the Somme Valley in July and August 1916. Within a few weeks of his arrival in France Loy was hospitalized with measles, then was repeatedly admitted over the succeeding months suffering from trench fever, rheumatism, and nephritis (inflammation of the kidneys). Loy's chronic ill health resulted in his being shipped to England in November, where he was treated at the Brook War Hospital in Woolwich. In April 1917 he was put on a ship back to Australia where he was formally discharged as medically unfit on 30 June.<sup>78</sup> By that stage Sam Loy had already been home at White Hills for a couple of weeks.

With his early discharge Loy became one of the few ex-servicemen of the Great War in Bendigo at the time - he was apparently only the third soldier to be welcomed back by the White Hills 'welcome home' committee, even though the war had then been going for almost two years.<sup>79</sup> This meant that he received more individual attention from well meaning civilian groups than did the later veterans who returned home en masse. Upon his arrival at Bendigo Railway Station on 19 June he was driven to his old school at White Hills, where followed a short ceremony featuring the singing of Kipling's Recessional hymn by the students and a speech by the chairman of the welcome home committee. A week later Sam showed his thanks by presenting each of the school children with a bag of lollies and peanuts.<sup>80</sup> The community ceremonies associated with his coming home were not finished however: a larger welcome back event was held towards the end of June at the White Hills Public Hall, where Loy, flanked on stage by the two other returned soldiers and the Bishop of Bendigo, was presented with a 'gold medal and citizens' certificate'.<sup>81</sup> After this flurry of attention Sam was left to settle back into civilian life. Samuel Loy later saw service in the Second World War. He passed away in 1971 and is buried at the White Hills Cemetery.

76 'Recruiting Campaign – Bendigo Depot', Bendigo Advertiser, 10 December 1915, p.5.

77 'Presentations to soldiers', Bendigo Advertiser, 27 March 1916, p.7.

78 NAA: B2455, LOY SAMUEL ARTHUR JOHN

79 'Welcome to White Hills soldier', Bendigo Advertiser, 20 June 1917, p.8.

80 'Grateful soldier', Bendigo Advertiser, 28 June 1917, p.5.

81 'Welcome to White Hills Soldier', Bendigo Advertiser, 29 June 1917, p.6.

# Albert David Lum

(1888 – 1982)

Albert Lum was born on the river town of Wentworth, N.S.W. to Suey Ah Lum and Mary Anne Jane Vincent in 1888. The Lums shifted to Mildura where Albert worked as a labourer and carter. He married Valda Margaret (Maggie) Dillon in 1911 and already had a young family by the time that he enlisted in 1915. He joined the 14th Battalion at Gallipoli in the last month of that campaign, a unit that was known as “Jacka’s Mob” as it numbered amongst its members Gallipoli VC winner Albert Jacka.

After the evacuation from Gallipoli Lum suffered severe health problems in Egypt resulting from a diseased cardiac valve. In 1917 he was transferred to the Australian Flying Corps as a batman (officer’s servant) where he had the rank of Lance Corporal, serving in this capacity in England and France before being invalided home to Australia before the end of the war. Albert spent the rest of his life in Mildura, Sydney, and Melbourne, working variously as a horticulturalist, labourer, and cleaner. Despite the severe physical infirmities which he had suffered during his war service Albert David Lum passed away in 1982 at the age of 94.



▲ | Albert Lum in later life. (Courtesy of the Lum family)



▲ | Albert Lum and son (Courtesy of Kevin Mustey)



▲ | Postcard sent by Albert Lum to his mother from France in 1918. (Courtesy of the Lum family)



▲ | The home front - Maggie Lum and children. (Courtesy of the Lum family)



▲ | (National Library of Australia)



▲ | Chinese interpreter Joseph Mason with wife Ellen and daughter Maud. (MF0964 - Collection Golden Dragon Museum)

## Robert Mason

(1893-1918)

Robert Mason was a descendent of one of Bendigo's oldest Chinese-Australian families, though this would not have been obvious from his English sounding surname. His grandfather was Macau born government interpreter Abboo Mason (or Massung), who had been resident in Victoria from the 1840s. Robert's father Joseph, who also worked with the Chinese community (in addition to being a pastry cook, pie seller, and hawker), had married Ellen Brown at Wentworth, N.S.W, in 1882. Robert, one of the younger children in the family, was born in Bairnsdale in 1893, where Joseph was then stationed as a government interpreter. By the late 1890s the family had shifted to Bendigo, where Robert's father had grown up in the 1860s and '70s and his grandfather Abboo had once also worked as an interpreter. The Masons lived in Caledonia Street near the Ironbark Chinese Camp, where Joseph often did interpreting work and would have attended the Gee Hing temple, a Chinese fraternal

organisation of which he was a known member. It is not known how much Robert and his siblings associated themselves with the Chinese side of his cultural heritage, though his brother Joseph Henry was described in an 1890s Advertiser report as a 'little halfcaste', showing (in the language of the day) that their Chinese background was certainly still noted by others in the community, even with a family who were as long established as the Masons. Robert was still living at the Caledonia Street address at the time of his enlistment in 1916. After leaving Australia, Mason served in France in the 58th Battalion A.I.F. Only a month before the war's end Mason succumbed to broncho-pneumonia at Dury Hospital near Amiens, France. His initial place of burial was in the Dury Hospital Military Cemetery, but in 1923 his body was disinterred owing to the fact that 'in order to reach [the cemetery] visitors were compelled to walk through the grounds of a French Lunatic Asylum where the inmates were at work.'<sup>82</sup> His final resting place is in the war cemetery at Villers-Bretonneux. An inscription to his memory was also placed on his mother's gravestone in Bendigo Cemetery.

# Benjamin Moy Ling 梅

(1885 – 1946)



▲ | (Private Collection)

Benjamin Moy Ling was born at Castlemaine in 1885, the son of Methodist missionary the Revd. James Moy Ling 梅靈 and his wife Kim (nee Wong). The Moy Lings had a long and continuing association with central Victoria, even after they shifted to Melbourne in the 1880s. James Moy Ling had founded the first Chinese Methodist Church in Bendigo in 1867 as well as the church in Melbourne's Little Bourke Street Chinatown while also superintending the Chinese Methodist Church at Castlemaine for many years. Benjamin was well known for his singing voice both before and after the war and is known to have attended competitions in Bendigo. Moy Ling attempted to enlist early in the war but was rejected due to his "nationality", despite being a "natural born British subject". Ben was able to obtain a special exemption in 1917 and served briefly in the field in France with the 4th Divisional Signaling Company shortly before the armistice. Benjamin Moy Ling was a popular and respected figure – 150 people were reported to have attended his farewell at the Methodist Mission before he left for the war. After his return in 1919 Ben was active in church and community and passed away in 1946.

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# The Grandsons of Wong Hee 黃喜

William Wong Hee (c.1840 - 1913) and Sarah Reeves (d.1904) had met on the Victorian goldfields and were one of a number of mixed Chinese and European couples in the gold rush town of Percydale near Avoca in the 1870s. The Wong Hee family in the years afterwards shifted to St Arnaud and then the flat plains of the nearby Wimmera - Wong Hee was a farmer residing at Banyena near Marnoo when he applied for naturalisation at St. Arnaud in 1882.<sup>83</sup> When Wong Hee died at St. Arnaud in 1913 his will makes no mention of his family and descendants in Victoria (with the exception of his third wife Annie Gar Foon<sup>84</sup>). The document does however show the older man's continuing strong connections with the Chinese part of his transnational family, leaving the Banyena property to a son in Canton named War Que and land at Yarrowonga to a nephew named War Hong<sup>85</sup>. Despite that Wong Hee did have a large family of Australian born descendants, including three grandsons (surnamed Rogasch and Lang) who were soon to serve overseas in the coming international conflict – their story is told below.

## Edward Albert George (Jack) Rogasch (1895-1915)

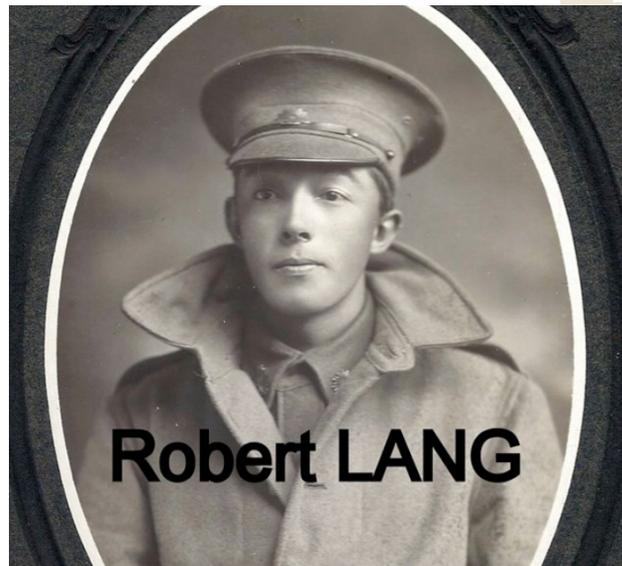
Jack Rogasch was born at Lake Leaghur near Boort in 1895 to Frederick Ernest Rogasch and Hannah Christina Wong Hee. Hannah had been born at in 1872 at Percydale to William Wong Hee and Sarah Reeves, and had married Frederick Ernest Rogasch, who was from a German South Australian family, in 1889. The birthplaces of their children show that the family moved around from Banyena to Boort and then to Raywood near Bendigo. Hannah Rogasch passed away at Banyena in 1898 when Jack was only three years old. Hannah was one of three sisters who were long remembered in the local district both for their beauty and their tragic early demise from tuberculosis.



▲ Edward Albert George (Jack) Rogasch  
(Australian War Memorial)



▲ Photographic Honour Roll in the Marnoo Memorial Hall.  
Sapper E. A. Rogasch is listed at right (Photographer: Tim Fitzgerald, Monument Australia)



▲ Courtesy of Rupanyup Historical Society

83 NAA: A712, 1882/W10200

84 After Sarah's death Wong Hee married Annie Gar Foon at Bendigo in 1904.

85 VPRS 7591/P2, unit 492

Jack Rogasch was a nineteen year old carpenter from the Wimmera town of Marnoo when he enlisted on 10 September 1914. Rogasch was assigned to the 2nd Field Company Engineers with the rank of sapper. Jack was took part in the landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 – he sent a written account of the event and subsequent campaign back home which was printed in the St Arnaud Mercury:

“Everywhere the warships were playing havoc with the forts and batteries. The din was deafening. We stepped off our boat on to the destroyer, and then in to rowing boats, and when they were full a steam pinnace took us ashore, the rest coming on the destroyer. We had to jump out of the boats into the water to land. As we were doing this a shell came just about 3 feet above our heads, but fell into the sea. This was our first taste of war. I soon learnt that it was shrapnel, and the most dangerous of all shells owing to its bursting and letting forth hundreds of bullets, any of which has a death dealing blow for 200 yards. Well I was that surprised at the suddenness of it that I took no notice of it, but the next one found me well and snugly hidden from danger in a big hole on the shore. We soon got to work making roads and other engineering works, with shells about 60 to the minute falling around us. Well that is a repetition of our seven weeks here, only with a few spells. I have been hit twice with shrapnel, once behind the right ear, which for a few hours gave me a stiff neck, and the other (about three weeks later) on the muscles of the right arm, but luckily it was only bruised. You hear a shell coming a good while before it gets to you, so you have time to get out of the road and under cover. The shell bursts are beautiful, especially at night. At first everyone used to duck, but now little or no heed is paid to them except by new comers, whose antics under fire for a while are the laughing stock of the ones that came before them. Well the things they use at war are far and away more that one would think. I would advise any one of you who are coming to the war to join, if possible, the engineers, or the Army Service Corps or the artillery.”<sup>86</sup>

Only a couple of weeks after writing these lines Jack was killed by an enemy action. On 5 July 1915 Rogasch was in a tunnel near the “Pimple” at Lone Pine with Sapper Weekes listening for nearby Turkish mining activity when both were buried and smothered when the Turks detonated their mine (the incident was later recounted by Charles E. W. Bean in his official history of the war).<sup>87</sup> Rogasch was recommended for a posthumous bravery award. When the news of his sacrifice reached home Sapper Rogasch’s image appeared in a number of newspapers nationwide amongst other fallen heroes of Gallipoli. Jack’s personal effects which were sent back to his father included a bible and prayer books that the devout

young Methodist had kept with him in as a source of spiritual comfort in the trenches. No place of burial (beyond the trench where he was entombed) is recorded for Jack Rogach - the Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists only a plaque at the Lone Pine Memorial at Gallipoli under his name.

## Herbert August Adolph Rogasch

(1893-1958)

Herbert was born at Leaghur southwest of Kerang. Like his younger brother Jack he was a carpenter in the Wimmera town of Marnoo at the time of his enlistment on 3 July 1915, and also like his brother he was to put his practical skills to use in the Engineers. But there was to be no family reunion at the front: Herbert joined up just days before Jack was killed at Gallipoli. Prior to enlistment he had been in the militia and citizens’ forces, spending three years in the Victorian Rangers. Also, shortly before his departure from Australia Herbert married his sweetheart Ella Blanche Hepburn Somers. In the A.I.F. Herbert Rogasch served with the 12th Field Company Engineers in France where his conduct earned him a mention in dispatches after the end of the war. Unfortunately we have no clear photos of Herbert during his active service, but his enlistment papers described him as being “dark” complexioned and with black hair and standing at over 5 foot 7 inches.

After returning to Australia Herbert worked as a carpenter in Melbourne’s eastern suburbs. He passed away at Malvern in 1958.

## Robert Cecil Lang

(1899 – 1984)

Robert Lang was born at Banyena in 1899 to Robert Oliver Lang and Alfrina Maud Wong Hee. He enlisted in the last year of the war and peace came while he was still in training in England. Lang still served “in the field” in peacetime Belgium after the armistice, and returned to Australia in 1919. Robert settled in Dimboola after the war where he worked for the Victorian Railway. He passed away there in 1984.

86 “At the Dardanelles – Letters from Soldiers – Sapper J. Rogasch”, St Arnaud Mercury, 7 August 1915, p.4.

87 C. E. W. Bean, *The Story of Anzac*, Vol.2, Angus and Robertson, 1924, p.276.



▲ | Brothers George Ah Sheck (top left) and Herbert Hickey (bottom centre) on the Deniliquin war memorial roll of honour. (Photographer Leigh McKinnon)

## George Sheck / Ah Sheck

(c.1878-1916)

George was born at Gunbower or Echuca to cook Ah Sheck and Margaret Hickey. The family had shifted northwards to Deniliquin, N.S.W. by the 1890s where Hickey is known to have had other children who were half-siblings to George. George Sheck's sister Alice later claimed that when they were 'very young' their mother Margaret abandoned them, leading to a rift in the family that apparently never healed.<sup>88</sup> Nothing further is known about their father Ah (or 'Archie') Sheck.

By the early years of the twentieth century George was living in Bridge Street, Bendigo, working as a jockey and trainer. Tragedy struck when his brother William, also a jockey, was killed in a racing accident at Jubilee Park, Grassy Flat, in 1905. Another tragedy hit the family ten years later when George's half-brother Herbert James Hickey was killed in action at Gallipoli in 23 May 1915. By 8 July Pte.

Hickey's death was being reported in the press. Two days later, and likely in response to news of his brother's death, 37 year old George Sheck enlisted at Bendigo.

Prior to enlistment George Sheck had also been resident at Joel Joel near Stawell where his sister Mrs Alice Currie was living. Alice was George's designated next-of-kin and only surviving close relative other than his mother. By the time that George was serving overseas she too had relocated to the Bendigo region, giving her address as Maiden Gully.

Sheck saw active service in France with the 22nd Battalion AIF. He landed at Marseilles in May 1916 via a stopover in Alexandria. His time on the front lines was to be tragically short: George Sheck was killed in action on 5 August 1916. According to an eyewitness report later gathered by the Red Cross George was killed by a wound to the head in the German communications trench at Tom's Cut on Pozieres Ridge.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>88</sup> See correspondence in Sheck's service file: NAA: B2455, SHECK GEORGE

<sup>89</sup> Red Cross Wounded and Missing Files – 3925 Private George Sheck 22nd Battalion

# James Andrew Siakew

(1889-1951)

James Andrew Sia Cow was born in 1889 at Bealiba, Victoria, to Chinese born miner Andrew Sia Cow and his wife Ellen (nee Dennison), who was originally from Sandhurst (Bendigo). Their family name is written variously in Australian records as Sy Cow, Sea Cow, Sey Cow, Sie Kew, and Sia Kew, the spelling finally settling as Siakew in the early twentieth century. The Chinese characters for their name and Andrew's exact place of origin are unknown.

By the early 1890s the Siakew family had settled at Golden Gully, near Bendigo. James was a 27 year old miner living in McDougall Rd, Golden Gully when he enlisted in the A.I.F. on 10 November 1916. It was likely because of his profession that James was placed in the 8 / 2nd Pioneers, a unit which was trained to support both the army engineers in their construction works and the infantry in fighting at the front line.

Pte. Siakew left Melbourne on the ship 'Medic' on 16 December, arriving in England two months later, where he stayed for most of 1917 owing to a long period of sickness and hospitalization that occurred after he had completed his training in Britain. James finally reached France, and rejoined his unit, in November 1917. In March 1918 Siakew was detached to the 184th Tunneling Company for the month, his experience in Bendigo's mines likely proving useful in trench building and other 'underground warfare' activities in which such companies were primarily employed. James stayed in France until the end of May 1919, half a year after the Armistice, returned home to Australia in September, and was discharged from the army in December that year. James Andrew Siakew passed away in Melbourne in 1951.

James Andrew Siakew is known to have been commemorated on the Honour Roll at the Golden Gully Methodist School Hall (no longer extant).



▲ The wedding of James's sister Elsie to Philip Hing Yee, Golden Gully, Bendigo, 1903. Is fourteen year old James Siakew the lad sitting next to the bride at right? (State Library of Victoria)



▲ Members of the 2nd Australian Pioneer Battalion making a wagon track from planks of wood at Chateau Wood, in the Ypres Sector, to allow the passage of traffic deeper into the freshly captured ground, and to facilitate a further advance. 26 September 1917. (Australian War Memorial)

90 NAA: B2455, SIAKEW JAMES

91 [https://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit\\_11394.asp](https://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit_11394.asp) (accessed 13/07/2014)

92 <http://www.1914-1918.net/tunnelcoyre.htm> (accessed 13/07/2014)



▲ Charles Roy Lee Suey in Darge's studio at the Broadmeadows training camp. (Collection Australian War Memorial - Photograph by Darge)



▲ Bulford War Cemetery, last resting place of Roy Lee Suey. (Commonwealth War Graves Commission)

## Charles Roy Todd (Lee Suey 李瑞) (1899-1917)

Charles Roy Todd was the eldest son of Castlemaine storekeeper Charles Lee Suey (d.1912) and his wife Florence (nee Todd), and grandson of Castlemaine Chinese community leader James Lee Suey (李瑞). Born before his parents were married in 1901, Charles (or Roy, as he was known) was registered under his mother's name at birth, but after his parents' marriage Roy took his father's name Lee (or Le) Suey.

Roy Lee Suey went to Castlemaine State School, which he left in 1912, thereafter working as a gardener at Campbell's Creek, where he had also begun playing for the local football team. After his father had passed away in 1912 the Lee Suey family relocated to Bendigo, but Roy seems to have remained in Castlemaine until his enlistment.

Roy, born in 1899, was underage when he enlisted apparently without his mother's knowledge in 1915. He gave his next of kin instead as his aunt Emily Kimm of Castlemaine. He also enlisted under the name Charles Todd, and gave his birthplace as Hay, N.S.W., as well as falsifying his age.

In August 1915 the Mount Alexander Mail listed Roy Lee Suey amongst Campbell's Creek's thirteen 'best and regular [football] players' who had 'joined the colours', adding that, along with thirteen supporters of the club who had also joined up, they had 'enough for a team on the heights of Gallipoli.'<sup>93</sup>

By the time that he arrived in the Middle East, however, the campaign in the Dardanelles was over. Todd had left Australia with the 14th Battalion A.I.F., joining his unit at Ismailia, Egypt on 8 January 1916. On 3 March Todd joined with the newly formed 46th Battalion at Tel-el-Kabir, and within a week had been shipped to Marseilles.<sup>94</sup> The 46th arrived at the Western Front in June 1916, and Charles was wounded twice two months later in

93 'Campbell's Creek – A Creditable Record – Honour Boards Unveiled – Memorial Service to Fallen Soldiers', Mount Alexander Mail, 12 August 1915, p.2.

94 NAA: B2455, TODD CHARLES



▲ | Roy in England, c.1917. (Courtesy of Pat Belmont)

August during action at Pozières. Suffering from a severe shrapnel wound in his left thigh, Todd was subsequently transferred to England, where he spent over five months recuperating at the Graylingwell War Hospital, Chichester until his transfer and discharge in February the following year. In May 1917, still in England on depot duty, Charles Todd was admitted to the 1st Australian Dermatological Hospital at Bulford with a venereal disease. While in hospital a pre-existing tubercular condition developed into pneumonia and Todd passed away on 18 July. His remains were laid to rest with a military funeral three days later in the A.I.F. Special Section at the Bulford Parish Cemetery. In a report sent to his mother in Bendigo by the hospital, Roy's final days were described in a few terse sentences: 'The deceased was in a special ward where every possible attention was given to him. The Chaplin saw him regularly and will write to the relatives. He was delirious (intermittent) for some days before his death.' He was also only 18 years old.



▲ | The Melbourne Herald 1 November 1915

## Camillus Wentworth Sue / Wallace Essay

(1892 – 1915)

Camillus Sue was born at Wentworth, N.S.W. to George Sue and Catherine Cantwell. Known as "Nugget", he grew up in Mildura where his mother kept the Victorian Dining Saloon and he temporarily worked at the local post office.<sup>95</sup> Nugget Sue was a station hand before the war, with his skills as a jackaroo likely of some use in his assignment with the 8th Light Horse after his enlistment in October 1914. For reasons now unknown he chose to enlist under the name Wallace Essay.

The 8th Light Horse saw action in the Gallipoli campaign, for which they had to leave their horses and serve as infantry due to the terrain. As one history of the regiment relates "The 8th formed the first two waves for the Brigade's disastrous attack on the Nek on 7 August and suffered heavily".<sup>96</sup> It was during this battle that Trooper Wallace Essay was first declared missing, then killed in action. Afterward's Sue's photograph was published in a number of Australian newspapers and his sacrifice was commemorated in the earliest ANZAC Day services in home town Mildura. Later a nephew born in the 1920s bore his distinctive name, and as Trooper Wallace Essay he is commemorated on the Lone Pine Memorial.

<sup>95</sup> The Mildura Cultivator, 22 Sept 1915

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U51042>

# Laurence Mansfield John Wagstaff

John Wagstaff was born in 1892 at Campbells Creek just south of Castlemaine to a mother whose family were of Tasmanian convict origin and an unnamed father who is believed to have been Chinese.

Wagstaff was working as an employee of the Victorian Railways when he enlisted in July 1915 at the height of the Gallipoli campaign. An athletic young man he played football for the Campbells Creek club alongside his younger fellow enlistee Roy Lee Suey. Later in the war, upon his promotion to sergeant in 1918, the Castlemaine Mail printed the following description of him at around the time of his enlistment: "Sergeant Wagstaff was a very popular young man here, and was a fine stamp of athlete, and in the football field he excelled himself. He was also very proficient in the noble art of self-defence, and on the troopship conveying his battalion to the war several boxing contests, carrying with them a substantial purse, were decided. In all the young sergeant was pitted against 16 of the best of fighters, and was never ousted by any, and easily won the championship. His many friends here will wish him further distinction on active service."

From 1916 to 1918 he saw active service with the 1st Pioneers Battalion on the Western front in France and returned to Australia in January 1919. During this time John was accidentally wounded by a bomb, and also suffered sickness and injury that at times left him hospitalized. During his time in the AIF John Wagstaff is reported to have written regular correspondence to his family back home and kept a meticulous diary of events. These accounts have unfortunately not entered the public domain and it is unclear if any have survived to the present day.

An important life event occurred when he married Usalla MacPherson at Glasgow, Scotland on Christmas Day 1918. Usalla later joined John in Australia. John Wagstaff died at Castlemaine in 1984 at the age of 92.



▲ (Photograph by Darge. Courtesy of the Australian War Memorial)

97 Chinese ANZACs p.99.

98 "Of the great number of Campbell's Creek men at the front, in the matter of correspondence two stand out prominently, viz., Signaller Archie Ford and Private John Wagstaff, who each, since the day they sailed away from their native shore, have compiled a diary in a most accurate and painstaking form, the reading of which would take some considerable time. They each give a daily account of happening out of the ordinary during the voyage at sea, the training in Egypt and elsewhere, and the actual fighting. Their marvelous escapes in battle make sensational reading, and the parents are naturally very proud of these interesting books." "Invalided Home – Campbell's Creek Welcome", Castlemaine Mail, 5 June 1918, p.3.



▲ | Albert Victor Young (Australian War Memorial)



▲ | The Young family of Dunolly in 1909. (Courtesy of Edna Brownbill)

## The Young Brothers of Dunolly

Pte Albert Victor Young (1897-1949), pictured here at the Broadmeadows training camp in 1915, was born as Albert Victor Almeida and was of Chinese, Portuguese, English, and possibly Jewish descent, his family tree being a striking example of the multiculturalism of the goldfields. His father George Ah Young was born near the Beechworth goldfield, and the family's Chinese lineage possibly goes back to Amoy (Xiamen) in south China's Hokkien (Fujian) Province. Albert was born out of a long term relationship between George and Florence Jane Almeida in 1897 at Ballarat. The family's main connections, though, were with the township of Dunolly.

Albert enlisted at Maryborough on 9th April 1915, shortly before the Gallipoli landing. In his deployment overseas Young served as a stretcher bearer on the Western Front, during which he was severely wounded and sent home to Dunolly before war's end in 1918. Further tragedy struck the family when his elder brother Ernest Young was killed in action at Warfusee near Villers-Brettoneux on 8 August 1918. Ernie had enlisted in Sydney in 1917 and was serving with the 17th Battalion AIF in France when he was struck and instantaneously killed by a shell. Young was buried at nearby Sauterre Cemetery: he was 26 years of age. His brother Albert Victor Young passed away in 1949 aged 52 years.



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