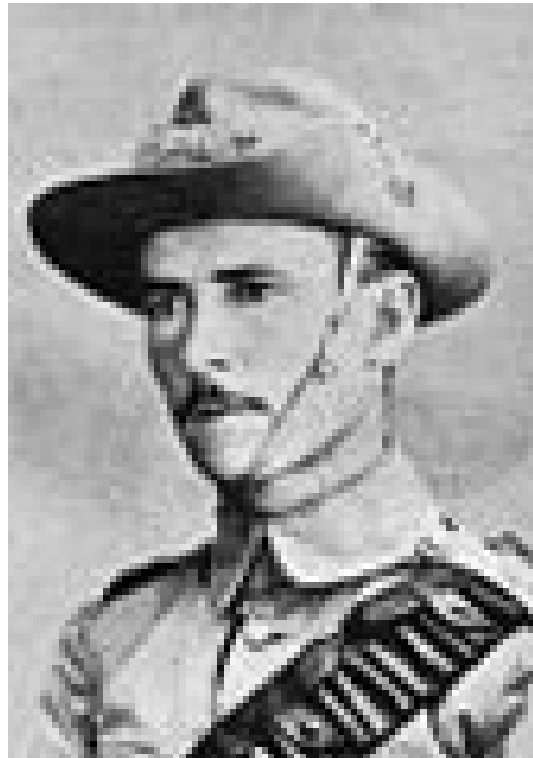




## Lieutenant Lachlan John ('Jack') CASKEY

[1870 – 1901]



5<sup>th</sup> Queensland Imperial Bushmen – Fifth Queensland Contingent

Lachlan John ('Jack') Caskey was born at Spring Creek on the Darlings Downs of Scottish immigrants. He was one of seven children and from the age of five he was brought up by his widowed mother Marjory at her farm at Spring Creek near Clifton.

*We thank the History Interest Group and other volunteers who have researched and prepared these Notes. The series will be progressively expanded and developed. They are intended as casual reading for the benefit of Members, who are encouraged to advise of any inaccuracies in the material.*

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Caskey began his teaching career as a 'pupil teacher' at age 15 years. He became an officer in the Queensland Teacher's Volunteer Corps and was Officer Commanding the School Cadets at the Leichardt Street (Boys) State School for Boys in Brisbane from 1898 to February 1901.

At the time of his enlistment, he was a School Teacher at Allora State School. He had been a Teacher's Union member (interested in 'wage issues' and the 'Rules of Head and Assistant Head Teachers').

Caskey was selected for the Fifth Queensland Contingent (5th Queensland Imperial Bushmen) that sailed from Brisbane in March 1901. On arrival in Cape Town, they were deployed in theatre from April 1901 - March 1902 under in East Transvaal, and the Free State, with principal engagements including a defeat at Mokari Drift, Caledon River.

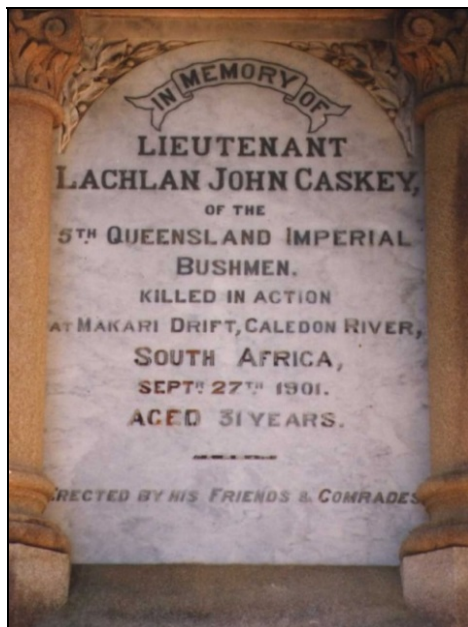
Jack was 5ft 8in tall with black hair and brown eyes and was described in the Brisbane Courier on 12 October 1901 as follows: *'qualities of fidelity to duty...intensely sympathetic disposition...good horseman with or without a saddle...a Good Shot'*.

Lieutenant Caskey was killed at Mokari Drift on 27 September 1901. He was aged 31 years and was single, with his mother (Marjory Caskey) as Next of Kin. He left an estate of realty and personally of £516. Lieutenant Caskey was Mentioned in Despatches on two occasions. His war service is listed as Cape Colony, Orange Free State, and Transvaal.

When news of his death reached Brisbane, teachers, students, family and friends arranged for two memorial plaques to be erected in his honour at the Leichardt and Spring Creek Schools.

Then with the additional support of the Valley Presbyterian Tennis Club, the Cricket Club and the Referees Association, a memorial was built in his honour at Toowong Cemetery. His regiment arrived back in Brisbane on 30 April 1902 and were on parade for the unveiling and dedication of the memorial on 3 May 1902.





The monument reflects his military, scholastic and sporting interests – see photographs above that show swords, cricket bats, tennis racquets etc. Its restoration was coordinated by the National Boer War Memorial Association at a cost of over \$8,000, with contributions from Queensland State Government, RSL Brisbane North District, Kedron-Wavell RSL Sub-Branch, the Sherwood-Indooroopilly RSL Sub-Branch and Friends of the Toowong Cemetery. A memorial service was held in the cemetery on 23 September 2012. USC President Colonel Dennis Scanlan CSM RFD ADC was Guest of Honour and represented the Club at that service.

**The Fifth Queensland Contingent** comprised the 5th Queensland Imperial Bushmen. Its strength on embarkation was 529, ordered into three mounted squadrons and one cyclist company, which later reverted to three mounted rifle squadrons only. The Commanding Officer was Lieutenant Colonel J. F. Flewell-Smith, then later Major F. W. Toll. They embarked with their horses in Brisbane on 6 and 10 March 1901 on the transports *Templemore* and *Chicago*, respectively.

On arrival in Cape Town they were deployed in theatre from April 1901 - March 1902 under General Plumer in East Transvaal, and the Free State - with principal engagements including a defeat at Mokari Drift (27 September 1901), and the Natal border campaign including the stand at Onverwacht (4 January 1902) where 13 died and 17 were wounded.

The Unit returned dismounted from Cape Town to Brisbane on 30 April 1902 on the transport *St Andrew* via Albany and Melbourne.

The Contingent's casualties were 26 killed or died of wounds (including Lieutenants Caskey and Pooley), four died of disease, three killed accidentally by comrades.

Sources included:

- Australian War Memorial
- National Archives of Australia
- Various web pages
- *United Service Club, Queensland: The First Century, 1892-1992* by Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton
- Club Meeting Minutes, Annual Reports and sundry documents