



Lieutenant Colonel Terence Patrick McSharry CMG DSO* MC

[1880 – 1918]



15th Infantry Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel McSharry CMG, DSO*, MC, was the most highly decorated of the eight members of the United Service Club who were killed in action on the Western Front.

Terence Patrick McSharry was born on 9 August 1880 at Townsville, Queensland, one of six children of Matthew McSharry (contractor and later accountant) and Margaret McSharry (nee Pottinger). His family nickname as a child was *Jockey Jim* for his love of horses,

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He was educated at Christian Brothers' St Joseph's College on Gregory Terrace in Brisbane and passed the Sydney University Junior Examination in 1895. Terry was a bookkeeper in Brisbane in 1903-08, joined the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board, and was a surveyor by 1912. He was apparently terminated for *playing up* or some similar disciplinary matter.

McSharry played football for North Brisbane Harriers and was a boxer. He was described as *cheery and energetic*, he was *short, of jockey weight ... with biting sarcasm if matters did not go his way ... Outspoken to a degree of bluntness that at times was most alarming, intermingled ... with a caustic wit.*

He served in the militia before the Great War. On 25 March 1912 he was commissioned in the Australian Intelligence Corps and in February 1914 was appointed a staff officer (Queensland District).

On the outbreak of war, he volunteered to join the AIF, and on 21 August 1914 he was appointed Lieutenant, 2nd Light Horse Regiment (2 ALH) which sailed from Pinkenba on 24 September.

The regiment landed at Gallipoli, without their horses, on 12 May 1915 to fight as infantry. 2 ALH played an important role in the defences at Quinn's Post and when it was decided to establish a small 'permanent HQ' (a small number of officers who would remain there to command the position while the troops were rotated through defence duties at Quinn's) McSharry was selected as permanent post adjutant and works' officer.

Although senior officers were present during the critical Turkish attack on 29 May 1915, it was McSharry who, *with his thorough knowledge of the post and eminent coolness and decision, most fully grasped and controlled the situation.* He rallied the men with the call *Come on, Australia!* as he led a party which halted the enemy with improvised bombs (grenades made on the beaches from jam tins packed with improvised shrapnel). He survived a near-miss when a Turkish bullet went through his hat.



Lieutenant McSharry was awarded the Military Cross for his *exceptional bravery and resource*, in this action and another action on 4 June.

McSharry was promoted to captain and was transferred to the 15th Battalion as Adjutant in June and was promoted major in Egypt in January 1916. He sailed with the battalion to France in June 1916.

He was promoted temporary lieutenant-colonel and took command of the 15th Battalion on 30 August 1916 when the then Commanding Officer (Lieutenant Colonel Cannan) was promoted to Brigadier-General.

He led 15th Battalion for almost two years, except when detached to temporarily command 4th Brigade from 13 to 25 July 1918. This was an exceptionally long period during which he commanded it in the major battles of Stormy Trench (January-February 1917), 1st Bullecourt (April 1917), Messines (June 1917), Polygon Wood (September 1917) and Hamel (July 1918).

McSharry was one of the notable Australian battalion commanders in France. He was held in high esteem and Charles Bean said of him *that there was no wiser head in the force*.

He was Mentioned in Despatches four times during this period, was awarded the Distinguished Service Order in June 1917 and appointed CMG in June 1918.

McSharry was mortally wounded in a bombardment while helping a wounded man to shelter at Vaire-sous-Corbie, on the Somme. He died on 6 August 1918, three days short of his 38th birthday. He was buried near Corbie.

He was remembered as *a lovable comrade ... a gallant and intellectual soldier*. With hair parted in the middle, and an upturned nose, he was short, described by the battalion historian as *of jockey weight ... with a small voice with more than its share of biting sarcasm if matters did not go his way ... Outspoken to a degree of bluntness that at times was most alarming, intermingled ... with a caustic wit ... There are hundreds of stories relating to his contempt for danger ... he could tell and appreciate a good joke*.

He was posthumously awarded a Bar to the DSO.

Lieutenant Colonel McSharry now lies in Corbie Communal Cemetery Extension, France.



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