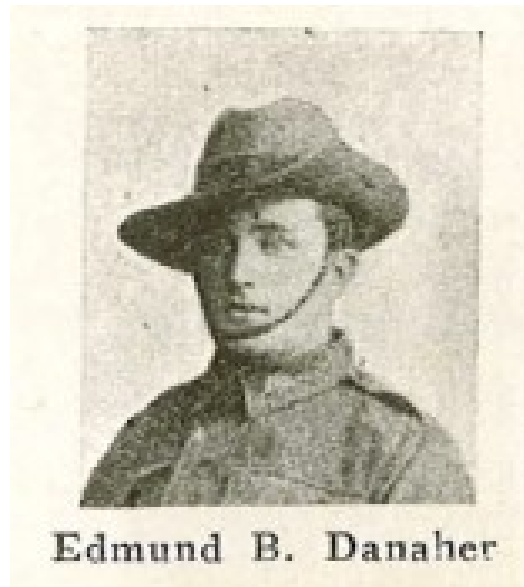
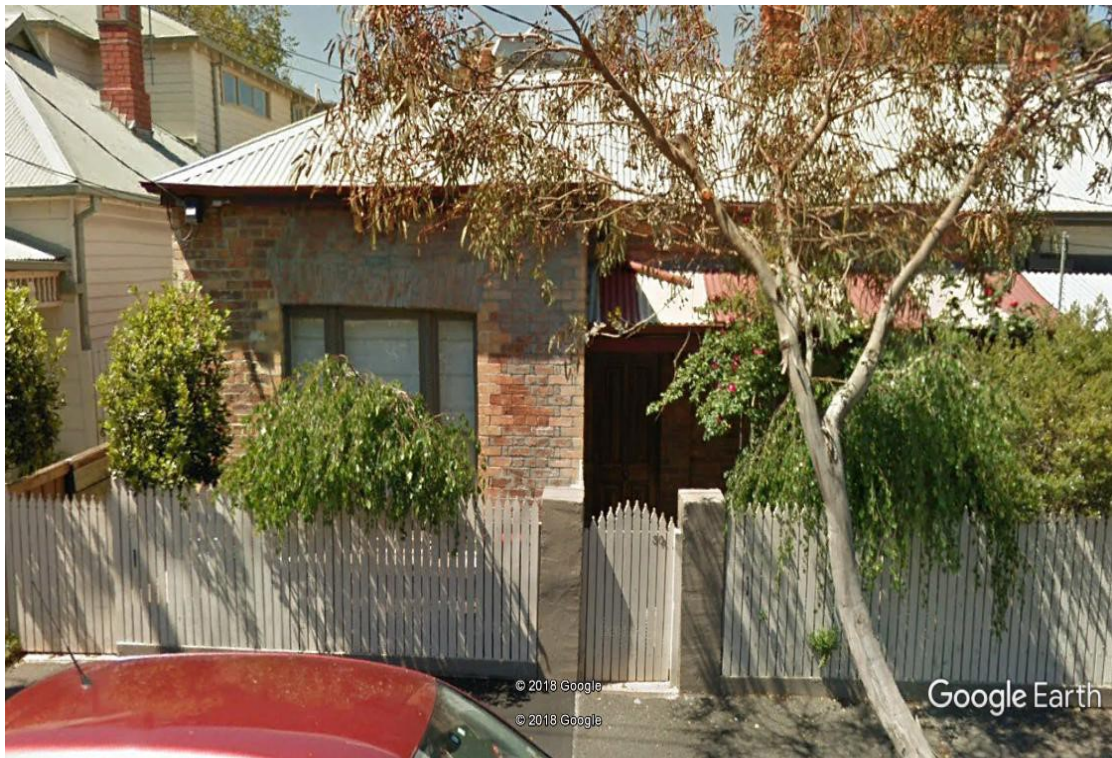


Private Edmond Butterworth Danaher

Rod Martin



(All Australian Memorial)



30 Shields Street, Flemington

(Google Earth)

Edmond Danaher (as he spelled his Christian name on his enlistment form) was just under twenty years old when he joined the army on 17 August 1914. He was one of thousands of keen young (and not so young) men who besieged recruiting offices across Australia in the weeks following the declaration of war on 4 August. Their motives included a desire to protect king and empire, a chance to see the world and a sense of adventure. Edmond was probably better prepared for combat than most of

them. After completing two years in the senior cadets while at school, he joined 58 Infantry Brigade, the Essendon-based militia unit led by Lieutenant-Colonel Harold 'Pompey' Elliott, and served fifteen months in that unit. Once he enlisted, Edmond followed Elliott into the newly created 7 Infantry Battalion, becoming the comrade of such men as Ellis 'Rocky' Stones, Lieutenant Ken Walker and Captain Cedric Permezel.

Edmond was a tinsmith by trade and lived with his parents at 30 Shields Street, Flemington. He was slightly built, with a dark complexion, blue eyes and black hair. When he enlisted, he was sent to Broadmeadows training camp before embarking on A20 HMAS *Hororata* on 19 October, headed ostensibly for France.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

PB0438

Troops boarding *Hororata* at Port Melbourne in 1915

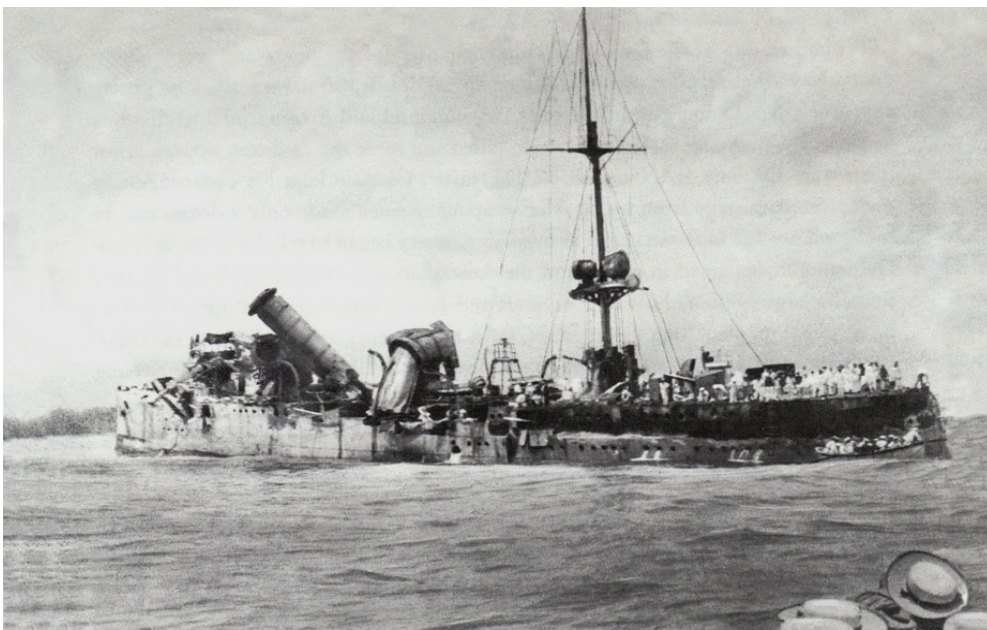
(AWM PB0438)

Ships from all Australian states and New Zealand gathered at Albany in Western Australia and sailed in convoy across the Indian Ocean, leaving on 1 November. On the ninth day of the month, one of their escorts, HMAS *Sydney*, sailed ahead on orders from the Australian Navy. The German commerce raider *Emden* had been sighted near the Cocos Islands, to the west. Using its superior speed, *Sydney* cornered the enemy vessel and battered it with its six-inch guns, forcing the German commander to run it aground on North Keeling Island. This was Australia's first naval victory in World War One. The successful occupation of German New Guinea between September and November 1914 had marked its first victories on land.



HMAS *Sydney* (I)

(Royal Australian Navy Heritage Collection)



The wreck of the *Emden*, with an Australian boarding party. 11 November 1914
(AWM G01442A)

When the convoy neared the Red Sea, orders came through to its commanders indicating that the troops would now disembark in Egypt, rather than going on the western Europe. The British war cabinet had adopted the idea of attacking and capturing Constantinople (now Istanbul) and putting Turkey, which had lately joined the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary, out of the war. This would give the British and French unlimited access to the Black Sea and Crimea, through which they could supply their eastern ally, Tsarist Russia.

Edmond and his comrades duly disembarked at Port Said and headed for a camp at Mena, on the outskirts of Cairo and next to the Pyramids. There they trained in the desert and took their turn at defending the Suez Canal from attack by the Turks.



'Pompey' Elliott with fellow 7 Battalion soldiers from Charlton, Victoria, photographed at Mena, 1915. (AWM H15592)

Edmond missed some of this, however, because he was hospitalised on 8 December, suffering from an abscess on his knee. He was there until the seventeenth of the month.

While at Mena, many of the troops also sowed some wild oats in the seamier streets of Cairo, and quite a few engaged in the so-called 'Battle of the Wozzer' on 2 April 1915. It was actually a riot started in the Wass'ah district of the city by Anzac troops angry at a particular brothel where an Australian was allegedly stabbed, and believed to be the premises responsible for the spread of syphilis. The date was auspicious: Good Friday.

We do not know if Edmond was involved in this riot. Suffice it to say that he was not sent home with venereal disease before the men sailed for the island of Lemnos, preparatory to the planned attack at Gallipoli. Quite large numbers of men were.



Troops of 3 Australian Infantry Brigade practising landings on Lemnos, 1915 (AWM PS1447)

By 25 April, the men had arrived off the western coast of the Gallipoli Peninsula. On that date, beginning at 4.00 am, steamboats cast off their tows and naval ratings in ships' boats full of soldiers rowed for the planned landing spot near a headland called Gaba Tepe. However, probably due to the fact that the ratings lost their way in the dark and veered to the left, the first boats landed about a mile to the north of the designated spot, at a place now known as Anzac Cove. The men had been told that they would be landing on a 3 000-metre front and would face terrain that could be crossed relatively easily. In reality, the boats of the various units bunched together and the men went ashore on a narrow front, troops from different battalions becoming discombobulated from the start. The land in front of them would have presented a worrying spectacle: steeply rising hills dissected by eroded gullies and spurs, covered in coarse bushes that would make progress very difficult. Seven Battalion was in the second wave, being towed in at 5.30 am and following the other boats to the north.



Reconstruction of a 'Gallipoli boat', Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance (Rod Martin)

The scene on the beach has been described a chaotic. Soldiers from various units were mixed together, in many cases with no officers to lead them, not knowing where to go, and being picked off by the relatively small number of Turkish soldiers who were strategically placed on the heights. Some men were shot while still in their boats. From somewhere came an order to drop their packs and head for the heights, up the

foreboding gullies that, of necessity, required them to run in small packs, having no communication with other groups in the area and being regularly targeted by the enemy.

The miracle was that some of these troops actually reached the heights and displaced Turks from their posts. However, as Peter Dennis *et al* have written, these men were isolated and scattered and could not provide a nucleus for any follow-up force to use to advantage. Moreover, the Turkish commander, Mustafa Kemal, quickly reinforced his surviving defenders by calling in fresh troops, thus establishing a stalemate. There the Australian troops remained, facing the enemy on ridges that were later given such names as Russell's Top, Walker's Ridge and Quinn's and Steele's Posts. The British commander-in-chief, Sir Ian Hamilton, refused to accept an Anzac recommendation to withdraw from the peninsula that evening. Instead, he ordered the troops to 'dig, dig, dig!'

In one day, as a result of desperate moves, the Anzacs had advanced further than they would for the next eight months, capturing around three and a half square kilometres of Turkish territory.



Anzac Cove today

(Robert Cathie)

The human cost had been great, however. Around 2 000 men had been killed or wounded. 7 Battalion's war diary for the day reported that two officers had died and sixteen were wounded – including Pompey, who was shot in the ankle as he landed on the beach. Next to the list of other ranks killed, the acting commander wrote

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In the chaos and confusion, there would have been no way of determining who in the battalion had been killed or injured, or where such injuries happened. If a man was killed on the beach, the details may have been obtained quite quickly. If he was killed

up on the slopes or on one of the ridges, however, it could have taken days to find and identify him – if they found him at all. That is why the report of Edmond's death noted that he died sometime between 25 April and 2 May. Tallies simply could not be finalised until that latter date, such was the disorganisation and deadly situation at Anzac Cove.

However, it is definite that Edmond's body had been found and identified relatively quickly, as his parents were informed of his death and burial on 6 June.

He was laid to rest in Number 2 Outpost Cemetery. His mother was granted a pension of thirteen pounds per annum (around twenty-six dollars) from 3 August 1915.



(Commonwealth War Graves Commission)

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