

2017 PREMIER'S ANZAC SPIRIT SCHOOL PRIZE



FREDERICK JOHN SCHENSCHER

War: World War One

Rank: Private

Regimental number/ service number: 913

Unit: 27th Infantry Battalion

By Abbie Nourse

The experiences of South Australian men and women on the Western Front and Middle East during World War One were horrific. All service men and women in some way displayed the ANZAC spirit during World War One. One of the servicemen who experienced life in World War One and displayed ANZAC spirit during his time of service was Frederick John Schenscher.

Frederick was born during May 1893 in the Saddleworth/Tohill Belt area, South Australia. He attended Saddleworth Public School. He had three siblings, two brothers and one sister. His brothers Ernest Frederick and Herbert Alfred also served in World War One. He was a son of Mrs Sarah Schenscher. Before enlisting he was a labourer. His religion was Methodist.

There are no records about Schenscher on his daily duties when on active service but he was a part of the 27th Infantry Battalion. In March 1915, the 27th Infantry Battalion was developed in South Australia. In World War One the 27th Infantry Battalion was the second prominently South Australian Battalion to be raised. The 27th Infantry Battalion was assigned to the seventh brigade in the Second Division. During World War One 8000 volunteers served in the 27th Infantry Battalion. Sadly 1169 servicemen of all ranks lost lives in active service. The colour patch of the battalion was brown and blue triangles inside a diamond. On the 31st of May 1915, the Battalion embarked on the HMAT Geelong. Most of the men would have been feeling uneasy and uncomfortable on the sea waters and inside the ships, as many of them would have probably never seen much of the ocean, like Fred. The 27th Infantry Battalion spent two months of training in Egypt, and landed at Gallipoli on the 12th of September 1915, stayed in until the evacuation in December. In April, the Second Division embarked for Marseilles. When the Second Division was travelling to their destinations in France the troops noticed the temperature was a lot colder compared to the scorching temperatures in Egypt and they came across amazing views along their way. On the 7th of April 1916, the 27th Battalion took its first steps on the ground of the frontline at Pozieres. The 27th and 28th Battalion were the first Australian troops to fight on the front line on the battlefield of Somme. During the Western Front the 27th Battalion fought at and in many battles across France. Overall the 27th Battalion experienced the highs, lows, successful and unsuccessful plans of the Great War just like any other unit but had extraordinary men like Fred in their unit.

Schenscher enlisted at Keswick, South Australia between the 12th and 15th of February 1915 as a stretcher bearer. He was aged 21 years and 9 months, 5 feet and 9 inches tall, weighed 171 pounds, had a dark complexion, green eyes and dark hair. Imagine yourself at the young age of 21 leaving a small country/ rural area to board a ship and go on this adventure which turned out to be brutally nothing like what was expected. After being a part of the E Coy. Base Depot from the 12th of February 1915 to the 15th of March 1915 he joined the 27th Battalion on the 6th of April 1915 and later embarked on the 31st of May 1915 on board HMAT A2 Geelong from Adelaide, South Australia. When leaving Australia, he would have felt excited and nervous, he also would have had adrenaline for this broad experience he was about to encounter. Schenscher embarked Alexandria on the 4th of September 1915. Schenscher briefly served at Gallipoli. Despite being at Gallipoli for a short time he would have seen horrific scenes, poor hygiene, poor sanitation, serious diseases, dirty trenches and nothing like the smell of country air back at home. Schenscher disembarked Ex Mudros 10th of January 1916, proceeded to join British Expeditionary Force (BEF) Alexandria 10th of March 1916 and disembarked Marseilles 21st of March 1916 France. On the 20th of January 1917, he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. He was transferred regularly most likely due to the stress on his body. He returned home to Australia on the 2nd of January 1919, having suffered physically and mentally.

Today there is a legacy known as the ANZAC spirit which was developed and shown in the war. The ANZAC spirit is the spirit of past and present servicemen and women; whose qualities live on in Australians still today. The values that make up the ANZAC spirit are courage, larrikinism, ingenuity,

good humour, endurance, mateship and bravery. Frederick displayed many of these qualities during his years of active service that reflects upon the Anzac spirit. Two of the qualities he showed during the 27th Battalion's period of time in Gallipoli was larrikinism and good humour in the famous photo (figure) which Charles Bean (a World War One Correspondent) said was staged as many of Ernest Brook's (a World War One photographer) World War One photos were staged, Fred has a typical cheeky grin/smile on his face as the soldier who has never been identified was most probably not injured or wounded and was just a good old mate carrying him on his back to show a photo of a frequently seen event. He was probably also having a joke to the soldier he was carrying as they would have probably felt ridiculous acting for a staged photograph. Fred would have also been thinking in his head how many more times he would have to repeat this act for an act of survival rather than a photograph. Between the night of the 5th and 6th of May 1916 two soldiers were hit in No Man's Land near German wire at Armentieres Schenscher alongside another stretcher bearer went out 300 yards and rescued the two casualties, under enemy machine- gun fire. At Messines on the night of 29th and 30th of June 1916 Schenscher and Young's stretcher was hit by shellfire but the pair continued carrying wounded all night long under artillery fire. Again, on the night of the 4th and 5th of August the pair worked together again at Pozieres Ridge worked nonstop for 18 hours (appendix 2, 4, 5 and 6) During these occasions Schenscher displayed eye-catching bravery, built mateship with his stretcher bearer partner Young, ingenuity to continue although their stretcher had been broken, courage and sacrifice to continue to save lives despite heavy fire around them, endurance tolerating the conditions that he was put up against. As a result of his acts of bravery, mateship, ingenuity, courage, sacrifice and endurance he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal on the 20th of January 1917. The Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) was introduced in 1854 by Queen Victoria and acknowledges gallantry displayed in the field. He was honoured with the DCM along with another stretcher bearer Private William Young who was also a member of the 27th Battalion. When the news about Schenscher's DCM was announced the community of Saddleworth couldn't have been prouder of his achievements, the town/ area was so proud of him (appendix 5). In Fred's postcard to his sister Helena (appendix 3) he mentions that the service men and women will have both whisky and pudding after the war, that he hasn't had a whisky since last September and leaves a rhetorical question 'going good don't you think?' This proves he kept his spirits alive during the war, did not let the effects of the war dampen his soul and kept positive saying after the war as there was any chance that he could die during service. Not only did he receive a DCM but he also received the 1914/15 Star No. 5991 4, British War Medal 4/4 No. 3847 and Victory Medal 4/4 No. 3806.

Frederick returned home in 1919. Although little is known about him after he returned home. He lived or frequently visited Port Adelaide a lot with other returned soldiers visiting his sister Helena and her husband Private Albert Lukander. Fred never married. Supposedly he died on the 17th of July 1957 drowning in the Port River during a fishing boat trip, he was found floating in the Port River. It is believed the accidental death could have happened due to a high intake of alcohol. He could have been heavily affected from war once returning home. According to the RSL Virtual War Memorial Schenscher was buried at the AIF Cemetery, West Terrace Cemetery, Adelaide.

Frederick is an amazing man who we should be proud to call Australian. Despite his mysterious death, he went to Gallipoli and the Western Front and survived. What an incredible man?

Appendices

Not checked with verification card

SCHAMMEL

2709	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Bert	5th Pioneers	31.7.16		
2668	Pte	SCHAMMEL	George James	5th Pioneers	2.7.16	R.T.A.	27.8.17
2678	L/Cpl	SCHAMMEL	John Hedder	5th Battalion	18.6.16	R.T.A.	1.4.19
56810	Gnr	SCHAMMEL	Richard	8th F.A.B.	9.9.15	R.T.A.	5.4.19
2722	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Antoon Frederickis	1st Inf. Bde	30.6.15	Tisch.	26.1.17
5416	Pte	SCHAMMEL	William Francis	24th Battalion	6.3.16	R.T.A.	10.9.17
2668	Sgt	SCHAMMEL	Carl Frederick "MM"	10th Battalion	26.7.15	R.T.A.	14.1.19
6823	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Ernest Frederick	10th Battalion	26.8.16	R.T.A.	20.5.19
913	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Frederick John "DCM"	27th Battalion	15.2.15	R.T.A.	2.1.19
4371	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Herbert Alfred	32nd Battalion	3.10.16	R.T.A.	15.4.18
5412	Spr	SCHAMMEL	Victor	2nd A.Tun. Coy	17.1.16	R.T.A.	7.7.19
1417	Cpl	SCHAMMEL	Christian John	34th Battalion	16.2.16	R.T.A.	19.2.19
7062	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Frederick	4th Battalion	23.10.16	R.T.A.	6.7.19
2979	Pte	SCHAMMEL	William John	50th Battalion	6.4.15	R.T.A.	17.3.19
18523	Dvr	SCHAMMEL	Herbert Andrew	7th F.A.B.	17.1.16	R.T.A.	29.5.19
2970	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Emerald Vane	14th L.H.	3.2.17	R.T.A.	24.7.19
7073	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Peroy	16th Battalion	6.10.16	R.T.A.	9.8.19
3611	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Weldon	2nd Pioneers	2.10.16	R.T.A.	12.7.19
3507	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Henry Alfred "MM"	5th L.H.	20.4.17	R.T.A.	6.4.19
4904	Sgt	SCHAMMEL	William Andrew "MM"	16th Battalion	9.12.15	R.T.A.	28.7.18
340	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Harry Gerald	2nd M.G. Bn	1.5.16	R.T.A.	
7088	Cpl	SCHAMMEL	George William	27th Battalion	22.5.17		
2915	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Albert Francois	1st Pioneers	10.8.15	R.T.A.	22.7.17
1804	Cpl	SCHAMMEL	Thomas Harold	5th A.L.T. M. Bty	13.6.15	R.T.A.	18.11.18
2819	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Ernest	23rd Battalion	8.7.15	R.T.A.	3.7.19
4501	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Ernest Frederick	5th Battalion	28.9.15	R.T.A.	20.9.17
2794A	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Fritz	51st Battalion	19.8.15	R.T.A.	13.2.17
4302	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Frederick Ernest	1st M.G. Bn	10.7.15	R.T.A.	12.4.19
5340	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Frederick Wassman	6th Battalion	10.4.16	R.T.A.	11.1.18
6898	Pte	SCHAMMEL	George Henry	17th A.S.C.	17.5.15	R.T.A.	23.7.18
6574	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Robert Julius	32nd Battalion	14.4.16	R.T.A.	1.6.19
60761	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Stanley Gladstone	3rd A.M.V. Sec	2.5.18	R.T.A.	3.7.19
3904	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Stanley William	24th Battalion	7.12.15	R.T.A.	3.8.16
492	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Frederick William	31st Battalion	13.7.15	R.T.A.	31.12.18
4926	L/Cpl	SCHAMMEL	Frederick William	50th Battalion	14.12.15	D.C.M.	8.5.17
4538	Cpl	SCHAMMEL	Emerick "MM"	22nd Battalion	29.1.16	R.T.A.	17.2.19
4182	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Charles Stanley	59th Battalion	1.12.15	R.T.A.	19.7.15
3639	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Charles Alexander	4th L.H.	3.3.17	R.T.A.	15.6.19
16806	Dvr	SCHAMMEL	William Frederick	8th F.O.E.	27.4.16	R.T.A.	25.3.19
2374	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Norman Maximilian	1st Anz. Reinf. Camp	12.7.15	R.T.A.	11.5.19
16841	L/Cpl	SCHAMMEL	Harold Bismark	7th A.F. Amb.	17.4.16	R.T.A.	2.3.19
3174	Pte	SCHAMMEL	Ernest George	A.G.B.D.	20.8.15	R.T.A.	24.1.19

Army Form W. 3121.

7th Aust. Infantry Brigade, 2nd Australian Division, 1st A.N.Z.A. Corps, 17th September 1916 Date of Recommendation.

Schedule No.	Unit	Regt. No.	Rank and Name	Action for which commended	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
56857	87th Sn. A.I.F.	913	Private Frederick John SCHENSCHER.	On the night of 5/6th May 1916 two men were hit in BO HAN'S LAND, ARMENTIERES near enemy's wire. These Young and Schenscher went out a distance of 300 yards and brought both in under a considerable amount of Machine-gun fire. On night of June 22/23th at MESNINES both these men were engaged all night carrying wounded from the trenches under considerable artillery fire. The stretcher they were carrying was broken by a shell but they procured another and continued to work. Their behaviour on this occasion was beyond praise. On the night of 4/5th August 1916 during the attack on BOULERS RIDGE both these men behaved with conspicuous bravery as stretcher bearers, and worked incessantly for 18 hours.	[Signature]	D.C.M.	[Signature]
56858		1794	Private William Richard YOUNG.				

With love
 From
 Fred
 + + + + +

Fabrication française - J.-M. T.

Mrs. Lena Hansen
 91 Royal Avenue
 Fort St. Vrain
 South Australia

Helena Schénstner

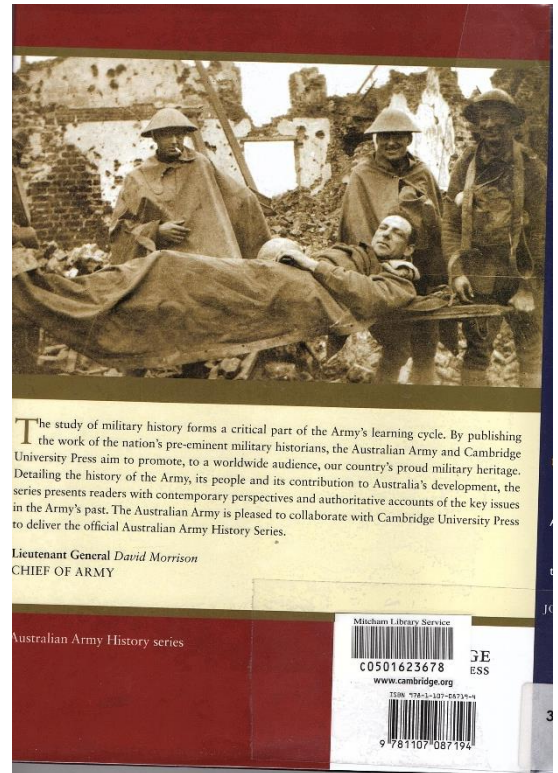
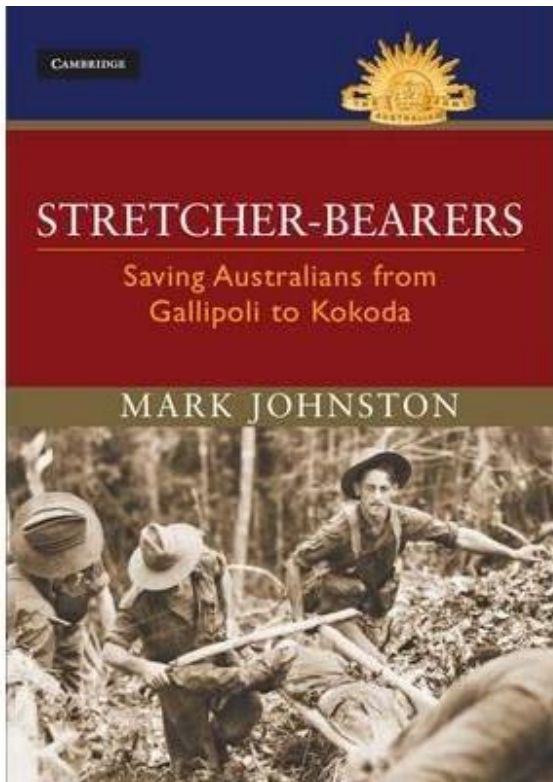
France July 15th 1916

What do you think of
 this for a gift. I guess
 we will have some of
 each after the War.
 But not at present.
 I haven't had a Whisky
 since last September
 going good don't you
 think. Best
 Love from
 Fred

CARRIE POSTALE
 POST CARD
 POSTKART
 ADRESSE

+ + + + +





The study of military history forms a critical part of the Army's learning cycle. By publishing the work of the nation's pre-eminent military historians, the Australian Army and Cambridge University Press aim to promote, to a worldwide audience, our country's proud military heritage. Detailing the history of the Army, its people and its contribution to Australia's development, the series presents readers with contemporary perspectives and authoritative accounts of the key issues in the Army's past. The Australian Army is pleased to collaborate with Cambridge University Press to deliver the official Australian Army History Series.

Lieutenant General David Morrison
CHIEF OF ARMY

Australian Army History series



Photo 21 (A)

Charles Bean said this Ernest Brooks photo was staged, and the original Admiralty caption describes 'the re-enactment of an event frequently seen'. The location was the relatively safe seaward side of Plugge's Plateau on 15 December 1915. Yet this photo belongs here. One reason is that this sight was 'frequently seen'. On 25 April, the shortage of stretchers and inadequacies of improvised stretchers led some bearers to 'carry on their backs'. 'No tracks down the hills', wrote 2nd Field Ambulance bearer Ralph Goode on 29 April, 'many times had to carry men on our backs, could not get stretchers up, and all this under heavy fire.' In the August offensives bearers not given empty stretchers on reaching the beach resorted to carrying wounded on their backs. In November a hospitalised private wrote that, after being wounded in the thigh, 'I managed to get to the Dressing Station on a Stretcher Bearer's back.'

Another reason for reproducing this archetypal image is the identity of the carrier, who is probably Private Frederick Schenscher, an interesting stretcher-bearer. One night in May 1916, Schenscher won attention as a bearer. He and Private William Young, both of 27th Battalion, went out about 275 metres and, despite much enemy machine-gun fire, rescued two casualties lying near the German wire at Armentières. The following month Schenscher and Young spent an entire night carrying wounded from the trenches. When harassing shellfire smashed their stretcher, they obtained another and continued. At Pozzières the same pair 'worked incessantly for 19 hours' and displayed 'conspicuous bravery'. Both earned Distinguished Conduct Medals for these brave acts. Young later added a Military Medal and Bar for similar work.

Genuine bearer work continued in the Gallipoli campaign's last months. On 29 November, soon after a heavy snowfall, the Turks bombarded Lone Pine and nearby Brown's Dip aid station, causing many casualties among two infantry battalions doing a changeover. Septimus Elnore was on duty at Brown's Dip, where 'it was simply hell for some hours', with 'fragments flying all around'. Through 'a tornado of shell etc we made repeated trips (only two bearers to a stretcher) ... to the first relay station ... about 1¼ miles distant, down steep slopes rough cut up tracks through saps etc., having many a "close shave" through the day'. Reg Hind was bearing there, too: 'Turks bombarded Lone Pine with ... everything they could bring to bear ... It was awful. On top of the snow when we are all feeling spent comes this trying ordeal. I can't describe it.' When called to help at Brown's Dip, his squad 'went up under a hail of shell fire'. A shell fragment hit him in the chest, knocking him down, but, although his overcoat was holed, a New Testament and other papers in his pocket saved him.²¹

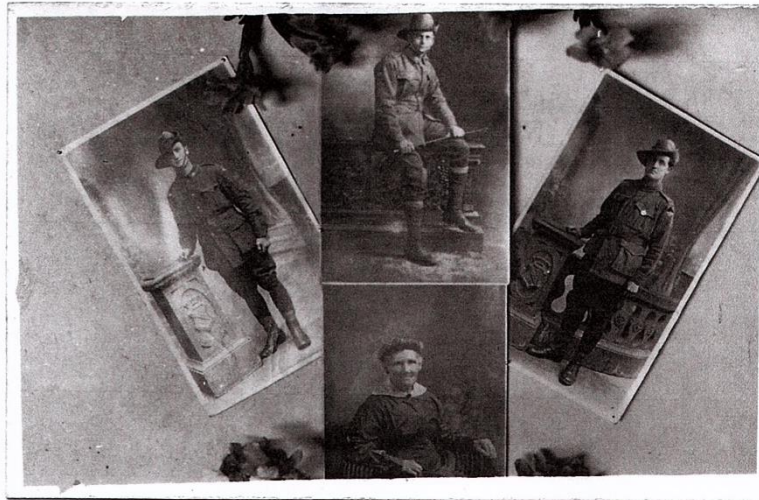


Private I.J. Schenker bringing in a wounded comrade to the hospital.





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The Express

SPECIAL WAR EDITION
AND TELEGRAPH

THE LIT.—No. 35,112. ADELAIDE, FRIDAY, MAY 14, 1915. PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE BULLECOURT BATTLE

STARTLING FLUCTUATIONS

GERMANS DRUNK WITH FURY

AUSTRALIANS SMASH THEM UP

THE IRISH HOME RULE PROBLEM

MR. REDMOND NOT ENTHUSIASTIC

BRITISH PROGRESS

THE BRITISH NAVY

GREETING TO AMERICA.

BEATING THE SEAS.

BRITAIN'S STRATEGY.

GERMANS CUT UP.

BRITAIN'S STRATEGY.
The British Navy is the backbone of the British Empire, and it is the duty of every citizen to support it. The British Navy is the most powerful navy in the world, and it is the duty of every citizen to support it. The British Navy is the most powerful navy in the world, and it is the duty of every citizen to support it.

GERMANS CUT UP.
The Germans have been cut up by the British Navy. The British Navy has been victorious in the Battle of the Atlantic, and the Germans have been forced to retreat. The British Navy has been victorious in the Battle of the Atlantic, and the Germans have been forced to retreat.

ON ACTIVE SERVICE.
The British Navy is on active service, and it is the duty of every citizen to support it. The British Navy is on active service, and it is the duty of every citizen to support it. The British Navy is on active service, and it is the duty of every citizen to support it.

IRISH HOME RULE

MR. REDMOND'S REPLY.

WILL ACCEPT A CONVENTION.

MR. REDMOND'S REPLY.
Mr. Redmond has replied to the proposals for a convention. He has stated that he is willing to accept a convention, but he has also stated that he is not willing to accept a convention that would give the British Government the right to interfere in Irish affairs.

THE BRITISH NAVY

BEATING THE SEAS.

BRITAIN'S STRATEGY.

GERMANS CUT UP.

BEATING THE SEAS.
The British Navy is beating the seas, and it is the duty of every citizen to support it. The British Navy is beating the seas, and it is the duty of every citizen to support it. The British Navy is beating the seas, and it is the duty of every citizen to support it.

BRITAIN'S STRATEGY.
The British Navy is following a strategy that is designed to defeat the German Navy. The British Navy is following a strategy that is designed to defeat the German Navy. The British Navy is following a strategy that is designed to defeat the German Navy.

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VENOING SOLDIERS

THE PRESIDENTIAL ASSEMBLY.

ENGLAND'S DEFENCE.

THE PRESIDENTIAL ASSEMBLY.
The Presidential Assembly has met to discuss the defence of England. The members of the assembly have discussed the need for a strong defence force, and they have agreed to support the Government's proposals for a new defence force.

STOP PRESS NEWS.

1019TH DAY OF THE WAR

GERMAN WARSHIP SUNK NEAR THE GATON COAST.

RUSSIAN PROBLEM.

HOPES OF SOLUTION.

ATTEMPT AT GOVERNMENT.

THE CENTRAL POWERS AGAIN CONFERING.

THE EMPEROR'S APPEAL.

ITALIAN FRONT.

IMPORTANT PROGRESS.

AUSTRIAN STRENGTHENED.

GERMAN WARSHIP SUNK

NEAR THE GATON COAST.

NEAR THE GATON COAST.
A German warship was sunk near the Gaton coast. The ship was carrying a large amount of supplies, and the sinking was a major victory for the British Navy.

RUSSIAN PROBLEM

HOPES OF SOLUTION.

ATTEMPT AT GOVERNMENT.

HOPES OF SOLUTION.
The Russian problem is a major concern for the British Government. The Russian Government has been unable to reach a solution to the problem, and the British Government is hoping for a solution.

ATTEMPT AT GOVERNMENT

THE EMPEROR'S APPEAL.

THE EMPEROR'S APPEAL.
The Emperor has issued an appeal to his subjects. He has asked them to support the Government's proposals for a new defence force, and he has asked them to support the Government's proposals for a new defence force.

ITALIAN FRONT

IMPORTANT PROGRESS.

AUSTRIAN STRENGTHENED.

AUSTRIAN STRENGTHENED.
The Austrians have strengthened their position on the Italian front. They have captured a large amount of territory, and they have captured a large amount of territory.

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THE WAR



2004 CASUALTY LIST

ISSUED TO R.M. THURSDAY, 11th MAY 1915.

ROYAL CANAL

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Frederick John Schenscher's Great Niece- Source and provider of postcard and photographs.

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