



Clan Forsyth

SYDNEY BRANCH

NEWSLETTER

CLAN FORSYTH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA – SYDNEY BRANCH

PO BOX 396, ROSEVILLE NSW 2069 June/July 2014 #2

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President's Report

Hello members,

It is hard to believe we are half way through 2014 in a very mild winter – so far. At the last Committee meeting we welcomed Les Springett as a new member.

Jenny Madden has also become a new Committee Member and we hope she will be feeling well enough to attend our next meeting. We are looking forward to the input of Les and Jenny to the functioning of the Clan.

It has been decided to try and publish four newsletters per year, if possible, depending on the contributions received from all members.

As indicated in the last newsletter this edition starts our series of remembering the Centenary of WWI and our families' servicemen and women. This includes Forsyth(e) and also their descendants whether Forsyth by name or not. We would welcome stories, records, photos etc. of your family servicemen, so that their information can be included in a future newsletter for all to appreciate.

Information, photos, etc. can be emailed to our Editor, Chris Lee at cwlee@optusnet.com.au or sent to our Post Office Box - details above on the newsletter. Looking forward to seeing you soon.

Judy Forsyth

Special Membership Offer

New members who also register their brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. before the end of 2014, and the new member, all receive FREE membership and emails of Clan Newsletters for 12 months.

The membership form for 2014 is available on the clan website under "Documents"

or people can send us their details including email address.

A Scots boy came home from school and told his mother he had been given a part in the school play. "Wonderful," says the mother, "What part is it?" The boy says "I play the part of the Scottish husband!" The mother scowls and says: "Go back and tell your teacher you want a speaking part."

Fred Forsyth, traveling by train was seated next to a stern-faced clergyman. As Fred pulled out a bottle of Scotch whisky from his pocket the clergyman glared and said disapprovingly, "Look here, I am sixty-five and I have never tasted whisky in my life!"

"Dinna worry, Minister," smiled Fred, pouring himself a dram. "There's no risk of you starting now!"



CONFESSION OF A MISSPENT CHILDHOOD

By Denise Park (a member of the Clan Committee)

The power of rumour is not new and how gossip can ignite and change regardless of the substance is thought provoking.

The recent Royal visit with baby George recalled to me the visit by the Queen back in the fifties. Australia went wild, lining the streets and hanging from shop awnings and lamp posts to catch a fleeting glimpse at the cavalcade. We, the children of Edward Street Gordon, thought it would be interesting to see what the result of starting a rumour that the Queen would be visiting the Red Cross Home in our street.

To this end we spoke loudly to one another in public places of the impending visit. The effort was startling, people started lining our street from early in the day armed with deck chairs. Thermoses, flags and cameras abounded.

The street filled and ebbed with great expectation. The residents had guests hosting parties on their front verandas, including our house and a jolly time was held by all.

We children realised we had started a tsunami from which we could not escape, so I suggested we sell lemon cordial which we had an abundance of in our pantry. This was very successful with many takers and we did very well financially.

As the shadows lengthened and people were becoming disillusioned and started to leave, the rumour was spread that the Queen had been delayed at her earlier venue. This also went like wild fire up and down the street.

The end result was a littered street and we children raised enough money to purchase more Enid Blyton books.

We never dared reveal what we had done (*until now*), so if you were one of those patient people, I apologize.

A Leaf in our Family Tree

Recently, through the web site, we received a request for information on a James Forsyth, born about 1870 at Maryborough Victoria. He married Martha Ann (or Annie) White 1893, Victoria. At least one child was born in Maryborough and more in Broken Hill and South Australia. On his marriage certificate his parents are named as Alexander and Jane Forsyth. James, a miner, died 5.7.1918 in Broken Hill, The White family lived in Broken Hill. His wife was the informant on his death certificate and gives his parents as James and Elicia. Their youngest child was named Clara Alicia. An Alexander Forsyth is buried in Maryborough, died 22.5.1893 aged 69 years; his wife Alice died 29.3.1911, aged 76 years. It is not known if this Alexander is part of the family.

Does anyone know of this family? Could they be connected to the Victorian/Western Australian family or the Hamilton family?

OMISSION APOLOGY

It is with regret and apologies that we acknowledge the omission of two names from our New and Renewing Members section in the March '14 newsletter.

So in this newsletter we say "Welcome" to **Adrian Forsyth & Douglas & Beverley Forsyth**. We hope to see you at one of our events soon.

FOR YOUR DIARY:

Clan Forsyth "Show & Tell" Day – Sunday 9th November from 2-5pm at Uniting Church, Clanwilliam Street Willoughby. Bring your Forsyth mementos – particularly items & photos relating to Forsyths in WWI.

SEARCHING FOR A CLAN SECRETARY:

If you have some spare time and can use a computer, we need a Clan Secretary for our Sydney Branch. Please send us an email if you are interested to find out more.



Allan James Forsyth (story submitted by Kay Clark)

He was born on 28/7/1893 at "Glenarchy", Cootamundra, NSW, Australia. He was the fifth child of a family of ten children (nine surviving childhood). His parents: Edwin James Forsyth (1859-1922) and Ellen Mutch (1865-1945). His grandparents: Lucius Forsyth (1812-1881) & Mary Phelan (1820-1881) and John Mutch (1826-1886) & Ellen Davis (1833-1910).

Allan was a farmer and as a child attended Jindalee School, near Cootamundra, NSW. When he was aged 23 years, Allan was engaged to Mabel Ronning of Tara near Cootamundra. Mabel later married Roy Patterson.

On 1/11/1916 Allan enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force. He served as Private 6978, 1st Infantry Brigade, 2nd Battalion, C Company, 23rd Reinforcements, Australian Infantry Forces.

2nd Infantry Battalion (New South Wales) 1st Infantry brigade

Battle Honours: Landing at Anzac, Defence of Anzac, Suvla, Sari Bair, Gallipoli 1915, Egypt 1915-16, Somme 1916-18, Pozieres, Bullecourt, Ypres 1917, Menin Road, Broodseinde, Polygon Wood, Passchendaele, Lys, Hazebrouck, Amiens, Albert 1918, Hindenburg Line, Epehy, France and Flanders 1916-18. - Egypt, Gallipoli, Western Front.

The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914 -1918: The AIF in France - Volume VI - Author CEW Bean gives details of fighting which took place by the 1st Brigade. Not only was CEW Bean the official WWI historian, it was through his suggestion and persistence that we now have the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. Allan James Forsyth is not mentioned in this book.

10th-11th Sept., 1918 Hindenburg Outpost Line (P.887): On the afternoon of September 10th the two forward battalions of the 1st Brigade which that night was to take over the front west of Jeancourt and east of Hesbecourt, found a line of German posts across the two knuckles leading west from Hargicourt, Villeret and le Verguier...Farther south, however, the patrols of the 2nd Battalion operating on either side of Jeancourt, where the old reserve system had not yet been captured, were able to work up the trenches north and south of the village. Jeancourt was empty, but on one of its roads in the dark a patrol found a force of Germans marching in fours and poured in Lewis gun fire at short range. (P888): The patrolling platoons of the 2nd Battalion also resumed the attack; at noon, with the help of guns, Stokes mortars, rifle-grenades and machine-guns, they cleared two German posts from the trenches south of Jeancourt and carried the front slightly beyond the trench-line. Allan's digitalized war documents (55 pages) appear at the National Archives website: http://www.naa.gov.au/The_Collection/recordsearch.html

Allan's official enlistment date was 1/11/1916. He was transferred to 23/2nd Btl. and given Reg. No. 6978. Allan's war files show his particulars were taken by the Recruiting Officer at Victoria Barracks on 26/10/1916 on "Application to Enlist in the Australian Imperial Force" and his official enlistment date was 1/11/1916. The application document shows Allan's address as Cootamundra, NSW and occupation as Farmer. He was aged 23 years and 4 months, height 5 feet 5½ inches, chest measurement 32 inches, fully expanded 35 inches, weighed 136 lbs., complexion fair, eyes blue-grey, 6/6 vision both eyes, hair light brown, religious denomination C/E and he was single. He had a scar on his middle chest; a mole above his left collarbone, a deformed left hand thumb and his pulse rate was 88. His "Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad" were dated 1/11/1916, R. A. Showground, Sydney and signed by Allan. His father was named as next of kin. He agreed to "undergo inoculation against smallpox and enteric fever."

On 9/11/1916 Allan, as part of the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Reinforcements, embarked at Sydney per H.M.A.T. A24 *Benalla* (11,118 tons, 14 knots, P&O SN Co London, Commonwealth control of this vessel ended 6/8/1917). Allan's medical history shows: 29.1.1917 sick to Fargo Military Hosp., influenza; 9/2/1917 transferred to Sutton Veny (?); 18/2/1917 marched in to 1st Tng. Bn. Durrington from Fargo Hospital; 3/5/1917 proceeded O/seas to France via Folkestone; 9/11/1917 wounded in action; 23/12/1917*; Rejoined Btl. from wounded; 6/3/1918 admitted to 1st Aux. Hosp., sick whilst on furlough in U.K.; 16/3/1918 rejoined unit from sick, England; 30/3/1918 rejoined Btl. from sick; 23/4/1918 to Hospital sick; 3/5/1918 discharged to unit from F.M. Unit ex sick; 11/9/1918 died of wounds received in action at No. 55 (sic) Casualty Clearing Station (gunshot wound to face, (bullet) penetrating brain) -died at 53rd Casualty Clearing Station**.

* E.J. Forsyth, Allan's father, received a telegram: "Reported Private Allan Forsyth wounded will advise anything further received - Base Records 27/11/1917." On 14/12/1917 Edwin wrote to the Base Records Depot, Melbourne: "Could you please advise me if you have received any further news of No.6978 Pte. Allan J. Forsyth who was wounded in France some four weeks ago and to the nature of his wound. By so doing you would greatly oblige. Yours Truly (Mr.) E.J. Forsyth". On 18/12/1917 a reply was sent to Edwin including "His wound is not stated to be serious, however, and in the absence of further reports favorable (sic) progress may be assumed, the practice of the Overseas Authorities being to notify this Department of any material change in condition."

** Allan was wounded at Peronne and later died at the 53rd CCS (Casualty Clearing Station) Doingt. Page 789 of - *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914 -1918: The AIF in France - Volume VI* by CEW Bean* notes: "Doingt beyond Peronne."

The town of Peronne is approximately 20 kilometres east of Amiens. La Chapelle British Cemetery lies a little south of Peronne on the east side of the main road from Peronne to Roye. There are now over 550, 1914-18 War casualties commemorated in this site. The cemetery covers an area of 2,937 square metres and is enclosed by a low rubble wall.

Peronne town was occupied by British troops on 18th March 1917, lost on the 23rd March 1918, and regained on the 1st September 1918. The 34th Casualty Clearing Station was at La Chapelle in April-July, 1917; the 55th for a short time in April, and the 48th in May; the Lucknow from May 1917, to March 1918; the 53rd and the 12th for short periods in September 1918.

Aged just over 25 years Allan was killed in action 11/9/1918 in France just two months prior to armistice. His memorial - Grave III.B.4 at La Chapelle, Peronne, Somme, France. There is also a grave in Cootamundra C/E Cemetery. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission notes Allan was the "Son of Edwin James and Ellen Forsyth, of "Glenarchy" Cootamundra, New South

Wales". Further information supplied by his father E.J. Forsyth, Glenarchy, Cootamundra, appear on "Particulars Required for the Roll of Honor of Australia in the Memorial War Museum" as follows: Allan was a farmer, aged 25 and attended Jindalee Public School. He was wounded at Peronne, France and died at 53rd Casualty Clearing Station Doingt, France (near Peronne). The *Cootamundra Herald* reported "Pte. Alan Forsyth was killed in action".²³

Allan's effects, "received from the field 1/11/1918" and sent to his father included: 1 disc, 3 wallets, 1 leather cigar case, clasp knife and chain, 1 pipe, 1 fountain pen and shield, brass bracelet, 4 foreign coins, 1 religious medallion, 1 brooch, 1 pr. Scissors, 1 note book, photos, letters. Edwin had not received these and on 15/5/1919 he wrote to Major Lean, OIC Base Records Melbourne, enquiring about Allan's personal belongings. These were received at *Glenarchy* 19/5/1919.

Also received were the Memorial Plaque (8/12/1922), Memorial Scroll and King's Message (10/1/1922) and Victory Medal (23/4/1923). Allan's medals included the 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission. In Memory of Private Allan James Forsyth, 2nd Bn., Australian Infantry, A.I.F. who died aged 25 on Wednesday, 11th September 1918. Private Forsyth was the son of Edwin James and Ellen Forsyth, of "Glenarchy", Cootamundra, New South Wales. Remembered with honor, La Chapelle British and Indian Cemetery, Peronne, Somme France. Their name liveth for evermore, in the perpetual care of The Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Shirley Armstrong, daughter of Iris Eveline Forsyth (Allan's sister) has in her possession various memorabilia pertaining to Alan's life, including a transcription of his diary, photographs, postcards sent from France by Allan and his war medallion. Shirley: "Uncle Allan Forsyth as you know was killed in WW1. His parents were sent a few mementos - colours etc. including a brass medallion 12 cm. in diam. with his name embossed, also a Roman type warrior and a lion and the words 'HE DIED FOR FREEDOM AND HONOUR'."



William George Vincent Hillcoat (1886 – 20.9.1917)

Known as Vincent Hillcoat he was the husband of Florence Elizabeth Forsyth (daughter of JB Forsyth). Vincent was born in East Maitland in 1886, the son of William Hillcoat and Matilda Clarke.

He became a Congregational Minister after training at Camden College and undertaking Arts Degree at Sydney University and was inducted at the Waverley Congregational Church on the 4th January 1914. He married Florence Forsyth later that year. A son, Clifford Vincent Hillcoat was born on the 19th February 1915 at Woollahra, NSW.

Vincent enlisted in the Army for service in WW1 on the 11th February 1916 and was assigned to the 3rd Field Ambulance Australian Medical Corps on the 1st December 1916. It is interesting that he joined the Medical Corp when he was a Clergyman. He left Australia on the RMS "Orontes" on the 19th December 1916. His embarkation record gives his rank as Private yet the above family photo shows Vincent's rank as a Sergeant. At the time of his embarkation Florence was living at, 'Ayton', Rosewall Street, Willoughby, NSW

He died at the 2nd Canadian Casualty station, Popperinghe, Belgium (near Ypres), at 10:30pm on the 20th September 1917, of wounds (*compound fracture of left leg, gunshot wounds to face and scalp*) received in battle at Polygon Wood, Belgium. He is buried at

Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium Plot X1X Row A, Grave no.15A. He was awarded the 1914/18 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal. Florence Hillcoat received Vincent's Memorial plaque (*popularly known as the "Dead Man's Penny"*) and scroll on the 13th September 1922. Florence, a Registered Nurse, went on to run a hospital at her home in Blanksley Street, Chatswood.



Mystery Forsyth

This man is possibly of the tanners' side of Clan Forsyth, but we don't really know.

Does any clan member recognise/identify this person?

We need NEW Members!

If you know of any Forsyths that are not members, please ask them to make contact with us so we can welcome them into the Sydney Branch:

clanforythaustralia@hotmail.com

Plus here's a reminder to pay your membership fee if you haven't already.

Also email your articles, photos and anecdotes for inclusion in future Clan Newletters.

Another option for contributions: email the Newsletter Editor's email address:

cwlee@optusnet.com.au

