

GILGANDRA'S COO-EES



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GILGANDRA'S COO-EES

The Coo-ee Honour Wall provides a poignant insight into the lives of the men who marched from Gilgandra to Sydney to volunteer for service in WW1.

To commemorate the Centenary of the Coo-ee March it was important to bring the stories of the Coo-ees to life and to remember and honour them.

These men represent an enduring symbol of all who have served.

Coo-ee March Organisers 1915



*Richard "Dick"
Hitchen
Came up with the
idea*



*William "Captain
Bill" Hitchen
Leader of the
Coo-ees*



*Alex Haldane Miller
Organising Secretary*



*John Robert Lee
Chaplain & Orator*



TROOPER WILLIAM ALSTON



Photo courtesy of Dell Tschanter

SERVICE NUMBER 1086

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 23

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Narrabri West, NSW

OCCUPATION Labourer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 1st Light Horse, Imperial Camel Corps and 14th Light Horse.

SERVICE DETAILS William trained at Liverpool and embarked for Egypt on RMS Mongolia in July 1916. Originally with the 1st Light Horse, William was assigned to the Imperial Camel Corps (ICC) after the re-organisation of the army in Egypt, and fought beside the Light Horse in the Sinai and Palestine. He was transferred to the 14th Light Horse after the ICC was disbanded in 1918.

FATE William was wounded in action several times and admitted to hospital. He returned to Australia on the Dorset on April 29, 1919 and was discharged on July 26, 1919.

COMMENT The photo of William Alston was taken on the occasion of his marriage to Miss Ivy Quinton, a sister of fellow Gilgandra Coo-ee, Victor Quinton, at Gilgandra in 1923.

PRIVATE HAROLD BAXTER



Photo courtesy of Gilgandra Museum & Historical Society

SERVICE NUMBER 4730

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 22

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT "Euronga",
Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Labourer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 13th Battalion and 45th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS Harold trained at Liverpool and embarked from Sydney to Egypt aboard HMAT A15 Star of England on March 8, 1916 with the 13th Battalion. Harold transferred to the 45th Battalion and left Alexandria for Marseilles, France, arriving at the Western Front in June 1916 and faced the Battle at Pozieres in August 1916.

FATE Harold was killed in action on November 22, 1916, by a shell burst at Flers, France and buried in a shell hole with his rifle on his grave. His final resting place is in the Bancourt British Cemetery. In a statement to the Red Cross Wounded and Missing Bureau, fellow Coe-ee James Maher (4847) said: "I knew Bob – his real name was Harry... we had just come from Belgium to the Somme... we were together always."

COMMENT Harold's brother, Herbert Baxter enlisted from Gilgandra in August 1914 with the 1st Light Horse and survived Gallipoli and the Western Front. Harold's Memorial Plaque is on display in the Gallery.

PRIVATE SIDNEY BENNETT



Photo courtesy of Iain & Judy Macdonald

SERVICE NUMBER 4732

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 25

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT "Hornsey", David St, North Sydney, NSW

OCCUPATION Labourer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 13th Battalion and the 54th/56th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS Sidney trained at Liverpool and embarked for Egypt on the HMAT Star of England on March 8, 1916. He arrived in France with the 45th Battalion in June 1916, experienced fighting at Pozieres in the Somme and was promoted to Lance Corporal on August 24, 1916. After recovering in England from a gunshot wound to his left forearm and facing several charges of being absent without leave, Sidney was sent back to France in time for the 54th Battalion's last major battle of the war at St Quentin Canal on September 29, 1918.

FATE Sidney returned to Australia on the Devanha on May 8, 1919 and was discharged in Sydney on July 19, 1919.

COMPANY SERGEANT MAJOR JAMES GERALD CAMERON



*Photo courtesy of Robyn
Cameron Mooney, Pamela
Cameron Jones and Dianne
Cameron Brown*

SERVICE NUMBER 4747

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 24

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Mendooran, NSW

OCCUPATION Farmer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 13th Battalion and the 45th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS James trained at Liverpool and embarked from Sydney to Egypt aboard HMAT A15 Star of England on March 8, 1916 with the 13th Battalion. After training in Egypt, he arrived in France in June 1916 with the 1st Anzac Cyclist Battalion. He was hospitalised in England after several episodes of gunshot wounds while with the 45th battalion. Promoted to Sergeant in July 1917, James was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal on September 18, 1918. The citation reads: "For conspicuous gallantry and good work during the attack west of Bellenglise, north of St. Quentin, on September 18, 1918. He was Scout Non-Commissioned Officer. On the battalion reaching the objective, he took forward an exploiting patrol with a Lewis Gun. He came in touch with three 5.9 Howitzers and their crews. He rushed the crew, six of the enemy being killed and fourteen captured. The horses were killed and owing to this the guns were captured."

FATE James returned to Australia and was discharged on August 10, 1919. He married Jessie Fenton in Dubbo 1920. Jessie's sister, Minnie Fenton, married a fellow Coo-ee, William Howard.

COMMENT James attended the Farewell Ball the night before the Coo-ees were to leave. Swayed by the speeches, he decided to enlist and rode back to Mendooran to tell his family. He returned in time to be photographed marching out of Gilgandra.

PRIVATE ROBERT CLYDE CAMPBELL



SERVICE NUMBER 5996

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 25

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT 228 Harris St,
Sydney, NSW

OCCUPATION Farmer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 13th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS Robert marched with the Cooes until Lithgow, where he was admitted to hospital with typhoid fever. He completed his medical examination on July 13, 1916 at Kiama and after training at Liverpool, embarked from Sydney on the HMAT Wiltshire on August 22, 1916. He joined the 13th Battalion on March 16, 1917 at Ribemont, France.

FATE While fighting on the Hindenburg Line in the vicinity of Reincourt in March 1917, Robert suffered a gunshot wound to his left arm – one of 118 members of the battalion wounded on that day; with 25 killed and 367 men reported as missing. He was sent to England for treatment and developed oedema in his leg.

COMMENT Robert returned to Australia in December 1917 and was discharged medically unfit on January 30, 1918.

PRIVATE JAMES CRAWFORD



SERVICE NUMBER 4753

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 38

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Labourer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 13th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS James trained at Liverpool and embarked from Sydney to Egypt aboard HMAT A15 Star of England on March 8, 1916 with the 13th Battalion. James transferred to the 45th Battalion and left Alexandria for Marseilles, France, arriving at the Western Front in June 1916. He faced the battle at Pozieres in August 1916.

FATE James was wounded at Mouquet Farm and died on September 3, 1916 at the 49th Casualty Clearing Station from gunshot wounds to his back. He was buried at Contay British Cemetery.

COMMENT His effects were returned to his mother, Elizabeth, in Hillhead, Castle Fern, Donegal, Ireland. His mother wrote to the Army Base requesting his address in Gilgandra as she believed there may be possessions still here. An advertisement was placed in the Gilgandra Weekly in 1917 asking for information. It is not known if there were any replies.

SAPPER CHARLES ARTHUR FINN



Photo courtesy of Dale Shales

SERVICE NUMBER 6289

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 27

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Blacksmith

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 1st Company Field Engineers and the 13th Field Company Engineers

SERVICE DETAILS Charles enlisted with the Gilgandra Coo-ees and marched to Sydney to train at Moore Park with the 13th Field Company Engineers unit. On March 21, 1916 he embarked for Alexandria on the HMAT Armadale. After further training at Tel-el-Kabir, Egypt and Etaples, France, Charles was taken on strength with the 13th Field Company Engineers in August 1916.

FATE Other than a three month stay in hospital for influenza, Charles remained with his unit in the Somme until he was killed in action on April 7, 1917.

COMMENT According to the Red Cross Missing and Wounded Report, Charles was killed with Lance Corporal Shepherd. They were removing detonators from German mines when a shell came over, killing them both. In 1920 Charles' mother was notified that he would be exhumed from the original isolated grave and re-interred in the Commonwealth War Grave, HAC Cemetery, St Mein, France.

PRIVATE LESLIE GREENLEAF



Photo supplied by Gilgandra Shire Library, courtesy of Brian Bywater OAM, Hitchin House Military Museum

SERVICE NUMBER 4783

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 18

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Eumungerie, NSW

OCCUPATION Butcher

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 13th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS Leslie trained at Liverpool and embarked to Egypt on board HMAT A15 Star of England on March 8, 1916 with the 13th Battalion. Leslie left Alexandria for Marseilles, France and arrived at the Western Front in July 1916 to face the battle at Pozieres in August of that year. On August 29, while attacking Mouquet Farm, he received a gunshot wound to his hand and was evacuated to England. He returned to his unit in France in December 1917, mainly on restricted duties. Leslie was recommended for a Military Medal for an action on May 2, 1918 when he saved the commanding officer's life at the risk of his own. On May 20, 1918, he was wounded in action when a bomb exploded, injuring his left arm, and sent to England for convalescence and to work at Sutton Veny. He never returned to France.

FATE He returned to Australia February 12, 1919 on the City of Exeter, arriving on March 2, 1919 and was discharged on May 11, 1919.

COMMENT Leslie was awarded a Military Medal on June 16, 1918. "East of Villers Bretonneux on the morning of May 2, 1918, when an officer was severely wounded by machine gun fire and lay within full view of the enemy, Private Greenleaf and (1403SN) Smith went to his assistance and carried him in at very great personal risk." He received the Military Medal, the Victory Medal and the British War Medal. His headstone inscription reads: "The Last Coo-ee".

CORPORAL WILLIAM THOMAS HITCHEN



Photo courtesy of Gilgandra Museum and Historical Society

SERVICE NUMBER 1677

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 44 (actually 51)

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Plumber

PREVIOUS SERVICE Captain of Gilgandra Rifle Club

UNIT/S 45th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS William marched with the Coo-ees to Sydney but afterwards remained in Bathurst to help organise the Kookaburra Recruitment March from Tooraweenah to Bathurst. He embarked from Sydney on the HMAT Ceramic on April 14, 1916 and arrived in Plymouth via Egypt on June 16 on the transport Franconia.

FATE William had reported sick with tonsillitis while aboard the Franconia and was admitted to hospital from the ship on June 16, 1916. He gradually grew weaker and died on September 3, 1916 in Harefield Hospital. He was buried in the St Marys Churchyard, Harefield with full military honours. The schoolchildren of Harefield place flowers on the graves annually.

COMMENT William and his brother Richard organised the Coo-ee March. His 14 year old son, Cob, and a friend accompanied them as scout dispatch riders and buglers. His older son, William James Hitchen had enlisted earlier and was overseas by the time the march arrived in Sydney. Bill, as he was known, was recalled from the Western Front to spend time with his father before he died.

LANCE CORPORAL WILLIAM JOHN LUTHER HOWARD



Photo courtesy of Graham and Beth Howard

SERVICE NUMBER 4802

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 25

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT "Mountain View",
Biddon via Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Farmer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 13th Battalion; 12th Machine Company
and the 4th Machine Gun Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS William trained at Liverpool and embarked to Egypt aboard HMAT A15 Star of England on March 8, 1916 with the 13th Battalion. William left Alexandria for Marseilles and Etaples, France and was attached to the 12th Machine Gun Company and was present at Pozieres, Messines, Passchendaele, Polygon Wood and in most major battles of the Australian AIF in the Western Front.

FATE He returned to Australia via Cape Town, South Africa, on the Commonwealth on April 13, 1919, arriving in Sydney on May 19. He was discharged on July 27 and received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

COMMENT After returning from the war, William named his property Passchendaele, in a tribute to the many friends he lost there. He married his sweetheart, Minnie Fenton, and they had eight children. The property is still owned by William's descendants.

PRIVATE FRANK HUMPHREY



SERVICE NUMBER 1887

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 33

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Albert St, Hornsby, NSW

OCCUPATION Bricklayer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Seven months with Roystons Horse in South Africa during the Zulu Rebellion

UNIT/S 13th Battalion and the 60th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS Frank enlisted in Gilgandra on October 9, 1915 and marched to Sydney with the Coo-ees to train at Liverpool. However he was discharged on January 4, 1916 after being absent without leave for the second time. He re-enlisted on February 11, 1916 at Wangaratta, Victoria with the 60th Battalion. On May 1, 1916 he embarked for Egypt from Melbourne aboard the Port Lincoln, arriving on June 10. He was admitted to the No 2 Australian General Hospital with an illness, leaving a week later for France aboard the transport Franconia.

FATE After arriving in Le Havre, France, Frank was admitted to the Canadian General Hospital and died on August 23, 1916.

COMMENT The only active service seen by Frank was in South Africa. He is buried in the Ste. Marie Cemetery Le Havre.

PRIVATE JACK HENRY HUNT



*William Laurence Hunt (left)
and his brother John (Jack)
Henry Hunt (right).*

*Photo courtesy of Iain & Judy
Macdonald*

SERVICE NUMBER 4806

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 18

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT "Wingadee",
Coonamble, NSW

OCCUPATION Labourer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 13th Battalion and the 45th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS Jack enlisted in Gilgandra and marched with the Coo-ees to Sydney to train at Liverpool. He embarked to Egypt aboard HMAT A15 Star of England on March 8, 1916 with the 13th Battalion. He transferred to the 45th Battalion and arrived in France at the Western Front in June 1916, facing Pozieres and Mouquet Farm as part of the Battle of the Somme in August 1916. Jack was admitted to hospital in March 1917 with "trench foot" (frost bite) and his toe was eventually amputated.

FATE Jack returned to Australia on October 19, 1917 by the hospital ship Lyttleton for three months change but never returned to the Western Front. He was discharged medically unfit on January 28, 1918.

COMMENT Jack and his brother William Lawrence Hunt (4805) enlisted together in Gilgandra. Their father, Charles Henry Hunt (4804) caught up with the Coo-ees at Raglan, near Bathurst, and enlisted there. They were together through training and the Western Front and all returned to Australia.

PRIVATE WILLIAM LAURENCE HUNT



*William Laurence Hunt (left)
and his brother John (Jack)
Henry Hunt (right).*

*Photo courtesy of Iain & Judy
Macdonald*

SERVICE NUMBER 4805

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 20

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT "Wingadee",
Coonamble, NSW

OCCUPATION Labourer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 13th Battalion and the 45th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS William enlisted in Gilgandra and marched to Sydney with the Coo-ees to train at Liverpool. He embarked to Egypt aboard HMAT A15 Star of England on March 8, 1916 with the 13th Battalion. He transferred to the 45th Battalion and arrived in France at the Western Front in June 1916, facing Pozieres and Mouquet Farm as part of the Battle of the Somme in August 1916. William was admitted to hospital in November 1916 with "trench foot" (frost bite). He remained in England, convalescing at the command depots at Perham Downs and Weymouth. In November 1917 he attended the Winchester Engineering Works for a course.

FATE William returned to Australia aboard the Runic on September 22, 1918 and was discharged in Sydney on January 31, 1919

COMMENT William and his brother Jack Hunt 4806 enlisted in Gilgandra, and their father, Charles Henry Hunt 4804 caught up with the Coo-ees at Raglan, near Bathurst, and enlisted there. They were together through training and the Western Front and all returned to Australia.

2ND LIEUTENANT JOHN ROBERT LEE



*Photo Courtesy of Gilgandra
Museum and Historical
Society*

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 30

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Farmer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Rifle Club Gilgandra

UNIT/S 24th Battalion and the 21st Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS John enlisted in Gilgandra on October 9, 1915 and marched to Sydney with the Coo-ees. As a former Methodist minister, he acted as their chaplain and as a skilled orator, he gave many stirring speeches. He embarked from Sydney with the 24th Battalion on October 30, 1916 on the Argyllshire and disembarked at Devonport on January 10, 1917.

After further training in England he joined his unit in France on the Western Front on March 23, 1917. Early in April 1917 he was transferred to 21st Battalion where he was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant on May 17. He participated at Bullecourt and in the capture of Broodseinde Ridge. From October 1917 he was at General Headquarters Gun School then on leave until November 1917. A knee injury ended his time in France and he returned to Australia in May 1918. He remained in the Army as a Reserve Officer and worked with recruitment and training at Liverpool.

COMMENT John Lee went on to have a long career in local and state government until his death in 1957. His wife survived him.

TRANSPORT 2ND CORPORAL ALFRED RUPERT LINGSTROM



Photo courtesy of Gwen Gormly

SERVICE NUMBER 4834

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 21

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Wrigley St,
Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Postal Assistant

PREVIOUS SERVICE Geurie Rifle Club

UNIT/S 13th Battalion and the ANZAC Mounted
Division Signal Squadron

SERVICE DETAILS Alfred passed the medical examination in Dubbo on October 13, 1915 and caught up with the Coo-ees at Blayney, marching to Sydney to train at Liverpool. He embarked on the HMAT Star of England on March 8, 1916 and trained in Egypt. In May 1916, he transferred to the Signal Section of the Engineers Training Depot and he remained in Egypt and Palestine for the remainder of the war.

FATE Alfred returned to Australia on the HT Malta on July 3, 1919 and arrived on August 10. Alfred was discharged on October 3, 1919.

COMMENT After the war he returned to the postal department and was postmaster in country towns. He died in 1952 aged 55 and is buried at the Woronora Cemetery Sutherland.

Alfred was also known as Alf Lynne and Pug Lynne.

LANCE CORPORAL JAMES MAHER



Photo courtesy of Lorrae Leo

SERVICE NUMBER 4847

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 18

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT "Springfield",
Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Farmer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Gilgandra Rifle Club

UNIT/S 13th Battalion and the 45th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS James joined the Coo-ee March on passing his medical examination in Dubbo on October 14, 1915. After training at Liverpool, he embarked for Egypt on the HMAT Star of England on March 8, 1916. After training in Egypt, James transferred to the 45th Battalion, arriving in France at the Western Front in June 1916 to face Pozieres and Mouquet Farm as part of The Battle of the Somme in August 1916. James was wounded in action and admitted to hospital in February 1917 with a severe gunshot wound to the chest and ankle.

FATE James was transferred through the Casualty Clearing Station in the field, the 36th General Hospital in Etaples, the Military Hospital in Chatham then to Harefield Hospital where William Hitchen had died in 1916. He returned to Australia on the hospital ship Kanowna and was discharged on July 10, 1918.

COMMENT He received the Victory Medal and the British War Medal. James died on March 25, 1957 aged 59.

PRIVATE CHARLES EDMOND MARCHANT



Photo courtesy of Gilgandra Museum and Historical Society

SERVICE NUMBER 4848

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 22

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT "Warrenderi",
Tooraweenah Rd, Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Farmer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 13th Battalion and the 45th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS Charles joined the Coo-ee March after passing his medical examination by Dr Peet in Gilgandra on October 9, 1915. He trained at Liverpool and embarked for Egypt on the HMAT Star of England on March 8, 1916. He trained in Egypt and transferred to the 45th Battalion in April 1916.

FATE Later that month Charles suffered an accidental gun shot wound to his elbow and was admitted to the 3rd Australian General Hospital at Abbassia in Egypt. He returned to Australia on the Karoola in July 1916 and was discharged in Sydney on September 13, 1916 without seeing any action.

COMMENT Charles died on May 8, 1926 and is buried in Gilgandra Cemetery with his military history proudly recorded on his headstone. "In Loving Memory of Pte. C. E. Marchant; No 4848 13th BATT 1st AIF".

PRIVATE ANDREW JAMES MCGREGOR



SERVICE NUMBER 4855

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 34

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT 39 Fotheringham St, Marrickville, Sydney, NSW

OCCUPATION Baker

PREVIOUS SERVICE 10 yrs Colonial Forces

UNIT/S 13th Battalion and the 2nd Field Bakery

SERVICE DETAILS Andrew joined the Coe-ee March after passing his medical examination by Dr Peet in Gilgandra on October 9, 1915. After training at Liverpool, he embarked for Egypt on the HMAT Star of England on March 8, 1916. Andrew trained in Egypt, then transferred to the No 4 Pioneer Battalion, 2nd Australian Field Bakery. They arrived in France at the Western Front in June 1916 and faced Pozieres and Mouquet Farm as part of The Battle of the Somme, then Bullecourt and Messines. Andrew was admitted to hospital in England in June 1918 with a severe back problem and did not return to active service.

FATE Andrew returned to Australia on the D32 Giaka and was discharged from the AIF on December 29, 1918 as permanently unfit for service.

COMMENT Andrew McGregor was the fifth of six brothers to volunteer and the sixth brother volunteered at Parramatta with the Coe-ees.

PRIVATE LAURENCE LESLIE MAGUIRE



Photo courtesy of Gilgandra Museum and Historical Society

SERVICE NUMBER 4840

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 26

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT "Woodvale Park", Curban, NSW

OCCUPATION Labourer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 13th Battalion, the 45th Battalion and the 62nd Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS Laurence joined the Cooe March after passing his medical examination in Gilgandra on October 8, 1915. He trained at Liverpool and embarked for Egypt on the HMAT Star of England on March 8, 1916. He trained in Egypt and transferred to the 45th Battalion in April 1916. The battalion arrived in France in June to face the Battle of the Somme, Pozieres and Mouquet Farm. In November 1916 he was admitted to hospital with scalded feet (no reason given). Treatment and convalescence kept him in England until September 1917 when he returned to France to face a battle near Passchendaele and the German Offensive in the Somme in 1918.

FATE Laurence was killed in action on April 2, 1918 near Albert in France. He has no known grave.

COMMENT He sent cigarette silks home to Curban and Ida (Bonnington) Lummis stitched them into a cushion, which is on display in the Gallery. Laurence is commemorated on the Villers Bretonneux War Memorial.

PRIVATE JAMES MCKEOWN



Photo courtesy of Sandy Taylor

SERVICE NUMBER 4862

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 37

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Lower Miller St,
Gilgandra

OCCUPATION Dealer and skin buyer

PREVIOUS SERVICE 15 months in South Africa

UNIT/S 13th Battalion and the 45th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS James joined the Coo-ee March in Gilgandra on October 9, 1915 and marched to Sydney where he trained at Liverpool before embarking to Egypt on the HMAT Star of England. After training in Egypt, James was transferred to the 45th Battalion and arrived in France in June 1916 to face his first experience of battle at Pozieres in the Somme.

In December 1916 he was admitted with bronchitis to hospital in France, then England, and convalesced at Weymouth in England. James returned to Australia on the Thermistocles and was discharged July 31, 1917 medically unfit with cardiac insufficiency and recurring catarrh.

COMMENT James and his wife Ruby King grew up in the Gilgandra district. He joined the Australian forces in South Africa to fight in the Boer War and was discharged in January 1901. He was married with five children when he enlisted with the Coo-ees and was granted a pension when discharged in 1917. James won a block in Barcaldine, Queensland. He died in Rockhampton in 1945 aged 68.

JOHN MCNAMARA



SERVICE NUMBER Depot

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 45

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Botany Rd, Sydney, NSW

OCCUPATION Butcher

PREVIOUS SERVICE Soudan (today's Sudan) and South Africa

UNIT/S Depot

SERVICE DETAILS The first time John McNamara tried to enlist was in Traralgon, Victoria in December 1914. He gave his age as 47 and passed the medical, but this enlistment didn't proceed. He joined at Gilgandra on October 9, 1915 and he marched off to Sydney with the Coo-ee March. He was attached to the 13th Battalion and trained at Liverpool. In January 1916 he was absent without leave for seven days, fined 40/- and forfeited pay. But he went "AWOL" again in February and was discharged on March 12, 1916 as "his services are no longer required".

COMMENT John Meredith describes John as "The Grizzled Old Veteran" in his book, "The Coo-ee March". He was in the NSW Artillery in the 1880s when he went to Soudan, Africa and was awarded the Soudan Medal and Clasp and the Khedive's Bronze Star in the Matabele campaign. In South Africa he gained the Queen's Medal and Four Clasps, the King's Medal and Two Clasps and the Distinguished Conduct Medal. He joined the Transvaal Mounted Police and fought in the Cape Colony Rebellion, and then worked on the Cape to Cairo Railway. When enlisting at Gilgandra he was asked about his previous service, so he simply emptied his bag of medals onto the table.

PRIVATE ALBERT WARREN PEARCE



SERVICE NUMBER 6296

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 38

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Teroit St, Richmond, NSW

OCCUPATION Labourer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Royal Australian Artillery
– six years

UNIT/S 1st Battalion and the Australian Medical Corp

SERVICE DETAILS Albert first enlisted in Gilgandra on October 9, 1915 and marched to Sydney with the Coo-ees but had a vision defect and was discharged in November 1915. Despite his his vision impairment, Albert enlisted in April 1916, at Dubbo, with the 46th Battalion and trained at Liverpool with the 1st Battalion. He embarked from Sydney on the Euripides on September 9, arriving in Plymouth, England on October 26, 1916.

Albert served at several camps and hospitals at Fovant, Larkhill, Durrington and Sutton Veny. In June 1917 he trained with the 17th Field Ambulance which was disbanded four months later when plans for a 6th Division were also abandoned. After attending the Australian Medical Corp Training Depot at Parkhouse, he was attached to the Group Hospital at Sutton Veny.

FATE He served in the Group Hospital at Sutton Veny, England until returning to Australia on the Karmala on February 2, 1919.

COMMENT Little is known of Albert but according to the NSW BDM Register, he was one of eleven children of Isaac and Jane Pearce of Richmond NSW and had a twin sister, Alice J. There is no record of a marriage and electoral rolls show he lived at Brewarrina and Dubbo from 1930 to 1949. There is a death recorded of a 75 year old Albert W Pearce at Liverpool on June 8, 1953.

PRIVATE JOHN QUINN



SERVICE NUMBER 881

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 30

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Fitter

PREVIOUS SERVICE Royal Australian Artillery for three years and possibly the Royal Australian Engineers for 2 years.

UNIT/S 13th Battalion, 4th Pioneer Battalion and the Australian Employment Company

SERVICE DETAILS John enlisted in Gilgandra on October 9, 1915. He was born in Moama and his parents lived in Tocumwal, NSW. He joined the Coo-ee March and trained in Liverpool before embarking on the Star of Victoria to Egypt. He trained further with the 4th Pioneer Battalion and embarked from Alexandria to France where he was taken on strength with the 46th Battalion. Admitted to hospital in France in July 1916 with an injury to his right leg, John was treated and convalesced then discharged to the Etaples Base to work with the Sanitary Squad. From there he spent his time with the 1st Anzac Reinforcement Camp and the Australian Employment Company.

FATE Returned to Australia on the Nevasa and arrived in Sydney on April 23, 1919 to be discharged on October 3, 1919 with a disability of the right lower limb.

COMMENT Private Quinn received the Victory Medal and the British War Medal.

PRIVATE VICTOR QUINTON



Photo courtesy of Gilgandra Museum and Historical Society

SERVICE NUMBER 4880

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 20

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Miller St, Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Labourer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 13th Battalion, 4th Pioneer Battalion and the Australian Army Ordnance Corps

SERVICE DETAILS Born and bred in Gilgandra, Victor was 19 when he enlisted with the Coo-ees in his home town on October 9, 1915. He trained at Liverpool and embarked for Egypt on the Star of Victoria on March 8, arriving in Alexandria in April 1916. By the end of May he was attached to the 4th Pioneer Training Battalion. On June 6, he left Alexandria and was taken on strength with the 4th Pioneer Battalion on July 22, 1916 at the Western Front.

On August 5, 1916 Victor was reported as Missing in Action, but had been buried by a shell exploding in the communication trench he was building near Pozieres. He was evacuated with "shell shock" but was back with his unit in France by August 11. In early December he was admitted to hospital with two other soldiers suffering with gastric influenza. He was sent to England for treatment and convalescence and never returned to France, spending the rest of the war in England with the Australian Army Ordnance Corps which was concerned with supply and administration.

FATE The transport ship Nevasa brought Victor home to Sydney on the April 23, 1919 and he was discharged on June 12, 1919. He received the Victory Medal and the British War Medal.

COMMENT After the war, fellow Coo-ee William Alston married Victor's sister, Ivy, and Victor married May Lumley in 1930. May died on July 1, 1973 aged 70 years and Victor died 20 days later, aged 77 years. They are buried in Coonabarabran Cemetery.

PRIVATE TYSON RYAN



Photo donated by Gilgandra Museum & Historical Society

SERVICE NUMBER N21449

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 18

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Dubbo Rd,
Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Horse Trainer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 6th Light Horse

SERVICE DETAILS Tyson passed his medical examination by Dr Peet in Gilgandra on October 30, 1915. The recruiting officer accepted him in Lawson on November 7 and he marched to Sydney with the Coo-ees. At Liverpool he was attached to the 6th Light Horse and remained at the depot but his behaviour was less than satisfactory. He was discharged in May 1916 as he was unlikely to become an efficient soldier. He tried to enlist again in the District of Darling on the June 29, 1917 but was rejected. At a proceeding of the Medical Board at Victoria Barracks on the November 30, 1917 he was found to be unfit for active service because of vision problems due to Trachoma.

FATE Tyson was discharged on November 30, 1917

COMMENT "Chicken" Ryan was a well-known figure working around Gilgandra until his death in 1976 at the age of 79. He is buried in the Gilgandra Cemetery where his wife and parents are also buried.

ERNEST SIMPSON



SERVICE NUMBER Depot

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 33

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Horsham, Victoria

OCCUPATION Labourer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S Liverpool Depot

SERVICE DETAILS Ernest failed the medical in Gilgandra because of a hernia before the march started, but decided to march anyway and hoped to pass the medical in Sydney.

FATE After 16 days in camp a Medical Board Report found that he had a double inguinal hernia, Ernest was rejected as medically unfit on November 29, 1915.

COMMENT He was mis-named as C A Simpson, which prevented confirming his service record until recently. Ernest was keen to enlist and was described as "the strongest man that has offered, and is otherwise sound as a bell". He had stayed in Gilgandra for three weeks waiting to join in the Coo-ee March but because of the hernia, did not pass the medical examination.

PRIVATE WILLIAM SMITH



SERVICE NUMBER 4602

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 21

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Geurie, NSW

OCCUPATION Grocer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 56th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS William enlisted with the Coos at Stuart Town on October 20, 1915 and served for three months but was discharged due to sickness. He then re-joined at Dubbo on November 1, 1916 and arrived at Devonport, England on the Beltana on January 29, 1917. He joined the 56th Battalion on December 13 in France and was involved in the capture of Peronne in September and the battle of St Quentin Canal. In December 1918 he was admitted sick to the Casualty Clearing Station and spent the remainder of his time in England in hospital and convalescence around Bulford and Parkhouse.

FATE William returned to Australia on the transport ship Friedrichsruh, arriving in Sydney on September 4 and was discharged on October 12, 1919.

COMMENT He received the Victory Medal and the British War Medal. It is interesting to note that replacement medals were sent to him per Gilgandra District Hospital on May 18, 1959.

PRIVATE STANLEY EVERARD STEPHENS



Photo courtesy of Michael Stephens

SERVICE NUMBER 6320

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 25

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT 25 Roslyn Gardens, Darlinghurst, NSW

OCCUPATION Journalist for Farmers and Settlers Newspaper

PREVIOUS SERVICE He first saw action with the Royal Australian Navy New Guinea and the New Britain Archipelago on September 11, 1914

UNIT/S 13th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS Stanley had come to Gilgandra to cover the Coo-ee March for the Farmer and Settler newspaper. He liked what he saw so enlisted and marched with the Coo-ees, sending detailed stories back to Sydney. After training in Liverpool he embarked on the Euripides to Plymouth, arriving on October 26, 1916. He arrived in France on January 2, 1917, when the 13th Battalion was in the Somme. He was wounded during an attack at Guedecourt and rejoined the unit after two weeks. On April 11, 1917 at the First Battle of Bullecourt, he was reported missing in action.

FATE That day saw 367 men missing in action, 25 men killed and 118 wounded. A court of enquiry held in October 1917 declared that Stanley was killed in action on April 11, 1917.

He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Villers Bretonneux Memorial.

COMMENT Stanley's mother, Ephie Stephens was the secretary of the 13th Battalion Comfort Fund. His younger brother, Percy (1611) was also in the 13th Battalion; he survived and returned to Australia.

PRIVATE LEO AMBROSE STINSON



Photo donated by Bruce and Joyce Stinson

SERVICE NUMBER 5644

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 21

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Miller St,
Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Ironmonger

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 5th Battalion and the 20th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS Leo joined in Gilgandra and marched to Sydney with the Coo-ees but his chest measurement wasn't large enough and he was discharged medically unfit. Several months later he re-enlisted at Dubbo and was accepted. Leo embarked for England on the Euripides on September 9, 1916 and arrived on the Western Front in January 1917. He was on the front line when he was wounded in the arm and chest – one of 16 men wounded and 6 men killed that day. It was classed a successful operation where 200 German prisoners and a machine gun were taken.

FATE He returned to Australia on the hospital transport Barda and was discharged on January 4, 1918.

COMMENT His third enlistment in WW1 was with Special AIF Escort. Leo embarked for England on the HMT Ypinanga with deportees. He had three weeks leave in London before he returned to Australia where he was discharged on February 7, 1920. Leo also served overseas in the Second World War. By then he was postmaster at Tarcutta and married to Sylvia Johnston.

PRIVATE THOMAS HENRY TURVEY

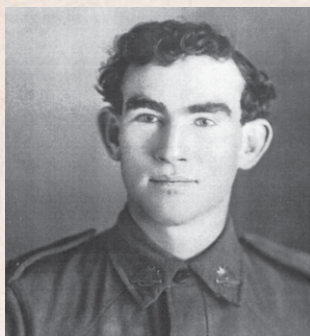


Photo courtesy of Gilgandra Museum and Historical Society

SERVICE NUMBER 4902

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 22

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Labourer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 13th Battalion and the 45th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS Thomas trained at Liverpool with the 13th Battalion and sailed for Egypt on the HMAT Star of England on March 8, 1916. After further training in Egypt, Thomas went to England then to France with the 45th Battalion. The first action he saw was at Pozieres in August 1916 then to the Somme Valley in March. He was wounded at Messines on June 7, 1917, suffering a gunshot wound to his abdomen.

FATE Thomas was sent to England for treatment and convalescence then returned to Australia on the Demosthenes and was discharged on November 1, 1917.

COMMENT Thomas was awarded the Military Medal on August 21, 1917 for "his gallant conduct and devotion to duty during an attack on an enemy trench near Guedecourt on the night of February 22/23, 1917 when, as a runner he maintained communication overland under artillery and machine gun fire between the front line and headquarters. His work in this respect was quite consistent with his previous fine record established for coolness and determination in the face of all obstacles".

PRIVATE ALFRED WARDROP



Photo courtesy of Gary Wardrop

SERVICE NUMBER 4908

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 28

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Pyramul, via Mudgee, NSW

OCCUPATION Labourer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 13th Battalion and the 45th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS Alfred enlisted on October 9, 1915 in Gilgandra, joining the Coo-ee March to Sydney where he trained at Liverpool before embarking to Egypt on the HMAT Star of England in March 1916. After training in Egypt, Alfred was transferred to the 45th Battalion and arrived in France in June 1916 to face his first experience of battle at Pozieres where he suffered a gunshot wound to his hand. He was sent to England for treatment and convalescence, after which he rejoined his unit in December 1916 and life in the trenches.

FATE Alfred was at Guedecourt in the Somme when he was again wounded in action in February 1917, resulting in the amputation of his left leg. After convalescence, Alfred returned to Australia and was discharged on September 6, 1918.

COMMENT Alfred received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. He died at Mudgee in 1935, aged 48, and is buried in the Pyramul Cemetery.

PRIVATE RICHARD CHARLIE WHEELER



SERVICE NUMBER 5777

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 18

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Labourer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 13th Battalion

SERVICE DETAILS Richard marched to Sydney with the Coo-ees and trained at Liverpool with the 13th Battalion. He embarked on the HMAT MacGillivray and trained in Egypt and England before arriving in France on October 13, 1916. He was with the 13th Battalion when they saw action at Gueudecourt and Bullecourt and Messines. Richard had a period of sickness and was attached to the 3rd Australian General Hospital in England until August 1918. He returned to France for the Somme Offensive and remained in France until the end of the war.

FATE Richard returned to Australia in October 1919 on the Benalla and was discharged on February 7, 1920. When he returned he brought his wife with him.

COMMENT Richard married the 19 year old Rose Gertrude Winifred Parsons on July 9, 1919 at Willesden, Middlesex in the Parish Church of Harlesden. He received the Victory Medal and the British War Medal.

PRIVATE FRANCIS NOEL WHITE



SERVICE NUMBER 2395 and 66805

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 35

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT 6 Greenway St,
Wickham, Newcastle, NSW

OCCUPATION Wheelright

PREVIOUS SERVICE Two years with the Royal East
Kent Mounted Rifles

UNIT/S 6th Light Horse and the Imperial Camel
Corps

SERVICE DETAILS Francis enlisted on October
9, 1915 and marched to Sydney with the Coo-ees.
He was attached to the 6th Light Horse and after
training at Menangle he embarked from Sydney to
Egypt on May 3, 1916 aboard Hymettus.

He was taken on strength with the 2nd Light Horse
Training Regiment at Tel el Kebir in Egypt and in
October 1916 transferred to the Imperial Camel
Corps. The ICC fought alongside Australian Light
Horse units at Romani, Magdhaba and Rafa against
the Turks.

FATE In February 1916 Francis re-injured his knee
and returned to Australia aboard the Willochre on
March 8, 1917. He was discharged in Sydney on
May 25, 1917 as permanently unfit.

COMMENT This did not stop him from trying
unsuccessfully to enlist twice more at Dubbo and
Newcastle. His service record states he embarked
aboard SS Wyreema on October 14, 1918 to
London and returned on December 21. Francis was
designated Acting Sergeant for the voyage and
was discharged on January 5, 1919. There is no
indication of the reason for the voyage.

DRIVER PETER WILSON



Photo courtesy of Gilgandra Museum and Historical Society

SERVICE NUMBER 2404

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 21

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Myrtle St
Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Labourer

PREVIOUS SERVICE Nil stated

UNIT/S 7th Light Horse and the 1st Field Company
Engineers

SERVICE DETAILS Peter was with the 7th Light Horse Regiment at Menangle Park NSW when he embarked for Egypt on April 18, 1916 aboard the Palermo. He trained at Tel el Kabir and was assigned to the 1st Field Squadron Engineers.

Sapper Wilson was involved in the defense of the Suez Canal and the pursuit of the Turks through to the Battle of Romani. In 1917 the advance continued to the victories of Beersheba, Gaza and Jerusalem. In Jerusalem he injured his hand when he was thrown from a wagon in the line of duty. However, he was back with his unit in time to see the armistice signed on October 31, 1918 between the British and the Ottoman Empire, ending the war in Palestine.

FATE Peter finished his service in Kantara with the AIF Headquarters as a Driver and returned to Australia aboard the Malta on July 3, 1919 and was discharged on September 29, 1919.

RICHARD GILBERT CLARENCE WRIGLEY



SERVICE NUMBER Depot

AGE ON ENLISTMENT 22

HOMETOWN ON ENLISTMENT Gilgandra, NSW

OCCUPATION Horse breaker

PREVIOUS SERVICE Gilgandra 9th Light Horse

UNIT/S 1st Light Horse

SERVICE DETAILS Richard enlisted with the Coo-ee March at Lawson on November 7, 1915 with ten other recruits and marched to Sydney. At Liverpool Camp, Richard was assigned to the 1st Light Horse, C Squadron. During training Richard had several charges of being drunk and absent without leave.

On January 4, 1916 he was transferred from Liverpool Camp to Milsons Island Camp in the Hawkesbury River, north of Sydney.

FATE May 19, 1916 was the last entry in his service record and date of discharge is January 3, 1919.

COMMENT Richard married Grace Troon in 1920 and was a lift driver. He was living at 70 Albion St, Waverley when he died in 1963.

Resources Used

AIF Database: <https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/index.html>

Service records at National Archives of Australia: <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au>

Trove: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>

NSW BDM (Births Deaths and Marriages): <http://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au>

Mapping Our Anzacs: <http://mappingouranzacs.naa.gov.au>

Red Cross Missing and Wounded Bureau: http://www.awm.gov.au/people/roll-search/wounded_and_missing/

Commonwealth War Graves: <http://www.cwgc.org/>

Australian First World War Record: <http://wraggelabs.com/ww1-records/>

Australian War Memorial: <http://www.awm.gov.au>

Helen Thompson Cooee March blog: <http://cooeemarch1915.wordpress.com/>

Gilgandra's Diggers: <http://www.gilgandraddiggers.org.au/>

'The Coe-ee March' Booklet by Graeme Purvis for the Gilgandra Museum and Historical Society

'The Coe-ee March' Book by John Meredith

'Digging For Diggers' Book by Graeme Hosken

Gilgandra Library Photograph Collection

Friends and families of the Gilgandra Coe-ees who provided photographs and stories.

WW1 Slouch Hat: Photo supplied by Australian War Memorial REL/03153.

Acknowledgements

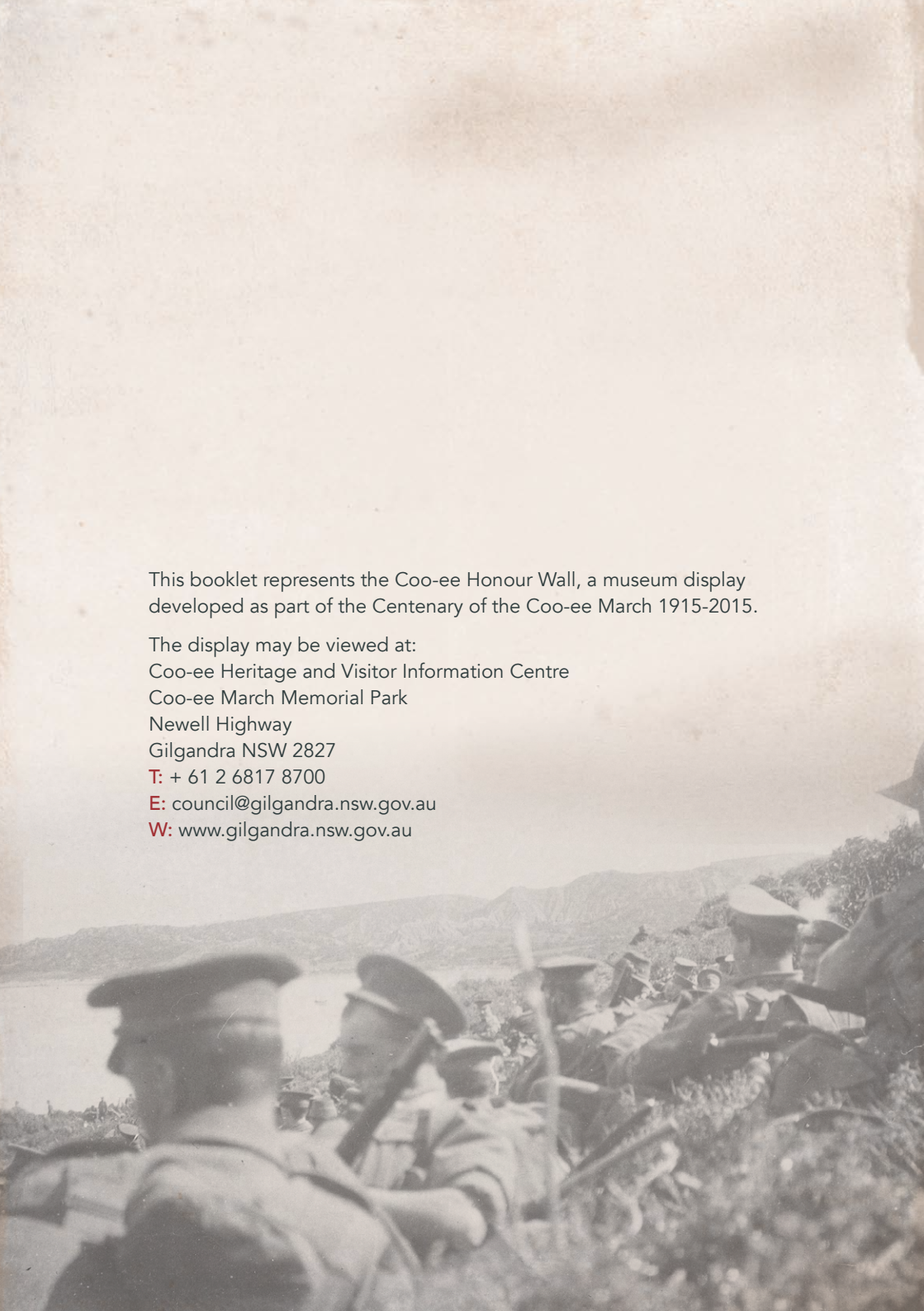
Research and compilation by Margo Piggott

Gilgandra Museum & Historical Society Inc.

Gilgandra Shire Council

Friends and families of the Gilgandra Coe-ees





This booklet represents the Coo-ee Honour Wall, a museum display developed as part of the Centenary of the Coo-ee March 1915-2015.

The display may be viewed at:
Coo-ee Heritage and Visitor Information Centre
Coo-ee March Memorial Park
Newell Highway
Gilgandra NSW 2827
T: + 61 2 6817 8700
E: council@gilgandra.nsw.gov.au
W: www.gilgandra.nsw.gov.au