

The Australian Light Horse Anthology:

A selection of readings and
reference material



Copyright Information

The Chauvel Foundation makes best efforts to verify copyright ownership in all material on these articles before publication. The Foundation requires all third-party contributors to provide a warranty confirming their ownership of the copyright in the material and assign Creative Commons Licence to the Foundation. If any person considers that a copyright violation has occurred, please contact us at admin@chauvelfoundation.com and we will investigate the matter. If it is confirmed that copyright infringement has inadvertently occurred, the Foundation will remove the relevant material promptly.

© The General Sir Harry Chauvel Foundation 2019

Cover Image: T. Baker, Shoeing Smith

Foreword

A contemporary view of the Lighthorseman by Henry Gullet is provided by way of a Foreword.

This is an edited excerpt from: Gullett H.S., (1923). *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, pp.32-38.

The Australian possessed, therefore, remarkable qualities, both natural and acquired, for a mounted war in a hot, dry country. He was, when engaged in such a war, living and fighting under conditions closely resembling those to which he had been accustomed all his life. He needed only to learn discipline, and to become skilled in the effective use of modern destructive weapons, to be a formidable soldier.

They formed a force essentially easy to train and discipline, provided they were handled with quick intelligence and sympathy. British regular officers, without an understanding of their native qualities, sometimes found them difficult; but, as the war developed, it became recognised that the Australian officer who had trouble with the light horsemen was not fit for his command. With the inevitable occasional exception to be discovered in any large body of troops, they were self-respecting men, accustomed to hard-working, independent lives. Like all citizen soldiers, they found rigid discipline irksome, but to all the essentials in that discipline their obedience was instant and absolute. It was as impossible as it would have been disastrous to stamp out the individual in them.

But the qualities which made him so effective as an individual soldier, and his fire discipline so absolute and unbreakable, rendered him impatient of that side of discipline which may be termed purely ceremonial. When away from his own officers, he was somewhat indifferent to the rigid rules of saluting; and this attitude, together with the disdain with which he regarded all army formality and etiquette which did not, to his rational mind, have some direct bearing on his work as a fighting soldier, produced much embarrassment, and at times even strained the relations between the light horse commands and the British General Staff in Egypt and Palestine. The evolution of the light horseman in these respects was interesting and typical of his strong individuality. In the early days of the war he was remarkable among the Australian force as a whole for punctilious observance of formalities. But as he learned the grim lessons of war, and became more and more effective as a fighting man, he grew less regardful of army ceremonial.

All through the war the light horseman tried things by the light of his strong common sense. On a hard-riding advance, when victory depended upon speed, and speed upon a supply of horsefeed, he did not hesitate to help himself to any grain or other fodder possessed by the natives of the country. Orders forbidding such conduct might have been couched in the strongest terms; but when it was a choice between failure through loss of horses, and success to be achieved by the commandeering of fodder, he did not hesitate to flout authority. He

dismissed such incidents from his mind with the scornful thought that a General Staff which could not settle trifling affairs of that sort with the natives was not fit for its job, and rode on happy because the bulging nosebag ensured an evening meal for his beloved waler.

The light horseman, with all his unconventional ways and his occasional forcefulness, was at heart distinguished by shyness and reserve. The young Australian countryman leads a simple and peaceful life. He bears himself modestly. One of the first horsemen of the world, and breeding the world's best horses of their kind, he indulges himself in no distinctive horseman's attire. He has none of that picturesque flashness which cowboys of western America and the Canadian northwest of a generation ago inherited from the Spanish pioneers of the Pacific slope. A felt slouch hat, a shirt with the sleeves rolled to the elbows, long trousers, not particularly made for riding, boots, and very gentle spurs make up his everyday dress. He rides, as a rule, in a plain English hunting saddle, and carries neither lasso nor revolver. A temperate man, his one excess is a harmless celebration at the annual races or agricultural show, or on an occasional visit to the capital city of his State; even then the impelling force is the bursting strength of his youth rather than any disposition for strong drink or unwholesome excitement. Men of all young British countries engage in these occasional sprees, which were in fact a stronger feature of the early pioneering days, when most of the settlers were of British birth, than they are among the native-born. The young countryman of the Commonwealth is neither a hard nor a regular drinker, but, when his rare holiday comes, he engages whole-heartedly in a joyous demonstration. On occasion he did this at Cairo, and at other places abroad, and his high spirits and forceful, but as a rule quite harmless, carnivals sometimes led to misunderstanding in the minds of men who did not know the native wholesomeness of his life at home. Any study of the slender "crime" sheets of the light horseman throws a sure light upon his character. The worst offence discoverable there (with the exceptions inevitable in a body of many thousands of men) is that of occasional physical violence, of blows struck in anger. But those tell-tale sheets are clean of all morbid or unmanly offences, and remarkably free from charges of desertion, cowardice, or disobedience to orders in action.

Much that is misleading has been written of the Australian type of manhood. So far as a distinctive type has been evolved, it is to be found among men from the country districts, where there is a preponderance of young men long of limb and feature, spare of flesh, easy and almost tired in bearing, and with a singular native grace of posture. The head is carried forward on long, powerful shoulders; and this, together with a casual, almost lazy, impression conveyed by the whole figure, and the national tendency to lean the body against fences, trees, vehicles, or the shoulders of a horse, misleads the stranger as to the Australian's great physical strength and superb athleticism. Perhaps no young manhood in any age, not even excepting the Greeks, has been distinguished by so great a love of physical exercises, and so much achievement in competition with men of other countries. But, although the man thus described may be roughly accepted as a national type, the light horsemen rode and fought in all shapes and sizes, from great square-built, heavy but active men like Granville Ryrie to wiry little men like Harry Chauvel.

Table of Contents

Foreword

Sir Harry Chauvel - biography

Midnight the War Horse

In memory of Bill of the Sixth Light Horse Regiment

The Veterinarian - Harry Worthington

Racing and the 'Great ride'

100 years ago - Waiting to go home

The horses stay behind

Australian Gold: Wartime currency

Colourising the Light Horse

Further Reading



The General Sir Harry Chauvel Memorial Foundation Inc

Become a Member

The Chauvel Foundation has been formed to commemorate and to bring to life the exciting story of General Sir Harry Chauvel. Visit the web site below and subscribe to receive further information.

GENERAL SIR HARRY CHAUVEL, GCMG, KCB

Harry Chauvel is one of, if not *the*, greatest military wartime leader in Australian history. He served in three wars and peacetime, yet his story has seldom been accurately told. *General Sir Harry Chauvel Foundation Inc* has been established to commemorate his service and that of all the troops he valiantly led; see <https://www.chauvelfoundation.com/>

Grazier, horseman, rifleman, soldier, leader of men, compassionate and caring for his men and horses, dedicated to his wife and four children, noble and just – Sir Harry Chauvel is one of the finest soldiers Australia has been blessed with, largely due to his fairness, discipline and his focus on the training and welfare of his soldiers.

"He fought to win, but not at any price. He sought victory on his own terms. He always retained, even in the heated moments of battle, when leaders are often careless with life, a very rare concern for the lives of his men and horses."

– Henry Gullett, official Australian WW1 historian

HIS LIFE AND CAREER

Born Henry George Chauvel (thereafter known as Harry) on 16th April 1865, on a cattle station at Tabulam NSW. Following his family's generations of military service in Britain and India, Harry joined the Upper Clarence Light Horse as a Second Lieutenant during the threat in Sudan and Russian interference in India. Threats over, family fortunes disintegrated due to drought and they moved to Canning Downs in SE Qld. Harry joined the Queensland Mounted Infantry QMI in 1890 aged 25.

In 1891 Harry led a detachment of QMI to work with civil police to quell the strife by striking shearers. On one occasion his detachment escorted non-union labour and four striker prisoners through the ranks of other strikers; order was maintained by good discipline and respect for both sides, without incident

Harry became a regular officer in 1896 when promoted Captain and became the Adjutant, Moreton Regiment. In 1897 he was promoted Major and sent to London for additional training for one year.

He returned to Australia and took a Company of QMI to the war in South Africa (Boer war). He was awarded Companion of the Order St Michael and St George CMG and Mentioned-in-Despatches MID. He returned to Australia in 1901 and to the military forces of the new Commonwealth of Australia.

In 1906 he married Sibyl Jopp and together they had two sons and two daughters. Harry was a dedicated family man and constantly wrote to Sibyl whenever he was away.

During the next decade Harry was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel and immersed in training our military forces. In early 1914 he and his family were posted to London as the Australian representative on the Imperial General Staff.

At the commencement of WW1, Australia committed its forces to the British war effort and our troops were intended to go to Salisbury plains where rain, mud, cold and poor-quality huts awaited them in a bitter snowy winter. Harry knew these conditions would not suit our soldiers coming from spring and summer. Appeals to the British staff fell on uncaring ears so Harry prevailed on the Australian High Commissioner and together they convinced Lord Kitchener, British Secretary for War, to disembark our troops in Egypt for further training and acclimatisation.

Harry became Commander 1st Light Horse Brigade as a Brigadier-General and took them to Gallipoli as dismounted infantry. For his leadership and military skills, he was awarded Companion Order of the Bath CB. Promoted Major-General, he was appointed to command the 1st Division before all troops were evacuated back to Egypt.

In Egypt he was appointed to command the Anzac Mounted Division AMD that now included the New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade and elements of the Imperial Camel Corps (formed in January 1916). The AMD was part of the British-led Egyptian Expeditionary Force EEF under command of Lieutenant-General Sir Archibald Murray. In April 1916 a force of 3,500 Turks crossed the Sinai Peninsula towards the Suez Canal and routed the British 5th Yeomanry Brigade. Murray ordered Chauvel and his AMD into the Sinai to repel the Turks and save the situation. The Turks were forced to withdraw towards Palestine.

Murray then placed all mounted troops under the command of Chauvel – the first time British and imperial troops came under command of a “colonial” officer; a remarkable achievement in a

class-conscious British army. Chauvel established his troops around the Romani area, some 25 miles from the Suez Canal.

The vital ground for the whole of WW1 was arguably the Suez Canal, through which all resupplies of men, materiel, munitions, food and gold from Australasia, India and the Pacific were required for France/Western Front and the Middle East. The alternative was to sail around South Africa, a much longer journey and susceptible to losses from German U-boats and warships. The Turks had first attacked the canal in February 1915, again in April. But they tried again.

In August 1916 a 6,000-man Turko-German force attacked at Romani on their way to the canal. After nine days the Anzacs repelled the Turks who again retreated towards Palestine. *Romani was the first British victory of the whole war.*

The Suez Canal was never again threatened and the Anzacs under Chauvel were never defeated in the next two years. Chauvel led the Anzacs through Sinai and was awarded Knight Commander St Michael and St George KCMG.

The next phase was to break the Turkish line at Gaza on the border of the Sinai and Palestine. General Murray failed twice to take it with frontal assaults and was replaced by General Allenby in June 1917. Allenby re-organised his force, promoted Chauvel to Lieutenant- General, the first Australian to that rank, and appointed him Commander, Desert Mounted Corps DMC.

Allenby needed to capture Gaza to enable the advance into Palestine. To do so he planned to capture Beersheba and its wells in the desert far to its east, then roll through Gaza. After months of careful planning, on 31st October the surprise attack began. After an all-day attack by infantry and dismounted light horsemen, in late afternoon Chauvel gave the order for Brigadier Grant's 4th Light Horse Brigade to charge. They did so, amazingly, with just 32 deaths from his 800 man brigade; they captured the vital water wells and over 1,000 prisoners.

This success allowed Allenby to move on Gaza and capture it, thus enabling the advance into Palestine and prepare for final destruction of the Turkish armies.

By now, Chauvel had provided two of the most significant British victories of the whole war: Romani and Beersheba. He was also present at the capture of Jerusalem. He was awarded Knight Commander of the Bath KCB in the 1918 New Year Honours List.

Problems in Europe on the Western Front now required that trained and seasoned British cavalry and infantry were sent to France/Western Front. They were replaced by less-trained Indian units. A three-month delay for resupply and training meant Chauvel had to supervise the welfare of his troops amid heat, dust, mosquitoes, scorpions, snakes and the enemy.

Finally, on 19th September 1918, Allenby's ultimate assault began. The surprise breakout near the coast opened with an initial air attack that destroyed Turko-German communications, followed

by an artillery bombardment and a massive infantry attack that opened the Turkish lines so that the mounted troops of Chauvel's DMC could pour through. The Great Ride to Damascus was so effective that within a month three Turkish armies were destroyed, some 90,000 prisoners taken, Damascus and then Aleppo captured. On 30th October the Turks signed an armistice. War in the Middle East was over.

It is noteworthy that in this campaign, only Australia's Chauvel and New Zealand's Major-General Chaytor served continuously, while at least six British generals were replaced.

Chauvel returned to Australia in early 1919 and was appointed Inspector-General and then Chief of the General Staff, Australia's top soldier. In June 1919 his knighthood was upgraded to Knight Grand Cross of the Order St Michael and St George GCMG.

In 1929 he was promoted to General, the first Australian to that rank. He retired in 1930 age 65.

There was considerable public discussion at the time about granting him Field Marshall rank, but the Australian Government did not do so, having bowed to advice received from Britain about their own Field Marshals (with the implication from them that Chauvel was "only a Corps Commander" – although he had much greater national responsibilities than that in the Middle East, had commanded a multi-national force there, and subsequently had a significant military role in peacetime Australia).

In retirement, Sir Harry was Chairman of the Shrine Trustees and Chairman of the Anzac Day Commemorative Council. He was Patron of Melbourne Legacy and active for the Red Cross and YMCA. He became the best-known and one of the best-loved military leaders. It was common for crowds at public events to stand and cheer when someone called out "Here's Sir Harry!"

He was appointed to some civilian company boards – he attended Board meetings of National Bank Australia and Colonial Mutual Life Assurance weekly or twice a week.

In 1939 he was recalled to WW2 service as leader of the Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC), Australia's Home Guard, until his death in 1945.

General Sir Harry Chauvel should be remembered for his focus on discipline, training, fairness, the welfare of his men and their horses, dedication to his family, establishment of the finest military force possible and his remarkable tactical ability. His decorations and awards were the least of his concerns, although appreciated as recognition of what his Anzacs and their comrades achieved under his leadership.

Midnight the War Horse

by Peter Haydon

As the clock struck 12 midnight, the much- awaited foal bounced awkwardly but strongly to her feet for the first time. The crystal-clear waters of the Pages River flowed around the big bend with its high side cut well into the bank, while the new foal stood on the level, rich alluvial flat on the homestead side of the river.

It was the 31 October 1905, the same day twelve years later she would come to a courageous end in a foreign land in a foreign war. In doing so, she would save the life of her rider, Guy Haydon. They had been coupled for life, they were a partnership, as he had been born just across the flat in the old homestead sixteen years earlier.



There she stood, black like the night as she nudged towards her mother. On her forehead was a small white star with three little peaks like the petals of a tiara pointing upwards. There was a distinctive white triangular peak on the front of her near hind coronet, standing all alone, matching the upward peaks on her star. She also had a small piece of white on the back of each hind coronet. Her feet were hard, solid black which were prized by bushmen for their strength, durability and toughness as opposed to feet which were white and soft.

It was Moonlight's first foal and she had been retired to strengthen the broodmare band at Haydon Horse Stud, following her career excelling in all the things that had been asked of her. From chasing brumbies in the high country to days mustering cattle and a long hard droving trip to the

Gulf. She was ridden between properties and to town as horses were then the only means of transport. Frequent rides were made to Maitland to do the family banking and to catch the ship at Morpeth to Sydney.

She had been bred by Thomas Haydon who had sailed to the Colony in 1836 to join his brother Peter who arrived in Sydney in 1828. Peter lived at Tivoli in Rose Bay grazing cattle along the foreshores of Sydney Harbour, with a wonderful view across the expanse of water to the natural undeveloped harbour foreshores. He was one of the early pioneers of the Upper Hunter and became the original landholder of Bloomfield in 1832. Peter had written requesting Thomas and his sister Matilda travel to the new colony to help Peter run his rural enterprises, which were expanding north from the Hunter Valley.



Tivoli Homestead 1842 (left) and Bloomfield Homestead, Blandford (right)

Thomas settled at Bloomfield and built the homestead from local sandstone. With his wife, Margaret, he raised five boys and two girls. He spent most of his life in the saddle riding, managing the sprawling properties as more were added. Matilda married Peter Brodie who had settled the property Glenalvon further up the Pages Rivers past Murrurundi.

In 1840, Thomas purchased the well-bred stallion Young Dover, who was by Dover, from the Scott brothers of Glendon at Singleton. Thomas would ride the 92 miles on Young Dover to Maitland, with gold he had purchased from the early gold prospectors from around Nundle and other monies to deposit in at the ANZ bank. The Haydon family are still the bank's oldest continual clients in Australia. The old ledgers with the original entries have been retained all these years by the bank. While there he would enter Young Dover in the Maitland races and on occasions, winning three races in the one day before riding him home again back up the valley to Blandford.



Dover imported 1836 (left) and The Bank's original Ledger (right)

Moonlight was by a son of Young Dover and Thomas's son Bernard loved riding the mare. He would frequently ride her into Murrurundi to visit and have dinner with the Wakeford family.

William Wakeford had come to help build the new railway tunnel through the Liverpool Range to enable rail transport into the developing areas of the north west of the State. He later built the Prospect Dam for Sydney's water supply. With his wife Elizabeth he travelled to the colony where his engineering skills were in high demand. However, it was their daughter Blanche that Bernard was keen to see. He had many trips during the courtship before marrying her in 1879.

Bernard further built a strong association with Moonlight when he rode her on the long droving trip all the way to their properties in the Gulf. Bullocks were then walked down from Normanton back to Bloomfield where they were fattened and then driven down over the Hawkesbury River to the Homebush market in Sydney. These were well-travelled bullocks, seeing a lot of Australia from the Gulf, through Queensland across the border into NSW and then on to Sydney.



The Droving Team at Normanton 1887

Moonlight was joined to the Haydon's top sire Tester who was never beaten on the track and became the leading sire of his time. His stock were the undisputed champions of the then popular short distance "Bridle Spurts" when the winner received a bridle. Many were unbeaten like their sire, winning numerous bridles for the family. Midnight luckily inherited her father's speed combined with the stamina of her mother.

Moonlight had a strong place in Bernard's heart carrying him during his courting days to the long distances, endurance and hardships of the Gulf. For her now to produce this lovely black filly by his prized stallion Tester was cause for celebration. Given the hour and her colour he named her Midnight. Little did he know and it would have been incomprehensible at the time, that this filly would even travel further and achieve more accolades than her mother.



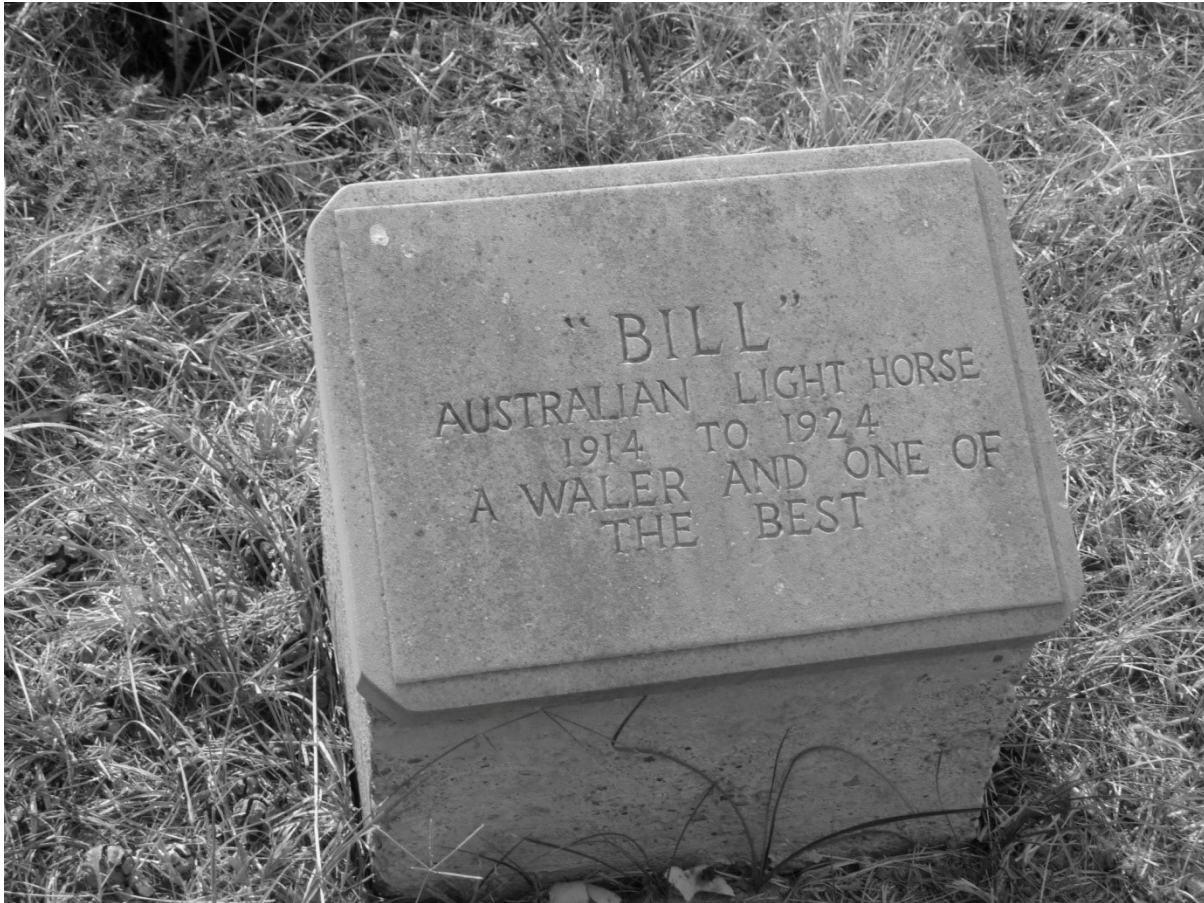
Tester leading stallion at Bloomfield 1888-1904 and sire of Midnight held by Combo Bloomfield

[Continue reading this article here.](#)

In memory of Bill of the Sixth Light Horse Regiment

1914 – 24 Aged 21: One of the Best

by Anne Flood



This is the epitaph engraved on a headstone surmounting a lonely grave under the shadow of Walker's Ridge at Gallipoli. "Bill" was a horse – just not an 'ordinary' horse but quite extraordinary and the 'stuff' that legends are made of.

Roland Perry tells the story of this fractious Waler – one of Australia's greatest war horses – in his book "Bill the Bastard". Bill left Sydney on board a troop ship: his minder was Banjo Paterson who served as an honorary vet on the troopship and even Banjo, who was an experienced horseman, was cautious of Bill. On reaching Alexandria the horses were unloaded and entrained to Maadi East of the Nile River near Cairo. After a spell the troopers were reunited with their horses – not that Bill would belong to any one trooper – he unceremoniously bucked off any man who attempted to ride him.

"On 17 April it was announced that the Infantry forces would be going into action on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The Light Horse Brigades were not included as the rugged terrain was

deemed unsuitable for mounted infantry. It was bitter news for the Light Horse Brigade. Chauvel and Godley immediately organized manoeuvres - they did not want to allow their men time to dwell on their disappointment.

Within a week of the Gallipoli landing the 1st Australian Division had lost over half of their numbers. Reinforcements were urgently required. Lieutenant-General Sir William Birdwood requested a force of 1000 volunteers from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Light Horse Brigades and the New Zealand Mounted Rifles that were located in Egypt. Colonel Chauvel and Colonel H.R. Russell, (C.O. New Zealand Mounted Rifles) strongly opposed asking for volunteers. Chauvel had witnessed firsthand the effect of the breakup of Australian units in the Boer War and was determined not to allow it to happen again. Chauvel consulted with Lieutenant General Sir John Maxwell who countermanded the order. The Light Horsemen were headed for long-awaited action, fighting not as mounted riflemen, but as Infantry on the now bloody slopes of Gallipoli."

Serving dismounted as back-up infantry the Light Horse and NZ Mounted Rifles landed at Gallipoli from 12th May onwards. Chauvel had organised a small group of horses and mules that could serve as packhorses and to carry injured men. Bill's strength and endurance and ability to be cool amid constant shell and rifle fire meant that he was ideal for these duties.

Perry relates: "Bill worked tirelessly carrying loads up and wounded or fallen soldiers down the steep and twisting tracks ... men and animals showing as much courage as they moved up the [Monash] valley retrieving the fallen ... everybody noticed Bill in particular, along with a gritty yet always cheery Englishman John Simpson and his small donkey. But ... on the day Simpson's luck ran out ... a spray of shrapnel hit Simpson and his animal. Without a second thought his limp body was placed on Bill and hurried away ... This wonderful and inspiring combination of fearless man and beast would no longer come to the aid of hurt comrades " ²

A strategic gain in the August offensive was the capture of the lower slopes of Sazli Beit Dere by the New Zealand Battalions, more than tripling the ground held by the ANZACS. The British Line now extended from Suvla Bay at the North to Gaba Tepe and Anzac Cove.

Each day a rider would carry mail and urgent dispatches from Suvla seven kilometres to British Headquarters. Turkish snipers on the ridges overlooking the beach would snipe at the riders. "It [the mail delivery] had to be done at a gallop" Chauvel wrote to his wife. "The rider was fired at from the moment he left the shelter at Lala Baba until he reached the wide communication trench near Anzac. All the Australian Light horsemen, New Zealand Mounted Riflemen and the British Yeomanry [cavalry] were tumbling over each other to get the job." ³

Perry tells the story of one of these rides: On 3rd October a British Yeomanry Officer, Captain Anthony Bickworth, who was an Olympic Equestrian Medalist, was "assigned the job ... he had the reputation, at least among the British, as the best horseman of the invading troops. " ⁴ Bill was brought out for the ride. Bets were always taken as to whether the mail would get through, but on this occasion when punters found that Bill would be involved, it may have become whether he competed the run with or without the rider. After swerving to avoid bullets from

Turkish snipers in the hills, Captain Bickworth was thrown off and Bill completed the seven kilometres at a gallop and delivered the mail but suffered two bullet wounds. One bullet was removed and the second remained lodged deep in his flank.

The Mounted Horse returned to Egypt and Heliopolis, out of Cairo, and served to defend the Suez Canal that was the 'jugular vein' of the British, bringing supplies, reinforcements and materials needed for the Western Front and the Sinai Campaign. Should the Suez be taken it could mean the end of the war for the British. In late July, 1916 it was reported that a force of thousands of the Turkish army was moving down towards the Suez Canal at Oghratina and Bir El Abd, within striking distance of Romani where the 1st Light Horse Brigade (1st, 2nd and 3rd Light Horse Regiments) were at the time stationed.

[Continue reading this article here.](#)

References:

1. Flood, A., (2013). *In the Footsteps of the First: 1st Australian Light Horse Regiment*. Triple D Books: Wagga Wagga NSW. pp.63 - 64.
2. Perry, R., (2012). *Bill the Bastard* Allen & Unwin: Sydney Australia. p.
3. Ibid, p.71
4. Ibid, p. 72

Major Harry Worthington GMVC

by Alan G Henderson PSM AM (Nephew of Harry Worthington)

Harry Worthington was the only child of Robert and Isabella Worthington, hoteliers in Echuca during the 1890s. Harry studied veterinary science in Melbourne and returned to practice in Echuca before enlisting in 1914 and serving in the Australian Army Veterinary Corps in the Middle East. Soon after his return from World War One in 1920 he acquired a farm in the Deniliquin district and in 1923 married Ida Henderson.

Hoteliers in Echuca

Robert and Isabella Worthington were married in Cheshire in 1884 and Harry was born the following year on 4 December. The family emigrated to Victoria in 1889 and travelled to the river port town of Echuca to acquire the license of the Southern Cross Hotel from Isabella's brother James Hulme.

The Southern Cross Hotel was in the east of Echuca and its lively customer base included employees of nearby sawmills and brickworks. The business, including a store and postal agency enjoyed a few years of prosperity followed by a significant deterioration in economic conditions which impacted on some of the nearby businesses. As Echuca's centenary historian, Susan Priestly observed

From the spectacular heights of the eighties' boom Victoria plummeted down into the depths of the 1893 depression, a descent so merciless that it profoundly affected people's outlook towards strict and sober conservatism.^[1]

The economic consequences of the end of the 1880s boom were compounded by the federation drought with rainfall in Echuca well below average for eight years from 1895. Regrettably 'sober conservatism' did not apply in all cases. In December 1894 Isabella gave "notice to publicans and others that I have ... obtained a prohibition order from the Echuca bench of Magistrates against supplying any intoxicating liquor to Robert Worthington of Echuca East."^[2] A month earlier, Isabella had applied for the hotel license to be transferred from Robert's name to her own.^[3] The Worthington's were also selling assets, including forty acres a couple of miles outside Echuca and two houses for removal from a block opposite the Southern Cross Hotel.^[4]

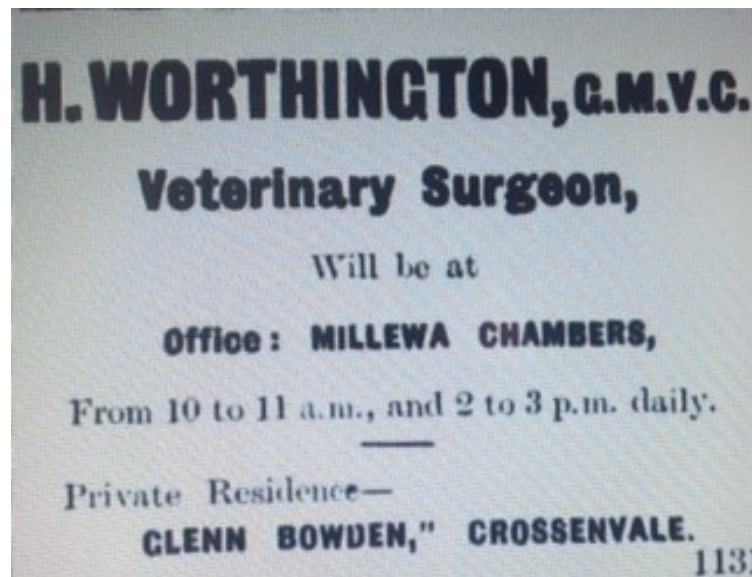
Revenue increased under Isabella's management but the Southern Cross was among twenty hotels that lost their licenses under the Local Option Act in November 1897. 'The Local Option Act 1890 gave citizens the right to decide whether hotels in their district should be closed, and by 1900 Echuca had reduced its total by half.'^[5] In July 1898 Isabella was awarded compensation for the loss of her license and surprisingly, in December she was granted a license for a wine bar at the Southern Cross.^[6]

In February 1898 Robert Worthington died aged fifty, 'from general break up of the system', according to a report in the *Bendigo Advertiser*.^[7] In 1894 Robert had been described as 'suffering from illness' by a witness explaining the reason for Robert's 'shaky' signature on his Will. His debt free estate bequeathed to Isabella was valued at £400, including a block of land with a five roomed cottage.

In 1900 Isabella, aged forty, married John C Young from nearby Barmah. John Young, aged forty four was a widower with three children. He was a civil servant involved with the management of State forests which required frequent transfers within the State. Isabella's younger brother William H Hulme took over the license of the Southern Cross Hotel.

Harry's Practice in Echuca

Harry Worthington was fourteen when his mother remarried. Presumably with Isabella's steady support and that of her relatives, including her younger brother William H Hulme, Harry concentrated on his studies through the depression, drought and family turmoil posed by his father's alcoholism and death in 1898. Harry featured among those awarded prizes by the Mayor at the end of the first year of Miss Brown's new school in 1894 and he subsequently attended the Echuca Grammar School. The Grammar School had been established in 1873 and from 1881 was co-educational. In Victoria prior to 1905 secondary school education (post Year 8) was confined to private schools. Harry completed his schooling in 1902 and then enrolled at the Melbourne Veterinary College, graduating with honours in 1907.^[8] The Melbourne Veterinary College had been established in 1888 and was effectively taken over by the University of Melbourne in 1909.^[9]



Riverine Herald, 16 December 1907

At age twenty one he was registered by the Veterinary Board of Victoria in June 1907 and returned to establish 'Harry's Practice' in Echuca. Initially he had consulting rooms in Millewa Chambers at 509-11 High Street, as well as at his private residence, Glenn Bowden in Crossenvale, in the southern part of Echuca. The fact that Harry's mother, Isabella was born in Bowden, Cheshire, would explain both the name of his residence, Glenn Bowden and one of his race horses, Bowden Bells.

It has been estimated that by 1910 there were about seventy-five veterinary surgeons practicing in Australia, including at least twenty five in regional Victoria.^[10] Harry's practice probably focused on horses. At least in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, veterinary surgeons '... had been trained primarily to deal with horses, examining them for soundness, advising on their purchase, or treating them for various ailments or injuries.^[11] During the initial years of Harry's career the number of horses was increasing strongly in Australia from about 1.9 million in 1907 when he was first registered as a veterinarian and peaking at about 2.5 million in 1914, the year he enlisted for overseas service.

Harry's interest in horses went well beyond the professional. As an amateur he rode at picnic race meetings at Echuca, Deniliquin, Hay and in 1921, an Oaklands Hunt Club meeting at Moonee Valley. He also had success as an owner at these events including riding his own horse Bowden Bells to win the Murray Plate, the first event on the program at the 1911 Echuca picnic races. He was still riding winners at the Echuca picnic races in 1925. Harry was the honorary veterinary surgeon for the Echuca Race Club and the Moama Jockey Club and later, for the Southern Riverina Picnic Turf Club and the Deniliquin Jockey Club. He was also a successful competitor in Echuca and Moama agricultural show thoroughbred and sulky events. On one occasion in 1911 he lost a protest and second place prize money for entering the same horse in both a hack and a single buggy event. Harry had his share of equestrian mishaps, sustaining concussion in a fall at the second jump in the District Hunters' Plate in 1907 and being thrown from his gig in 1911 when the wheel was fouled in the train lines in Echuca.

A Vet at War: Middle East Campaign^[12]

Britain declared war against Germany on 4 August 1914. The carnage among Australians in the First World War was horrific, with about 330,000 departing Australian shores and about 215,000 casualties, including around 60,000 killed. As Les Carlyon asks, 'Why did Australia do it?' He suggests a couple of reasons.

No-one in the Australian winter of 1914 envisioned casualties of 215,000. No-one in Britain, Australia or New Zealand envisioned the suicide of nations. For another thing, Australians saw themselves as transplanted Britons. A war against England was a war against them.^[13]

The latter sentiment applied literally to Harry Worthington. He was born in England and in 1914 his mother aged in her mid-fifties had lived more than half her life in England. There also may have been professional factors in his willingness to enlist.

Practically all the country veterinary surgeons ... held a commission in mounted infantry regiments, and, as large numbers of horses were required by the A.I.F for artillery and transport as well as light horse units, the call on veterinary personnel was great indeed.^[14]

Harry enlisted on 16 November 1914 and initially was appointed as a Veterinary Officer in the Sea Transport Service supporting the 9th Light Horse Regiment. This regiment

was formed in Adelaide and trained in Melbourne between October 1914 and February 1915. Approximately three-quarters of the regiment hailed from South Australia and the other quarter from Victoria. As part of the 3rd Light Horse Brigade, it sailed from Melbourne on 11 February and arrived in Egypt on 14 March 1915.^[15]

[Continue reading this article here.](#)

References

1. Priestley, Susan, 2009, *Echuca: A History*, page 174. This publication is an extended and revised edition of Priestley, 1965, *Echuca: A Centenary History*. [↑](#)
2. *Riverine Herald*, 15 December 1894, page 3. [↑](#)
3. *Riverine Herald*, 28 November 1894, page 2. [↑](#)
4. *Riverine Herald*, 21 August 1895, page 3; and *Riverine Herald*, 7 July 1897, page 3. [↑](#)
5. Priestley, page 209. [↑](#)
6. In the *Riverine Herald* of 29 May 1895, it is reported at page 4 that Isabella transferred the license for the Southern Cross to William J Mc Guinness. If this is correct, at some later point it must have been transferred back to Isabella Worthington. [↑](#)
7. *Bendigo Advertiser*, 9 February 1898, page 3. [↑](#)
8. 'Rural Topics', *The Australasian*, 27 July 1907, page 5. [↑](#)
9. Seddon, H R, 1964, The Development of Veterinary Science in Australia, page 18. In Michael Tyquin, 2011, *Forgotten Men: The Australian Army Veterinary Corps 1909-1946*, note 2, page 427 it is stated that the College was taken over by the university in 1908. [↑](#)
10. Seddon, pages 18-19. [↑](#)
11. Seddon, page 17. [↑](#)
12. Harry Worthington's military service records can be accessed at the National Archives of Australia website <http://www.naa.gov.au/> and follow the steps: the collection; search the collection; record search; name search; insert Worthington, World War 1; among 67 Worthingtons select Worthington H at item barcode number 3444939 (see barcode numbers on the right hand side); finally view digital copy. [↑](#)
13. Carlyon, Les, 2001, *Gallipoli*, page 106. [↑](#)
14. Seddon, page 19. [↑](#)
15. Australian War Memorial at http://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit_10565.asp [↑](#)

The Great War: Racing and the Great Ride

by Honor Auchlinleck

On 13th March 1917, General Sir Harry Chauvel wrote to his wife Sibyl 'We are having a race meeting at Rafa on Monday next, and I am giving a cup for the "Anzac Steeplechase". There is also the "Syrian Derby" a cup given by Sir Phillip Chetwode; the "Promised Land Stakes", the "Border Plate"; and the "Jerusalem Scurry" (for mules). I am also one of the stewards, and I'm running a horse in the Anzac Steeple. We are looking forward to a good day's sport. If a 'Boche' plane comes over it will be rather puzzled as to what the crowd is!



Harry Chauvel on Bally

Just over two months after the battle of Rafa on 10th January and less than a week before the First Battle of Gaza on 26th – 27th March 1917, on 21st March, General Sir Harry Chauvel wrote, 'We have had a great day today, - the races at Rafa—and I don't know when I have enjoyed a day's racing so much. The course was lovely—beautiful green grass in a large natural amphitheatre—right in the middle of the battlefield of Rafa! The Turk's trenches and rifle-pits need a little dodging when laying out the course, but that was all, and the jumps were sandbag walls with brushwood on top. My division won five out of the six horse races, and out of the other three, one, the Anzac Steeplechase was won by a 3rd Light Horse Brigade horse. My own horse, Bally, ran third in the Anzac Steeplechase. I ran him in my groom's name, as I was giving the cup. I think the results were very creditable to our horses, considering there were so many English hunters and well-bred horses about.'



General Chauvel goes to tell his wife that he's sending the programme which includes the 'Battle of Romani' by the Pipe Band. 'It is a beautiful thing', he explains, 'written by Lt Colonel Maclean, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who is A.A.&Q.M.G. with the Scottish Territorial Division (52nd Division) which was with us so long at Romani.'

Eighteen months earlier on Gallipoli, Chauvel had understood the role of race meetings on morale of the battle weary. On

8th November 1915, from Headquarters 1st Division, Chauvel wrote to his wife, 'I am enclosing a copy of the "Peninsula Press" with the results of the Melbourne Cup in it. These were inserted at my instigation. We had a sweep in my Brigade, & we wanted the results as soon as possible, so I gave General Birdwood a hint that it would be taken as a compliment by the Australian troops if they were cabled for, & inserted in the "Press".'

The entry^[1] records, 'We have to thank the Eastern Telegraph Company for the following cable giving the results of the racing for the Melbourne Cup: (1) Patrobus, (2) Westcourt (3) Carlita (4) Garlin. Patrobus won by half a neck; the betting was 8 to 1. Westcourt (betting 50 to 1) was second by a length: Garlita (betting 7 to 1) was third by a length. The betting on Garlin was 25 to 1.'



The pipe band at the Rafa races playing 'The Battle of Romani'

Chauvel was not to know that Patrobus's breeding could be traced back to P and W Mitchell whose horse Trafalgar had been beaten in the exciting 1910 Melbourne Cup by half a neck by Comedy King. Trafalgar's grandsire was Carbine, the winner of the 1890 Melbourne Cup. Walter

Mitchell, partner of Peter Mitchell in the P and W Mitchell partnership was father of his future son-in-law, Tom Mitchell.

Six years later on August 16th 1921 Chauvel wrote to Sibyl, "I forgot to tell you in my letters the story of the horse-mail at Gallipoli. After the Suvla Bay landing in August 1915, we found it necessary to organise a despatch-rider service between Headquarters at Suvla & Headquarters at Anzac. The distance was six miles, & almost the whole of the ride was exposed to rifle-fire from the Turkish trenches on the ridges over-looking it. The mail used to leave Suvla in the morning and return from Anzac in the afternoon. It had to be done at the gallop, & the rider was fired at from the moment he left the shelter of Lala Baba until he reached the wide communication trench near Anzac, -- & yet all the Light Horsemen, Mounted Rifles & Yeomanry were tumbling over one another to get the job, & fortunate indeed was considered the Regiment which had to find the men for the duty! It was one of the daily entertainments. Everyone on the left of Anzac knew the moment the mail had left Suvla by the rattle of Turkish musketry which commenced on the extreme left, & continued along the line until the rider was safely in the communication trench. Strangely enough, this went on for nearly three months before either rider or horse was hit."

The horse-mail was a strange form of racing – perhaps one in which fate determines who lives and dies.

Chauvel was on leave in England for the Melbourne Cup 1916. While undoubtedly, he would have ensured that he and his wife Sibyl would have placed bets and have received the results without delay, there is no record of how they marked the day.





On 9th September 1917, Chauvel once again writes to his wife describing how he had attended the sports of the Camel Brigade. 'I have never seen anything so funny in my life as the Musical Chairs on Camels! The men had to ride bare back round and round a big ring while the band was playing, and when it stopped, had to dismount and lead their camels up to the "chairs" which were sandbags half filled, standing on end in the middle of the ring, and hold the camels while they sat down. As a camel dislikes being hurried beyond all things, and objects to going out of a walk when he is being led, it is not always the smartest man who got to the "chair" first, especially when the chairs were getting reduced in number. You never saw anything so ridiculous as the camels keeping time to the music—one of them started waltzing in the middle of the ring and the umpires could not keep him out.'

[Continue reading this article here.](#)

Reference

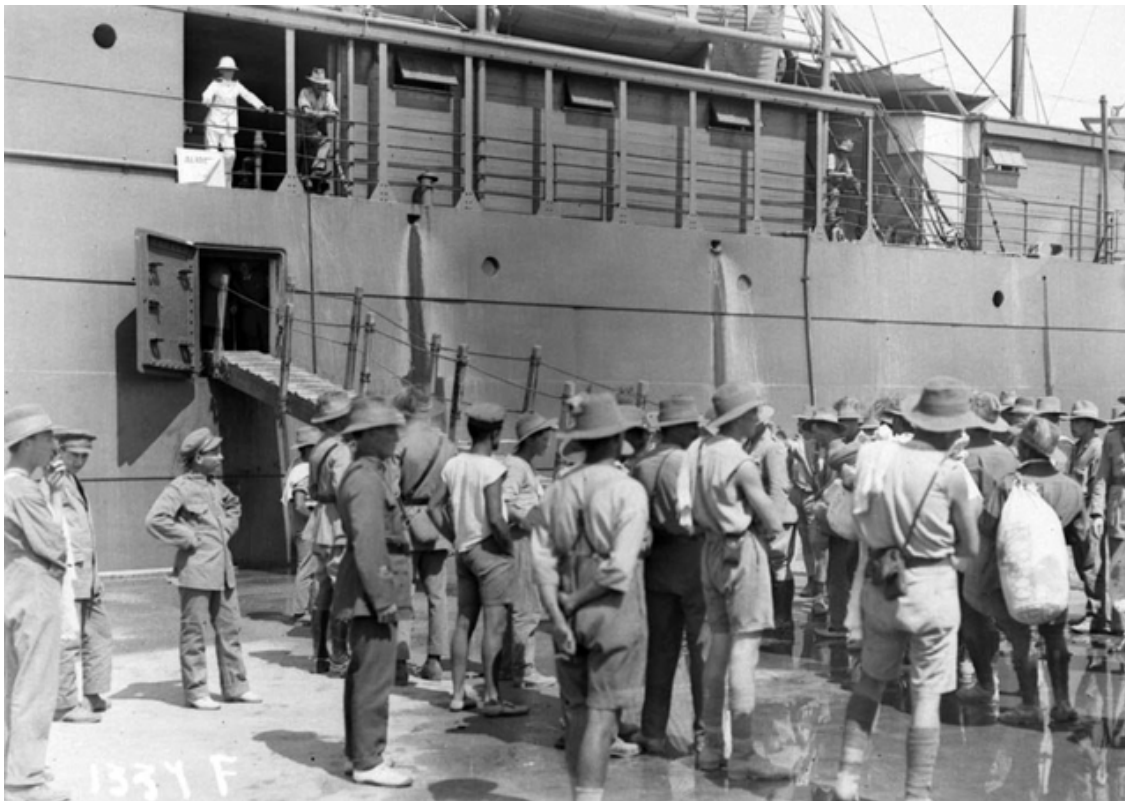
1. *Peninsula Press* (Monday, 8th November 1915, No. 87, Official News, R. E. Printing Section, G.H.Q., M.E.F) [↑](#)

100 years ago – the Light Horse come home

by John Boyce

After the Armistice, the 1914 “Originals” were repatriated first, departing for Australia before Christmas 1918. However, in Europe and the Middle East the remaining troops still awaited their turn for transport home, a delay of several months. The troopers had also been told that their beloved horses would have to stay behind, owing to quarantine risks and to shortages of transport – sadly, their Walers would have to be passed to the British or Indian cavalry, or culled by the vets if too old or unfit (1).

Next, in March 1919 the 1st, 2nd and 3rd LH Regiments had sailed from the Middle East, just missing the sudden re-activation of the Light Horse at the time of the Egyptian Uprising (2). But all the other thirteen LH regiments did have to saddle up again in March and April 1919, tasked by the British authorities to re-establish order across the Egyptian countryside in the face of local riots and sabotage to railways, telegraph lines and bridges. It was busy and sometimes dangerous work; the Light Horsemen were to be particularly bitter at the loss of twenty men to local snipers and ambushes, despite having survived the Great War itself (3).



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

B01 337F

The 4th Light Horse embark for home on HMT Essex 15 June 1919

But in late May that delay was also over, and the Light Horsemen could look once more towards home and family. Time for them to return equipment yet again, farewell their horses and prepare to sail for home. Meanwhile, there were the usual entertainments, including sports, educational classes, the occasional horse race meeting, local leave to Cairo and the pyramids (some actually took UK leave) as ways of keeping busy and passing the time. But their impatience increased.....

There were some larger sporting events too. A Divisional swim sports was held at Ismailia on 14 June, and a 3rd Brigade cricket competition in late June/early July (4).

Despite going back to routine, even in June there were still some military tasks. For example, the 4th LH Regiment was still providing guards for trains from Ismailia, and at the aerodrome, and for canteens at Moascar (5).

The Light Horse had not yet been properly farewelled by General Allenby (who was still smarting after the December 1918 Surafend incident, involving troops from the Anzac Mounted Division). Journalist and historian Henry Gullett visited him to point out the resentment felt by the troops at this slight, and to appeal for the General to do so properly. General Allenby then issued a generous Farewell Order to the Australian Mounted Division, one often quoted since when evaluating the prowess of the Australian Light Horse. It was read out to the 4th LH Regiment on parade 16 May, for example (6). Interestingly, the General did not mention the New Zealanders then (7). A later order dated 28 June 1919 was more complimentary of both Mounted Divisions (including the NZ Brigade).

Excitement mounted when preparations brought re-vaccinations in late May. Next, in each departing unit there was also a disinfection of all ranks. Embarkation rolls were drafted and paybooks checked. The 12th LH Regiment hosted their brothers-in-arms from 4th LH Regiment on 9 June at a farewell gathering for all ranks (8).

On their last day, each contingent of troops preparing to depart underwent the final routine of returning bedding, handing in cooking utensils, processing of their paybook, and traveling to the quayside, where they mustered into their lines and then had names checked off as they boarded.

On 15 June 1919, 24 officers and 492 Other Ranks of 4th LH Regiment embarked for their voyage aboard HMT Essex. Typically, it sailed via Colombo (some troops took leave to visit Kandy) and then on to the excitement of seeing eucalyptus trees once more at Fremantle, before reaching Melbourne on 25 July, where the troops dispersed. Historian David Holloway notes that this dispersal also included sixty-one troopers heading home to parts of NSW, twelve to Queensland, seven to Tasmania and one back to South Australia (9).



Waiting to see their loved ones - ANZAC Buffet in Hyde Park Sydney June 1919

[Read the remainder of this article here.](#)

Notes:

1. J. Bou, 'Light Horse – a history of Australia's Mounted Arm', Cambridge Uni Press 2010, p 201
2. H. S. Gullett, 'The AIF in Sinai and Palestine', Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18 Vol VII p 793
3. M. Emery, 'They rode into History- 8 LH Regiment', Slouch Hat publications, McRae Vic, 2009, p 170

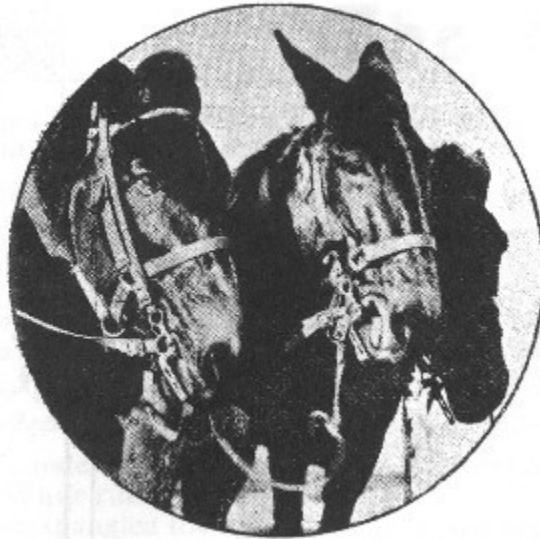
4. Emery, *ibid* p 172
5. D. Holloway, "Endure and Fight" 4 LH Memorial Association, Melb, 2011, p 334-5
6. Holloway, *ibid*, p 335
7. L. Bayly, 'Horseman, Pass by' Kangaroo Press, Sydney, 2003, p 314
8. Holloway, *op cit* p 336
9. Holloway, *ibid* p 338

Kia-Ora-Coo-EE

The Magazine for the Anzacs in the Middle East,

November 1918

The Horses Stay Behind. (1)



Soon we will be tracking down the Indian Ocean, bound for home. But we leave the horses behind. There's the rub! Our old friends of twenty stunts and a hundred sporting smaller shows are not to know again the sweet native grasses and the pleasant paddocks of Australia. We are told that to take them back would endanger the health of all Australian livestock, and further, that the cost of transport would be more than they are worth. More than they are worth!

They are to be left behind and sold. Most of them are doubtless for the countries around the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean peoples have many attractive qualities, but I am sad to think they may get my old cuddy. Their way with horses is not ours. Happy thoughts of going home are clouded by the fear of what may happen to veteran horses which carried us across the sands of Sinai and on up to Amman and Damascus. We cannot stipulate, but one country should be barred against buying them. Spain should be cut out. Horses which helped us through Romani and carried us into Beersheeba, and up the goat tracks of Moab and Giliad and away worth into the Lebanon, should at least be made safe from the bull rings of Madrid and Barcelona. Bad enough to think in after years of their pulling tourists about in Quarries, and assisting a Bedouin's cow or camel to haul a plough; but don't let them get into Spain.

Palestine taught us much about ourselves, and more about our mates; but it taught us still more about our horses. We thought we knew all the qualities of an Australian horse before we came to the war, and all that we knew was good. But we really didn't know the beginning of them. We

believed that a horse was fully loaded when he carried 12st., and that only very special animals would work regularly under 15 or 16 stone. We thought it a crime to work a horse for more than a day without water. We marvelled in our school days at stories of camels going from three to five days without a drink. Our education in what our horses could do began at Romani, where horses carrying from 17 to 20 stone, travelling constantly with heavy sand up to their fetlocks, endured for 20 hours without a drink, and this in the August heat of Sinai. That perhaps was the record, but it has often been approached since. A discovery scarcely less startling to us was the ration on which our horses would continue active and serviceable under their great burdens. Not one Australian in a hundred would, before the war, have dared to take a horse out on a journey extending over many days on a ration of from 7 1/2 to 10lbs. of barley a day and nothing else. But here the horses have done it, and held their condition and kept their spirit in a manner beyond belief.

Over ten days on the ride to Damascus there were thousands of Australian horses, both in our force and among the Indians, which averaged not less than 40 miles a day. The tracks followed would not measure so much, but cavalry does not follow the tracks. Hundreds of these horses engaged with the advance guard and on various lines on work often did from 60 to 80 miles a day. For one day 60 to 80 miles is nothing even when carrying up to 20 stone, but for a horse which was averaging 40 miles on the days before and after it was a great performance.

"They gallop in all shapes" is an old racing saying. So, too, all shapes make great campaigners. There are here famous horses which we all know, as for instance General Rylie's "Plain Bill". And these famous horses are usually thoroughbred or very close to it. But among the troopers you find hundreds of horses, less pleasing, perhaps, to the eye, but equally spirited and equally hard to kill. You sometimes find these wonderful remounts with ugly heads, and flat ribs, long backs and hairy legs. But behind all or nearly all of them is the thoroughbred sire, and sometimes at least one thoroughbred grand sire, and it is that streak of blood which shines through and makes our horses what they are.



AT THE TROUGHS.

At the troughs.



(Aust. Official Photos.)

The horses we have ridden will always stand first in our affections. But scarcely less remarkable in their performance have been the draught horses of the wheeled transport. Before the war most of us preferred a light active draught to the larger heavier types, and here the little Clydesdale has excelled. No horses bred in Australia, perhaps, have ever worked so staunchly and consistently and attracted more attention from horsemen from other countries than these hardy haulers of our rations over every sort of country, from deep sand and black soil mud to steep mountain gradients. There was a day when we despised the mule and treated the donkey as a joke. It is safe to say that the mule will be largely bred in Australia in the near future as the result of our knowledge of him gained in Palestine. And the donkey? If sentiment and not business controlled demobilisation very few of the faithful long-eared servants of the regiments would remain in this country after the war. They would go home to Australia, greatly honoured with the horses. Credit goes to the fighting man. But in this campaign at least the overthrow of the enemy has been due to an extent difficult to exaggerate, to the quality of the animals which carried us and our baggage. The waler roost of all, and after him the Clydesdales and the mules, the little donks and the imperturbable camel - the least of our livestock - deserve special cables of congratulation from King George and the War Council.

During the war we have at times treated ourselves to the dream of going home with our horses. We have drawn pardonable pictures of Regiments fully mounted and equipped riding in triumphal procession up Collins Street and Macquarie Street, or along the cheering highways of the other capital cities. And what man who has ridden a good horse here has not resolved at one time or another to buy his old friend from the Government after the war, and keep him in rich pastures until the end of his days?

Palestine. [H.S.G.](#) (2)

Notes

1. *Kia-Ora-Coo-EE*. The Magazine for the Anzacs in the Middle East, November 1918, p.10
2. H.S.G. is Sir Henry Somer Gullett Author of the Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine 1914 - 1919

Note also:

The fate of the horses was researched by Dr Jean Bou of the Australian National University. [His article can be read here.](#)

Australian Gold: Wartime Currency

by Neil Dearberg

In times of trouble, two commodities prevail; cash and gold. But cash from the losing side is of no value – Turkish Lira had no value as the war progressed. Gold, however, especially in sovereign form, is currency and an item of influence at any time.

Nations can exchange weapons, ammunition, food and loyalty for gold – so it was in this Great War. In June 1916 many Arabs under Sharif Hussein, Emir of Mecca and descendant of the Prophet Mohammed, rose against the Ottoman Turks in what became the Arab Revolt. They soon sided with the British but needed assistance. Their ongoing support required weapons, gold and food.

As important as military supplies were, gold became the primary incentive for tribal leaders to join or remain with Sharif Hussein. Their tribesmen enjoyed some of this spoil shared out by their sheiks, but plundering and looting casualties in the battlefield was their more natural reward.

Only gold sovereigns were currency though, not bullion or nuggets. England had a mint but no mines and a limited gold reserve from pre-war days. India was a big consumer of gold but had neither mines nor a mint. South Africa had mines but no mint. Only Australia had both gold mines and mints in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth.

Private S.C. Rolls (who drove Lawrence of Arabia's armoured car for eighteen months) reported:

On the day of our arrival in Guweira Lawrence decided to make his first raid by car on the Turkish railway. We loaded two tenders with a large supply of gun-cotton, a week's rations and water, a case of 5,000 sovereigns marked Commonwealth Bank of Australia, several coils of electric cable, a battery exploder and several other articles which had been found useful on previous demolition raids. (1)

Lieutenant Colonel George Langley, CO 1st Anzac Camel Battalion, reported:

Cases of gold coins were regularly brought out from Australia and paid out to the Arab Bureau in Cairo for the Arabs. (2)

These sovereigns came from the Royal Mint in Perth via the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (then owned by the Australian Government), which was the only authority able to export gold in the period of prohibition of gold export during the war years.

But danger lurked. The Indian Ocean, sloshing on the shores of German colonies in the African continent, was awash with German submarines and battleships. Allied shipping plying between Australasia, India and the Red Sea in transit to Egypt then Europe was vulnerable. On Australian

wharves and in bars and cafes, spies waited, eager for news of war targets to pass on to their German paymasters. Security demanded silence: 'loose lips sink ships' became the catch cry.

At night, the normally office-bound men of the Commonwealth Bank would throw off their suits and don overalls and darken their faces. Down the Swan River in starlight, they moved the gold by lighter to load aboard vessels already at sea, rather than have waterside workers handle such treasure and heighten the possibility that this information would be passed to enemy agents.

The Commonwealth Bank archival history states:

'Ships would then only sail on assistance and advice afforded by the Navy and in no case was any loss occasioned'. (3)

Astonishingly, around £20,000,000 was so moved without loss (about 800,000,000 Aussie dollars today).

No one seems to know exactly how many gold sovereigns were handed out to the Arabs but the number is estimated to be many millions. Sharif Hussein is on record as receiving 220,000 of them per month for over two years. Even more passed to tribal Bedouin for loyalty and per capita captures or shootings of Turkish soldiers. No one knows where they are today, despite major shifting of sands and rocks over the years by local inhabitants.

But gold, Australian gold sovereigns, bought loyalty.

Notes:

1. Rolls, S.C., *Steel Chariots in the Desert*, p. 143.
2. Langley and Langley, *Sand, Sweat and Camels*, p. 83.
3. Faulkner, C. C, Commonwealth bank of Australia, A Brief History of its Establishment, Chapter XII

Colourising the Light Horse

In order to provide funds for the Foundation's activities, an image colourisation service has been created. Some image samples follow. Requesting a colourisation can be done at this [link](#).





Additional Reading

For additional articles in the Light Horse Anthology, try these links:

[Sir Harry and the Light Horse](#)

[The horses](#)

[Battles and events](#)

[Art & Poetry](#)

[Homecoming, commemorations and speeches](#)

[Before and after WW1](#)

To subscribe to our newsletter, visit our web page:

<http://www.chauvelfoundation.com>

Join us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/chauvelfoundation/>