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Membership**REMEMBRANCE IN NOVEMBER, 2018**

It was the anniversary of the Armistice, which led to the end of the war. It was celebrated with reverence and solemnity across the world. Etched in our memory is the oration by Prime Minister the Honourable Paul Keating on 11 November, 1993, in honour of the Unknown Soldier.

Those who fell at Fromelles are in their own way remembered every day of



the year, with the evocative Cobbers statue in the Fromelles Memorial Park, with Sgt. Simon Fraser carrying a wounded cobber to safety. We therefore commend the words of The Scribbly Bark Poet, Maureen Clifford to you for reflection.

WE WON'T FORGET YOU COBBER

A fog as thick as thieves rolled in, covering all that was there
the sodden ground was cloaked with a miasma of despair.

The reek of blood, the stench of mud, and of cordite and shot
permeated the damp darkness, to every muddled spot.

The bombardment kept up all night, it highlighted the wire.

Grotesque caricatures of men were backlit by the fire.

Some moved, some cried, others were still - around them battle raged
though as the mist got thicker yet, no war gods were assuaged.

Men crept out, under cover, hidden by the swirling mist
to stealthily retrieve the wounded, give aid and assist
them back behind their own lines. They also retrieved the dead.
Cut them from the wires ...no prayers for them were ever said.

A call rang out, a ragged voice in pain pleading for aid.
A man cried for his Mother, somewhere another voice prayed.
And volunteers with stretchers lifted wounded from the ground

For those lost so far from home.

and doubled back towards their trenches with barely a sound.
 "Please don't forget me cobber" came a whisper from nearby
 and a soldier slithered into view, bad cut about his eye.
 A useless leg was shattered, he said, resigned to fate
 "I'm OK boys but won't you please do something for me mate."
 His mate was badly wounded, and hope was looking dim,
 two burly blokes lifted him up onto the canvas thin
 and stretchered him off at a jog, heading back to the lines.
 Whilst Simon and another crouched in a shell-holes confines.
 "We won't forget you cobber - hold on now, we'll get you back"
 for still the lines where these men worked were under fierce attack
 Doubtless the German soldiers were firing into the dark
 but every now and then a random shot still hit its mark.
 These blokes saved many lives that night - two hundred plus I heard.
 And from the generals at the top no voice of thanks was heard,
 not that it was expected - they just did what must be done.
 Long gone the expectation that 'A war might just be fun'.
 They'd left Australia's golden shores one warm November day.
 One bloke, an Aussie farmer came from down Byaduk way.
 They buried him at Bullecourt - he never made it home
 and Simon Fraser's spirit 'cross Fromelles' fields does still roam.
 A statue stands where once was the German defensive line.
 An Aussie soldier carrying a mate. His courage shines.
 Dedicated to those blokes who served and saved ... "I've got ya"
 It stands as testimony - "We won't forget you cobber".

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And isn't that what Remembrance is all about?

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD 29 JULY, 2018 AT CASTLE HILL.

Our AGM was held in the comfortable surroundings of Castle Hill RSL Club. This year we were able to report on the successful identification of 9 more soldiers at Fromelles. We had presentations by Royce Atkinson, Marg O'Leary, and Geoffrey Benn dealing with the events and some personalities of the previous 12 months.

Most interesting on the day was the presentation by Unrecovered War Casualties Army Service, dealing with the Fromelles Project. We were given an outline of the structure of the organisation, the methods used to identify living relatives, and of more interest, the workings of the Joint Identification Board, based in London. The role of DNA is often elevated beyond all other measures in the public's understanding of the process, but it is one of the means of identification, and sometimes the DNA has been 'corrupted' in different ways, so it is not always conclusive.

UWCSA are reviewing all data again, and targeting families for soldiers with particular features, such as the height of the soldier, and the age of the soldier, in an attempt to rule out or rule in potential DNA donors.

As always the work of the UWCSA depends on the families who submit their details for assessment, and the speed with which DNA testing kits can be used and returned.

The afternoon session took the form of a panel interview and discussion session with someone whose soldier had been identified, and someone who is still waiting; with UWCSA members Al Cooper and Dave Wilson giving insight to each of the comments as they were made. There were people whose soldier was unlikely to be found, based on the reports of where they fell, and there were people whose soldier was not on the original German Death List. All in all, an engaging discussion, and illuminating for all.

The meeting finished with the election of office bears for 2018-2019, who are: President: Royce Atkinson; Vice President (Research): Marg O'Leary; Vice President (Research) Ann Watson; Secretary: Geoffrey Benn; and Treasurer: Bill Irvine.

Congratulations to all, but we welcome any expressions of interest and assistance for any of these roles in future.

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THE STATUE AT WOLLONDILLY ANGLICAN COLLEGE

The statue of Acting Sgt. William Ryan and the young girl was dedicated on 18 June, 2018. It was erected to pay tribute to and honour soldiers who died in the First World War. We are pleased, and at the same time amazed, to be able to advise you that since its unveiling, the statue of has been nominated for war memorial registration. An application has been made for it to be placed on the

Register of War Memorials NSW.

If granted this approval, access will still only be available by appointment, by contacting the College. This can always be arranged through the College Administration, Wollondilly Anglican College, 3000 Remembrance Drive, Tahmoor. Ph (02) 4623 0205.

Congratulations to Headmaster Dr. Stuart Quarmby, and all those responsible for the creation of the statue. More information can be found by following the link below:-

<https://www.warmemorialsregister.nsw.gov.au/content/wollondilly-anglican-college-tahmoor-anzac-memorial-shelter-ww1>

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For those lost so far from home.

ALL IDENTIFIED TO DATE ARE LISTED ON OUR WEBSITE.

We often receive requests to advise if a soldier has been identified or not. This information had previously been available on the Army website, but appears to have been taken down. So we have prepared our own. Details of the 159 soldiers identified at Pheasant Wood to date can be found on our own website at:

www.fromellesremembered.wordpress.com

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AN APPEAL FOR MORE VOLUNTEER GENEALOGISTS

In September this year, Vice President (Research) Marg O'Leary requested that we post an appeal for more volunteer genealogists on Facebook, on our website, and in the Newsletter. We didn't need to go past our Facebook page. Within a week the request had been 'shared' among many other Facebook pages, and we were inundated with requests to help from interested amateur genealogists, and others with no experience at all. We had to post on 25 September, that:-

WE HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMED BY YOUR RESPONSE.THANK YOU.

We posted an appeal for more Volunteer Genealogists. We got more than 30 contacting us, so



we have been swamped with offers of assistance, so much so that we can't keep up with the distribution and the allocations to new volunteers.

In fact, in spite of getting the large numbers of volunteers that we did (over 50) we were then, and are still able to allocate soldiers, to all who signed up.

And we already have some new donors identified.

[Photo: from the 2018 Dedication Service at Fromelles, France.]

In some cases, new volunteers have been able to work on other research projects (non-genealogy) to enable us to expand our work on our objectives.

Our message went on to say that:

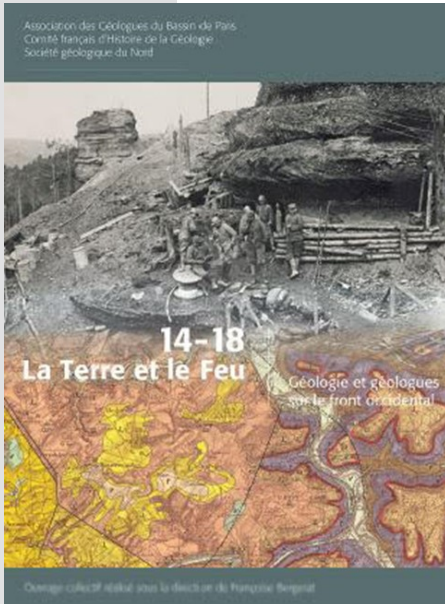
We have what can only be described as an Embarrassment of Riches from our appeal for assistance. So to all of you: THANK YOU for your interest, we very much appreciate your kindness in assisting our cause. We can still take your details, but we may take a while to respond to your contact. Please check in from time to time because we do very much appreciate your interest. There are still 91 soldiers in Pheasant Wood who should be identified. And there are soldiers buried in other cemeteries as 'unknown', along with those in VC Corner Cemetery, all of whom deserve to be identified. One day, with your support, they will.

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For those lost so far from home.

GEOLOGY AND THE GREAT WAR

To all budding or professional geologists, interested in the manner in which the various substrates of soil in the areas of the Battles in France took place, a message from Geologists in France.



The Association of Geologists of the Paris Basin (AGBP), the French History of Geology Committee (COFRHIGEO) and the Geological Society of North (SGN) inform you that the subscription to the book *14-18: The Earth and the fire, geology and geologists on the Western Front* is extended until 30 November 2018.

This book is available for subscription at a price of 28 € (plus shipping) until that date.

You can find more information in the attached document or visit their web page: <http://agbp.fr/grande/le-livre>

Receive our best regards

Jean-Claude Porchier

Project coordinator and Geology Great War.

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AN ACCOUNT OF ATTENDING THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL DURING THE 62000 POPPIES PROJECT AT CANBERRA.

Thanks to Rene & Lynne Herbert.

On 9 November 2018 my wife, Lynne, and I visited the Australian War Memorial in



Canberra to pay our respects to my Uncle Stan who is still missing at Fromelles.

We found the sight of 62,000 knitted poppies to be very moving. A sound system was playing solemn music through the whole area and it was a very impressive experience.

My wife and I were moved by the representation of the sheer waste of 62,000 human lives and particularly

the tragedy that was Fromelles. [Photo: Rene Herbert]

Many poppies were also incorporated into the memorials throughout the grounds. Simpson and his donkey were suitably and tastefully embellished.

For those lost so far from home.



[Photo: Rene Herbert]

We also visited a memorial plaque honouring the Qantas Aircrew who were actively involved in WW2 and other conflicts. Several crews were lost in the war. The memorial plaque was laid by "Skippy Squadron". This is an Association of Qantas crew who operated 600 flights to and from Saigon taking Australian troops to and returning them from the Viet Nam War. "Skippy Squadron was named by the Australian soldiers waiting at Ton San Nuit airport. When the red tail was spotted the soldiers would say "Here comes Skippy". As a young flight steward, I operated several of these flights and I can assure you that the return flights were very much happier than the inbound ones.

It is interesting to note that this plaque is the first one mentioning a commercial enterprise which was permitted to be laid at the War Memorial. Our President received a phone call prior to the dedication asking if "a certain person" could attend. That person turned out to be Angus Houston, then Chief of the Defence Force. During his remarks he mentioned that his first visit to Viet Nam was by Qantas.

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ARE YOU ATTENDING THE SERVICE AT FROMELLES in 2019?

Some members of this Association are planning to attend the July 2019 Service at Fromelles, and wish to correspond with any others thinking of making the journey, with a view to meeting up, perhaps in Lille, perhaps in Fromelles.

If you are going, or know someone intending on going, please contact Ann via her

For those lost so far from home.

email: kevinann2014@bigpond.com.

Enjoy the trip!

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UPCOMING CHANGES TO OUR COMMUNICATION WITH YOU.

Ever since we began our Association, we have used a Newsletter to post information to our members and friends. This process has been overtaken in the distribution of information by posts on our Facebook page, and more recently, by us being able to upload information onto our internet web page progressively.

Stories of soldiers, and their families are in our assessment, better placed by being posted onto our Website page, as they often consume more than half of a newsletter in themselves. By posting these to our website in future, we will be able to upload more stories, more frequently.

Frankly, most of our members now have internet access, so the means to obtain information from us will be more and more directed to you all via our internet media means. If you have a need to access information from us, and you do not have internet access directly, we highly recommend finding an internet 'friend' who can pass on information to you, or attending at your local public library at which internet access can usually be obtained free of charge.

While we do not have a timeline for ceasing the distribution of newsletters, we do not expect to be using this means of distribution in 12 months time.

As always, your feedback is welcome on this and any other item included in our Newsletter, on our Facebook page, or our website.

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MEMBERSHIP IS OPEN TO YOU, YOUR FRIENDS, AND ANYONE ELSE.

If you haven't renewed in the last 12 months, a membership application form is attached with this email. If you're not sure whether your membership is current, or to when your membership is up to, send us an email to check and we will let you know. And we still have more lapel pins and cloth patches you can use to spread the word. We really do appreciate all the feedback we get from you and all those who contact us. And we look forward to asking for your assistance if and when the opportunity arises in the months and years ahead, and until all our boys are identified. Thanks to all.

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The Fromelles Association of Australia

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**FROMELLES ASSOCIATION
OF AUSTRALIA**

For those lost so far from home