

THE ANZAC LEGEND, GALLIPOLI AND THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND TROOPS WHO FOUGHT ON THE WESTERN FRONT DURING WORLD WAR ONE SHOULD BE INTEGRAL TO THE HISTORY SYLLABUS OF EVERY SCHOOL. THIS WOULD ENCOURAGE THE YOUNG TO REMEMBER THE SOLDIERS WHO SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES AND PROMOTE COMMEMORATION. IT WAS ON THIS BASIS THE FOLLOWING EMAIL WAS PREPARED ON 19 NOVEMBER 2009 AND FORWARDED TO THE HON. JOHN KEY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET, NEW ZEALAND. PRESUMABLY OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL LIKE THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER THE HON. BILL ENGLISH, THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE THE HON. SIMON POWER, THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND MINISTER FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION THE HON. ANNE TOLLEY, ATTORNEY-GENERAL THE HON. CHRISTOPHER FINLAYSON, THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS THE HON. MURRAY McCULLY AND THE MINISTER FOR DEFENCE THE HON. DR WAYNE MAPP, WILL BE FURNISHED A COPY OF THE COMMUNICATION.

NATIVE OF DUNEDIN, NEW ZEALAND, Z948 SECOND LIEUTENANT CLARK MAXWELL GRAY, 58TH BATTALION, 15TH INFANTRY BRIGADE, 5TH AUSTRALIAN DIVISION, ENLISTED IN MELBOURNE, VICTORIA AND SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN. HAVING JOINED THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE ON 31ST MAY 1915, 2374 PRIVATE GRAY WAS LITTLE MORE THAN 18 WHEN HE ENLISTED DESIGNATING THAT HE HAD SERVED IN THE SENIOR CADETS BOTH IN NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA AND THE CITIZEN MILITARY FORCES AS WELL. CLARK WAS PRESBYTERIAN AND REQUIRED HIS PARENTS CONSENT BECAUSE HE WAS A SCHOOL BOY.

HE WAS PROMOTED CORPORAL ON 19-NOV-15 AND TRANSFERRED TO THE 58TH BATTALION ON 17TH FEBRUARY 1916. HIS STATEMENT OF SERVICE INDICATES HE WAS TO BE A SECOND LIEUTENANT FROM 18-MAR-16 AFTER WHICH HE LOST HIS LIFE AT FROMELLES ON 19TH JULY 1916.

THE HON JOHN KEY, PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND, OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND:

Dear Prime Minister,

The New Zealand Government has probably followed developments at Pheasant Wood with interest, particularly as a number of service personnel who were born in New Zealand are recorded among the missing from the historic assault on the village of Fromelles. To honour the 5th Division AIF and to keep alive the memory of those who participated in what the British named the Battle of Fleurbaix, Fromelles Discussion Group has requested the Australian Government aggregate all unidentified First World War Diggers lost during this poorly planned operation, whether buried in the recently discovered mass grave which has been now excavated, or located in other cemeteries in the vicinity. It is worth Cabinet and the Executive as well as yourself as Prime Minister of New Zealand noting, that beside the 193 members of the First AIF previously believed to be interred in the burial pits at Fromelles, there are said to be a further 1,131 unknowns from this battle still awaiting identification.

As a result this group would like to draw the attention of your Government to the following names recorded on VC Corner Australian Cemetery Memorial, located 2 kilometres north-west of Fromelles on the road to Sailly. Preliminary research by us has shown these Great War soldiers not only participated in the Battle of Fromelles on 19 / 20 July 1916, but designated New Zealand as their place of birth when completing enlistment papers for service abroad.

Below are the New Zealand born 5th Division soldiers who went missing during this engagement:

4460 Private Charles William Conroy 54th Battalion—376 Private William Fletcher 60th Battalion—2929A Private Andrew Moncrief Given 60th Battalion—Z948 2nd Lt. Clark Maxwell Gray 58th Battalion—4816 Private Herbert James King 54th Battalion—3162 Private Shrewsbury Frederick Kingsford 60th Battalion—3076 Private Edwin Lawler 53rd Battalion—2705 Private William Lund 55th Battalion—3137A Private Horace Maidment 60th Battalion—3366A Private Gilbert Major Morey 53rd Battalion—Second Lieutenant Joseph Beresford Nelson 53rd Battalion—728 Private Henry Oscar Nelson 30th Battalion—3087 Private Arthur Coventry Lerouse Pybus 54th Battalion—2895 Private Robert Sloan 59th Battalion—Second Lieutenant John Gerald Strangman 54th Battalion.

One of those shown here is actually contained in the list of servicemen believed to be buried at Pheasant Wood which was released by Australia's former Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, the Hon Warren Snowdon MP on the 2nd April 2009. 728 Private Henry Oscar Nelson was 19 years old when he joined the Australian Imperial Force on 17 July 1915; having been born in Wellington, New Zealand where he spent three years in the cadets.

Son of Martin Nelson, Private Henry Nelson was Church of England, a wood working machinist, with fair hair and complexion. KIA on 20th July 1916, Henry was 5 feet 4 1/2 inches in height, weighing 126 lbs. Although born in New Zealand, by the time he enlisted Henry's father was deceased and his mother, Elizabeth Nelson, was residing in Ryde, NSW.

This information is being provided as a courtesy and affiliates of this group invite the New Zealand Government to honour these men by supporting the campaign to have all remains from this action aggregated and individually memorialized. In the context of World War I, it should never be forgotten that the acronym ANZAC stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.

Indeed following the allied withdrawal from Gallipoli formations known as I ANZAC Corps and II ANZAC Corps were established. The latter comprised the 4th and 5th Australian divisions and a New Zealand Division, with both corps being transferred to France where they fought on the Western Front until 1917, when all the formations were combined.

Best wishes and kindest regards,

Grant Triffett, Convenor/Administrator, Fromelles Discussion Group

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