

The Gympie Researcher

*The newsletter of the
Gympie Family History Society Inc.*

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THOSE MAGNIFICENT MEN {AND WOMEN} IN THEIR FLYING MACHINES.

“LOOPING THE LOOP AND DEFYING THE GROUND”



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EDITORS COMMENTS

Welcome back everyone, I am sure 2016 will be a successful year for our society. Our first publication for the year is dedicated to the early era of flight. Alex Miles, travelled to Ambon, the Island where 70 years ago his uncle was a P.O.W. of the Japanese. A fascinating experience that we are privileged to have him share it with us. Lyn

MEMBERSHIP: WE CURRENTLY HAVE 63 MEMBERS

PRESIDENTS REPORT; Welcome to 2016, we have high hopes that it will be another good year and who knows, we may even find a new home. Our last year ended well with our Show and Tell. Our Cemetery Crawls have been well attended and proved quite successful, only by the efforts of Di and others who helped research the names which Di then has to put into the books, Thank You. Since starting this year we have gained some new members who have offered help—we will accept any help we can get. Our little livewire Joyce was not so lively over Christmas, but has been back again, but has to go to the “Big Smoke” to help with her brother, so will be coming and going. Val B finishes her Chemo this week, then away for a week so we will put her to work when she comes back. Val T is always busy in the library, then has a day off every 2 months to get an injection in her eye—oh well a day off is not too bad I suppose if it keeps her going in her job. Faye is still researching which is greatly appreciated but what is more so is her husband Peter who in his travels has picked up another fridge for \$100 plus a microwave for free. Thank You Peter. I have been down sizing scrapbooks, maybe one day I will stand up and my seat will be stuck to me. I am looking at something different for a while as Merlyn Burkhardt has sent 2 boxes of files for research and I am going to hopefully (standing up) find places in the filing cabinets for them. We have been given a lot of history of Two Mile school. Thank you to Margaret Brouen, who as it happens, her children went to school with mine, so I have an interest in it all. I gave the job to Denise to photocopy the enrolments for 1893 when the school opened. 16 of my late husband’s family attended, and my children did as well as some cousins. Other records were bought in also, as well as 2 boxes of records of Alan Nash. Margaret has also done a record of all the staff over the years. Di and Woody have been very busy recently and now have to get up the energy to get the WWI books done. Di is shrinking before our eyes, but don’t go overboard or we will not know you. Good Luck anyway. Woody comes in when he gets time and keeps us up to date, plus things to do for our sweet treasurer. I am sure I have overlooked something but a big “Thank You” to all who help in any way, it is greatly appreciated. Margaret

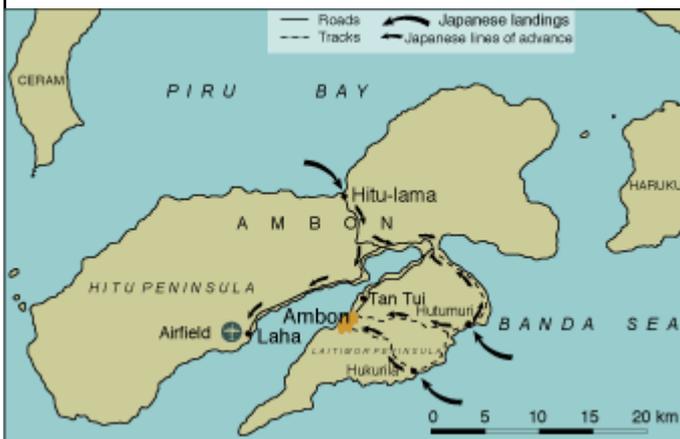
RESEARCH

It has been very quiet lately so if you need anything researched—please contact us

We did have a gentleman researching the McIntosh Family come into the rooms and share his information and we are researching for him now.

Faye Kennedy

FALL OF AMBON -The Australian Battalion Group known as “Gull Force”



arrived in Ambon on the 17th December 1941, the group comprised 2/21st Battalion which was part of the 23rd Brigade, 8th Australian Division, together with anti-tank, engineer, medical and other detachments. Their task was to join Netherlands East Indies troops. About 2500 men to help defend the Bay of Ambon and 2 airfields at Laha and Liang.

The first Japanese air attack on Ambon was on the 6th January and by the 24th January the Japanese were 1000 Kms from the Island. The last of the Allied aircraft were withdrawn on the 30th January 1942. The Japanese landed 3 Battalions on Ambon during the night of 30-31st January, two days later on the 3rd February, 800 surviving Australians became Prisoners of War. After the Japanese surrendered it was discovered that about 300 servicemen who had surrendered at Laha Airfield had been killed in four separate massacres between the 6th and 20th February 1942, not one had survived. The prisoners of Ambon and Hainan were subjected to some of the most brutal treatment experienced by P.O.W.'s anywhere during WW2. Over three quarters of the Australian prisoners there died in captivity.

Source: Fall of Ambon A.W.M.

An Uncle of Alex Miles was one of these soldiers.

MY TRIP TO AMBON

By Alex Miles

In July 2015 I drove up to Darwin tracing my Uncle's footsteps from when he was a member of the 2/21st Battalion AIF "Gull Force." He left Bonegilla, Victoria, March 1941 by train for Adelaide and then by the Ghan train to Alice Springs where they travelled by road to Birdum. They were loaded onto a cattle train for Darwin and set up camp in the bush 10 kilometers south of Darwin at Winnellie, which is a suburb of Darwin now. After being in Darwin for 8 months, on the 13th December 1941 six days after Pearl Harbour was bombed, they embarked on three Dutch Inter-island trading vessels escorted by the cruiser Adelaide and the Corvette Ballarat for Ambon.

In Darwin I met up with my cousin Joan Tucker {nee Miles} and her husband Walter from Glass House Mountains. At the end of August we flew to Bali where we were to meet with 33 other members of the 'Gull Force 2/21st Bn. Association'. They were from Victoria, N.S.W., South Australia, and New Zealand. We were the only Queenslanders and we all met up at the Ramayana Resort, Kuta.

On the 3rd September we flew from Bali to Ambon Island, where we were met by an excited group of Ambonese who helped the Australian's during World War 2, it was an emo-

tional greeting of tears and laughter from both sides. The Ambonese placed Lays of Cloves around our necks. After collecting our luggage we with our new friends made our way by bus to a wreath laying at an Australian Memorial at Tawari Village, the site of mass graves of Australian Soldiers found after the war. The Hotel had a banner draped over the entrance with "Welcome back Gull Force 2/21 Battalion" Australian flags were also flying throughout the hotel.



Ambon is a small Island of 775 sq km., 51 km long. It is a mountainous jungle with the highest mountain 1038 metres high. Ambon is the capital city of the Malukas, better known as the "Spice Islands." It is 400 km west of West Papua and 1000 km north of Darwin. The population is about 500,000 people of Malayan-Papuan origin.

Gull Force 2/21 Bn. Association was formed in 1965 by its surviving members who in October 1967 made their first pilgrimage to Ambon. They in conjunction with the R.S.L. presented the Governor with a bronze plaque, and land was donated by the people of the Village of Kudamati for the erection of a memorial.

Our next excursion was to the Galala War Cemetery where Joan and I lay a wreath on our Uncle's Grave. Albert was made a Prisoner of war on the 3rd February 1942 he died 3 years and three months later of Beri-Beri caused by starvation.

VX44323 Private
A.M. Miles
2/21 Infantry Battalion
25th May 1945 aged 26
Sleep on beloved and rest
Forever with the Lord.



Later in the day we were entertained by the Shell Orchestra, beautiful music made with sea shells, and next day young men and women in colourful

uniforms marched past the hotel. Sunday afternoon we were taken in 4WD's adorned with flying Australian Flags to a village on top of one of the mountains, a spectacular trip with houses built on the side of the mountain surrounded by jungle. We walked the last 500 metres down steps to the village where we were made welcome.

Ambon Day celebrates 440 years of colonization and 70 years of freedom and the Mayor invited us to be his guest. In the afternoon we went to a village for temporary displaced persons where 70 families, mostly women and children were housed in one room shacks, most lost their husbands and homes in the Muslim-Christian revolution of 1998. One old blind man sang to us war time songs, in English, he learnt as a child by listening to the prisoners singing at night in the camp. We gave each family a food and clothing parcel.

Our next destination was the wharf where four corvettes arrived 70 years ago to take home

the 123 survivors of Gull Force 2/21 and also the wharf where prisoners were made to work. The son of one of the prisoners told the story of his father managing to bend some of the fins on the torpedoes.

September 10th marked the 70th Anniversary of the evacuation of Ambon. Prior to the ceremony we attended a funeral service for an Australian soldier killed in West Timor during WW2. His remains were uncovered during routine building excavations two years previously. His identity was never established so he was buried as the "Unknown soldier" alongside other unknown soldiers whose executed bodies were discovered in mass graves at Laha after the war.

It was an emotional service conducted by the Australian Army, it is hoped with DNA they can be identified.

The association arranged an area of flowers on stems with the names of all the soldiers. Red Poppies for the ones who died, White Lilies for the one's who returned and since died and Blue Lilies for the 5 men still living. Sadly the Red Poppies (almost 800) overshadowed the others.

The Ceremony included several speakers, the Australian Ambassador, the Mayor of Darwin and a number of Military personal. Des O'Brien the President of Gull Force Association, spoke emotionally of the hardship endured by our soldiers over the three years and seven months of captivity. He has spent time with the survivors hearing detailed accounts of the horrendous acts of cruelty, starvation and medical neglect inflicted by their captives. The service contained the Ode, Prayers, Last Post, National Anthem and Benediction. The Ceremony concluded with an Ambonese Choir in beautiful costumes singing two songs in their language, followed by a very emotional rendition of 'Danny Boy' and 'Amazing Grace' in English. After the service at the Kudamati Memorial I was given the Honour of raising the Australian Flag. That night the Hotel gave us a farewell dinner.

I would like to congratulate the Gull Force Association for all their work putting the trip together.



Photo Wharf Ambon.



Photo of Burial.



RESEARCH FEES

Members Free (when visiting personally to the rooms and doing your own research although we are happy to help guide you or if you are from interstate and are not able to do your own research)

Non Members (at our discretion)

Mail & Internet Inquiries

\$30.00 Australia

\$35.00 overseas

For Research Requests:

email c/- gfhs@spiderweb.com.au or mail to: GFHS, P O Box 767, Gympie QLD 4570

The Research Process Explained:

You make your enquiry, we then look to see what information we can find quickly—then we contact you to see if you wish to proceed and advise of the fees.

If you do, we ask for \$30 (or \$35 overseas—to cover extra postage). Once payment is received, we then investigate either your specific queries or start at the beginning and check cemetery records, BDM registers, local registers, school registers, pedigree charts, some shipping, local history books, Gympie Times records, previous cemetery crawl presentations, previous research requests, mining, electoral rolls and so the list goes on.

We hold a lot of various local registers and cuttings and basic items you would find in a local history library. We also have access to the internet and can often suggest websites and ways of searching that you may not have thought of.

We do many hours of ongoing research and then either email the information to you as we go, or mail packets to you so you have the hard copies. We then also keep the information we have researched for you on file and it is then available to future people who may be researching your names too. Many times we have put people in touch with other searchers of their own trees.

Our research people do so much more work than you would realise to help you in your search for information. Please feel confident that everything possible is done by our volunteers to supply you with any relevant information we may have in our library.

The funds raised from your payments for our research, assist us with obtaining further records and to produce books and CD's for easy access of family details in Gympie and the surrounds.

Payment can be by either cheque sent to our P O Box as above or direct deposit into our Bank account is another option for those who feel comfortable with the method. Details of our bank account are: BSB 633000 Account# 153118963 and is with Bendigo Bank. We ask that you confirm by email to gfhs@spiderweb.com.au. if possible when you have made the payment. Then we can allocate your payment and get on with the research!

Our research officer is Faye Kennedy.

GYMPIE BORN ACHIEVERS:

For all our hard working members who are Ex Nurses.

BERYL EMMA BURBIDGE:



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

ART24371

Beryl was born on the 4th March 1902 in Gympie, the youngest of 9 children of Victorian born parents William Edward Burbidge, assayer, and his wife Maria Esther nee Wardle. Beryl's parents had moved to Gympie in 1893 during the gold rush. They became active members of the community and her father was Mayor of the town in 1910.

Educated at local State Primary and High Schools, Beryl left home at 19 to live with her sister in Charleville, where she worked as an assistant nurse in a private hospital. In 1923 she began her training at (Royal) Brisbane Hospital; she obtained her general nursing certificate on 22nd January 1927, becoming a staff nurse, and was appointed a Sister in November. In 1929 she travelled to Hobart and in March the next year gained her Midwifery qualification at Queen Alexandra Hospital. She returned to Brisbane Hospital and in the 1930's took charge of medical,

surgical and gynecological wards. A senior sister from 1938, she worked in the operating theatre for four years.

On 12th January 1942 Miss Burbidge commenced full time service in the Australian Army Nursing Service as a sister with the 6th Casualty Clearing Station, Ipswich. Appointed to the Australian Imperial Force on 2nd November, she was promoted to senior sister next month (Captain in March 1943). She served in General Hospitals in Papua from September 1943 until January 1944, when she was recalled to take charge of the Nursing staff at the Land Headquarters Medical research Unit, Cairns. There she supervised the care of volunteers exposed to malarial mosquitoes and oversaw the keeping of the secret experiments. She transferred to the Reserve of Officers on 14th November 1946.

In 1948 Miss Burbidge returned to Brisbane Hospital as a senior sister in the Matron's Office, and in 1952 was made Deputy General Matron. She transferred in August 1956 to the new South Brisbane (now Princess Alexandra) Hospital as acting Matron.

She was described as a "large impressive woman", lived in the nurses' quarters and was viewed by her staff as firm but approachable. She regularly toured the hospital to check everything from the organization of ward staff to the cleanliness of the bathrooms. "Her Military Experience tended to reinforce both hierarchical structures and reliance on discipline."

Miss Burbidge was President of the Qld. Branch of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation, and a member of the State Committee of the College of Nursing and of the Centaur Memorial Fund for Nurses. Retiring on 28th February 1968, she was appointed OBE that year. Miss Burbidge passed away 27th November 1988 and was cremated with Anglican rites.

The portrait above is housed at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra and was painted by Nora Heysen, who in 1938 was the first woman to win the Archibald Prize for Portraiture, and in 1943 the first female Australian war artist.

Source: Australian Dictionary of Biography

www.gympiefhs.egympie.com.au



2016 Programme

Gympie Family History Society
Cnr Station & Chapple Sts

23rd Mar—Gympie Crawl

1st May—Bus Tour—Kandanga revisited

22 June—Gympie Crawl

11 Sep—Bus Tour—Kilkivan revisited

19th Oct—Gympie Cemetery

Details—contact Di Woodstock 0419 224 628

gfs@spiderweb.com.au

GFHS facebook page

www.gympiefhs.egympie.com.au

LIBRARY HOURS

Wednesday 9.30am to 2pm

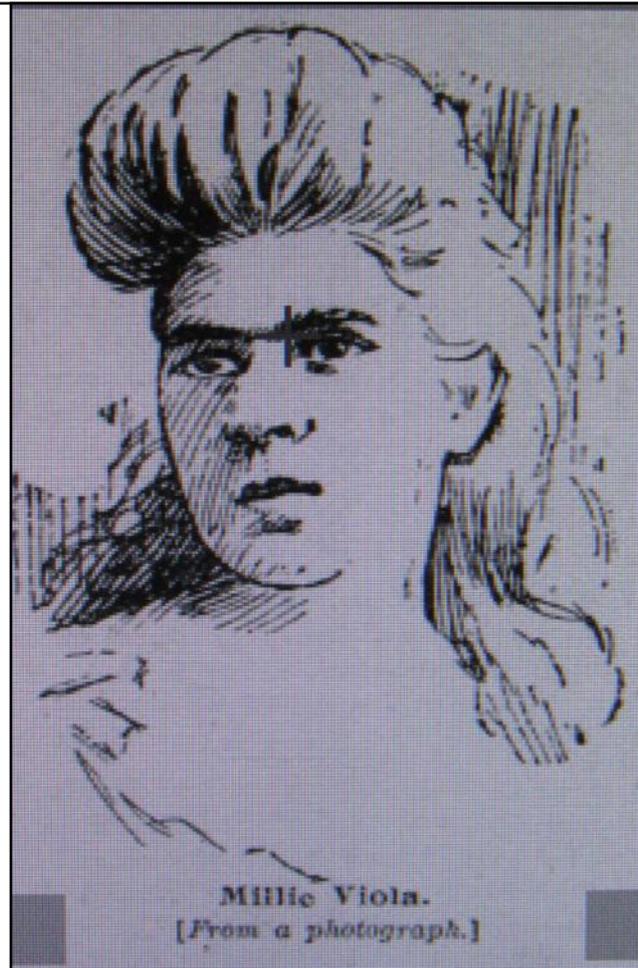
Friday 9.30am to 12pm

Saturday 1pm to 4pm

A PASSION FOR FLIGHT:

Since the beginning of history humans have dreamed of the ability to soar on wings with the freedom of birds. Following are two stories of people with Gympie connections who had such dreams.

The Balloon era in Australian Parachuting lasted from 1888 to about 1920. It was uncommon for parachutists to have acrobatic experience, they had a business Manager and the jumps were public displays done for money. The balloons were hot air balloons, mostly filled from town gas, or occasionally coal gas and were mostly made of silk or other materials such as calico. The aeronauts were either hung in an open state beneath the balloon or suspended in a folded form beneath the balloon. The parachutist sat on a trapeze bar underneath the parachute and the parachute was released from the balloon either at a predetermined height or when the balloon began to descend.



Our story is of two teenage sisters Millie and Essie Viola (their names for each other Boo and Chum) and their incredible aeronautic adventures. In an interview Millie and Essie explained how they came to be aeronauts. They were born on a ranch in Texas, America in the 1870's, the ranch was about 36 miles from Texas City. When Millie was about 5 years old her father died and a few years later her mother was "incapacitated from earning her own living."

When Captain Thomas S. Baldwin, America's most popular balloonist came to town, Millie the eldest teenager practiced some aerial flights with him, before going to Chicago to take up the Chicago Challenge - an offer of £2000 for the first lady to make a parachute descent.

Her first descent landed her in the waters of Lake Michigan. The girls toured the United States, India, China, South Africa, Japan, New Zealand, but Australia provided their most thrilling experiences.

One such event the balloon was caught in a whirlwind and Millie ascended spirally but with remarkable velocity, the balloon passed up into a calmer current, and ascended over three miles, passing out of sight of those below. 400 feet from the ground she commenced the parachute descent, but was again caught in a whirlwind and was carried up and down, round and round before landing in the branches of a tree. The branch snapped and Millie landed on her back.

It was a black week for aeronauts 7 losing their lives in 7 days, with Millie thinking she had

joined them. She was able to walk to the carriage awaiting her and was driven home. Once the excitement had subsided she was in agony and the Doctor said her nerves were dead but she survived, losing over 2 stone in weight.

In Fremantle after an ascent by twilight, Millie became attached to the Spire of the Town Hall Steeple about 800 feet from the ground. She swung with a very precarious hold by one of her feet and legs. The Commissioner of Railways who was among the spectators, dispatched a special train to Perth where Hayes Circus was performing and the train bought Mr. Byron Hayes back. Fastening a rope round his waist Mr. Hayes climbed up the lightning rod, reached Miss Viola, and transferred the rope from his to hers and lowered her down. Even then the rope was some 30 feet too short and Miss Viola was kept suspended until ladders were procured and she was rescued from her dangerous position.

The jump that caused the most media attention happened in Gympie. Millie Viola was to make a balloon ascent from Queen's Park, Gympie, Easter Monday 1895, but instead of bounding into the air, with the lady gracefully holding on to her perilous seat and soaring over the heads of the crowd, it only rose 8-10 feet, touched the earth again and dragged along for 50 yards before it finally collapsed, much to the disgust of the spectators. The management decided to make another try the next morning and admission would be free. A large crowd gathered in the park to watch the inflation of the balloon, twice during the operation the material caught alight but after a time the burns were noticed and put out. It was thought that too much time would be taken closing the gaps so they were left. The balloon which stood 50 feet high with an immense girth, had been filled with hot air obtained by means of a large fire, conveyed through an underground flue and then to the balloon by a funnel which was held by several assistants. When sufficient air was forced into the balloon, an iron plate was put on top of the funnel to keep down the flames. When the order was given to let go, one of the men holding it became entangled in the parachute ropes but disengaged himself.

Once free from the weights that held it down, the balloon soared in the air amidst a shout from the crowd. Those nearest the scene saw at once something was wrong, the bottom of the balloon caught the plate over the funnel, lifted it off and a flame shot up into the interior, ignited the material and rapidly spread. The 17 year old Miss Essie Viola was the sister making the ascent and Millie threw her arms around her sister and tried to pull her off the trapeze. Essie with the utmost coolness said, "let me go; they'll think I am afraid." The balloon by now had just got free and the jerk it made loosened Essie's hold on the trapeze, causing the bar to fall and caught her at the back of the knees throwing her backwards. One of her wrists was fastened to the trapeze ropes dragging her along. She

THE DINNER TABLE AT THE
FREEMASON'S HOTEL
IS WELL WORTH PATRONAGE.

MISS ESSIE VIOLA
IN HER

Balloon Ascent

Postponed from Thursday on account of
the wind to

THIS AFTERNOON

(Weather permitting).

as near as possible to three o'clock.

FREE! NO COLLECTION! FREE!

☛ A well-known Gympie mining manager has undertaken to inflate the balloon in 32 minutes, or forfeit £10 to the Gympie Hospital.

FRANK WARD.



threw one leg over the bar and in this precarious position with head hanging down she was taken up into the air. Essie regained her seat and waved a handkerchief at the silent and horror stricken crowd and called "Goodbye." It is said the words were heard on the other side of the river, and a round of applause burst forth. The cheers were quickly hushed as the flames fanned the ascending motion of the balloon which was going up and up and the form of Essie getting smaller and smaller. She clambered up the rope of the parachute trying to disentangle the ropes but she was unsuccessful and the balloon remained stationary for a time and started to descend. The parachute partly opened but was still attached to the balloon.

The women spectators could be seen sobbing and the men were visibly affected. Men, youths and boys were seen jumping fences, bounding over ditches and logs in an endeavor to witness the fall. Essie let go of the trapeze still attached to the flaming mass and sprung away from the flames, landing on her side in the grass and leapt to her feet.

The burning balloon fell to the ground a short distance away and was dragged to a nearby lagoon to try and save some of the material. The spectators crowded around the heroine of the hour to shake her hand and look at her. The landing took place at the back of Elworthy and Mellor's slaughter yard on the Chatsworth Road (*possibly around the Forestry Complex area*). A vehicle took Miss Viola back to the park, the news spreading that she was safe and sound. A collection was taken up and a fairly liberal response was made.

On the Thursday, a Benefit Concert was given in the Olympic Hall, enabling material for a new balloon to be secured through J.S. Cullinane, his staff promptly engaged in making a new balloon. Mr. A.J. Brown, chemist, rendered the material fireproof.

Millie and Essie had started their own business three years previously, Millie had secured 208 ascents, while Essie only 20. Essie's account of her trip on Tuesday is interesting if only for the nonchalant manner it was related. She is about middle height, slight, and rather fragile looking. She has no fear of Ballooning but is afraid of mice and cockroaches. The reason she gave for not disengaging herself when the balloon caught fire, was "Her reputation was at stake, for after the failure of the previous day the public would probably believe it was a put up job." She admitted the balloon got free before everything was ready, but due to her athletic training she had no trouble regaining her seat on the trapeze after dangling upside down. Her greatest fear was the burning balloon falling over the parachute, enveloping her in the burning mass and hot air. The parachute did catch fire but the distance from the ground was not great and she knew she was alright.

The sisters returned to America after touring several other Queensland towns and an article in the San Francisco 'Call' January 1896 has the two still ballooning. Millie fell 15 feet to the ground hurting her back and spine. Essie had made a successful ascent in the same place a few weeks previously and Millie said she was going up "Rain or no Rain.". The sisters appeared with a curly haired little boy, Millie kissed the two goodbye and took her seat on the bar. The balloon rose slowly when about 15 feet from the ground, she leant backwards as if to make a turn on the bar when the parachute departed from the balloon and fell to the ground with Millie attached. She was aided to her feet and said "It was a failure. If they can get the balloon back I'll go up anyhow." She then complained of pains in her back and back of her head.

Were they brave or just foolish? These Aeronauts were forerunners in an industry that changed the world. When war broke out in 1914, men were sent up in observation balloons for intelligence gathering and artillery spotting. The balloon was tethered to a steel cable and winch that reeled the balloon to a height of 1000-1500 meters. If attacked, parachutes were used. This was well before parachutes in aircraft. After WW1 the non-flammable Helium replaced gas.

Researched by Lyn Fleming.

Sources Trove; Wikipedia; The History of Parachuting in Australia.

Cemetery Crawl

Wednesday 23 March 2016

- Time: 6.30pm start (so come along a little earlier for a chat and to meet new people) - there is also a vege tray raffle \$1 ticket
- Where: Meet at the shed at the Gympie Cemetery
- Cost: \$7.50 (includes a light supper & a booklet) {**\$5 members**}
- Bring: Good walking shoes, a torch, bug spray,
- To Book: Ring Di Woodstock on 0419 224 628

Names included: Edwards, Router, Kidman, Gamgee, Boneham, Caston,

HERBERT HENRY TURK.

Family Life:

Herbert was born in Gympie on the 8th May 1889 to George Turk and Alice (nee) Long. His father George was born around 1852 in Middlesex, England, the son of a shoemaker and Alice in Oxfordshire around 1862, the daughter of a baker. Both migrated to Australia when quite young. They married in the Gympie Church of England in 1880 and had four children: Alice Mary, Samuel George, William Frederick and Herbert Henry. George was employed as a fitter in the Gympie Mines, worked at the Pyrites works and subsequently bought the Battery Machine he maintained.

Searching for new fields and opportunities, he erected part of the machinery at Glastonbury, sold it, but it soon fell back into his possession. After a couple of brief stops in other towns in the South Burnett the family came to Paradise in 1891 and started a crushing company. A year later it became apparent the field was unlikely to ever be payable so George moved his machinery to Mount Steadman. This mine proved a little more productive than Paradise however the family soon returned to Gympie where George became Manager of the Mary River Dredging Plant. In 1898 George secured a similar job in British Columbia, Canada, and with his brother-in law Samuel, arrived in Vancouver, succumbed to a sudden illness and never recovered. The sad news of his demise was a shock to his wife and children.



TOWN OF PARADISE. UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG

The town of Paradise is now submerged under the Paradise Dam. The Turk family home was one of the houses used for research into the life styles of the era. The house was originally the local Police Station and was quite a ramshackle affair. A new Police Station was built in the center of town and the lease for the land and the rough hut that had been built was taken up by George and Alice Turk. From the artifacts found it is suggested the Turk family were from Upper working class/lower middle class background and their economic prospects were on the ascent. The children had adequate gendered toys, slates and pencils, the hallmarks of a Victorian childhood. The family clothing was the most diverse of any house in Paradise and spoke of carefully chosen outfits that were tastefully fashionable. On the other hand the ceramics etc were very poor and the Turks made little effort to decorate their home. For three years before reaching Paradise the family carted their possessions and battery from one gold mine to another which would account for their lack of expressing their gentility through their home but through their appearance. Alcohol and tobacco con-

sumption was limited, showing that despite the plainness of their dwelling, they were mindful of the domestic environment being provided for their children.

Herbert: In December 1910, Herbert made a border crossing from the United States to Canada and his occupation was Electrician and his next of kin was his brother William Frederick. Census records from 1913-1915 have him living in Brisbane and his occupation as an Electrical Engineer. During this time Herbert was well known in Motoring Circles in Queensland.

In 1915 a Committee was formed to raise funds for the Volunteer Flying Corps later known as the Queensland Volunteer Flying Civilians. The V.F.C. was formed by Major Thomas MacLeod and Lieutenant Valdemar Rendle. Money was raised for the reconstruction of an aircraft, and a hanger at the Hemmant aerodrome to train a volunteer force in the building and handling of the machine of the type to be used in aerial warfare. The caudron was a single engine French Biplane widely used in WW1 as a reconnaissance aircraft. Major Thomas MacLeod took eight trainees to England in February 1916 to enlist with the Royal Flying Corps, including Herbert Henry Turk .

He gained his R.F.C. certificate in a Maurice Farman Biplane at the Military School, Brooklands, England, on the 5th April 1916. Brooklands, a Motor Racing Circuit, was closed during WW1 and used as an aircraft training ground. His rank was 2nd Lieutenant. He was awarded the Military Medal and was regarded as a fine pilot. His Military History is best told by his mates and himself. Herbert was 'Killed in Action' on the 11th November 1916.

The Gympie Times on the 20th January 1917 reads: "13th Squadron, 12th Wing, R.F.C., B.E.F., France, November 5, 1916. Dear Mr. Turk, I suppose you will already have received official information of your brother Herbert's death before this reaches you, but as he was one of the Queensland Volunteer Flying Corps started by me in Brisbane, I thought the least I could do was to go to his squadron and get all the information I could for you. Herbert was chosen to carry out experiments in picking up messages with a machine by flying close to the ground without landing. The exact details of the manoeuvre I believe are not to be made public, although we know how it is done. He picked up the message alright, and was starting to climb again, when for some unknown reason the gear caught in his propeller, and burst it. The blades of the propeller cut off three of his tail booms, and the forth broke, so the machine immediately hit the ground nose first. It was then only 15 to 20 feet up.

Herbert was unconscious when picked up. It happened on the aerodrome, so there was not a moment's delay in giving him medical aid but he was beyond human aid and died in 20 minutes without having regained consciousness. His observer was also killed. The accident happened on the 3rd and Herbert was buried in the cemetery at Avesnes le-Compte. It came as a great blow, not only to his own squadron, but also to all who knew him in my squadron. I had been over to dinner with him at his flight mess only about a fortnight before. He was well known as a keen and courageous fighter, and he generally piloted one of the fighting machines that escorted us on bombing raids, and we always felt more secure when he was with us, because he was so quick to attack hostile machines, however great the odds. His fearlessness and courage were well known, and he must very soon have been a Flight Commander, as he stood out so prominently for his thoroughness, reliability and devotion to duty. However, it is not only for that that I miss him. I had the highest opinion of him, personally as a friend, and he and I graduated for our 'wings' on the same days, and sat side by

side at the written examination. He richly deserved the Military Cross which was recently given him and Brisbane should well be proud of him as a true hero. So far as I know he is the first Brisbane airman to give his life for the great cause. What a fine pilot he was too. It was a treat to see him handle a machine, and his heart was absolutely in flying, which he loved so much. His death, appalling as it is, is not however in vain, as it has shown great danger attached to this particular manoeuvre, and what to avoid. I would like to express my deepest sympathy to you as I feel his loss personally.

Yours truly Thomas MacLeod, 2nd Lieutenant

Dear Mrs. Turk, You will have heard the sad news about your son by now, and I am so deeply sorry for you and all those who loved him. I may say that I too Loved him, which accounts for my writing. We lived together for some months, and sharing a hut in war time means usually great intimacy. He died for his country if man ever did. He was killed instantly, as he never regained consciousness. His machine crashed to the ground owing to the propeller breaking and cutting off the tail. I send you two papers, I think you will like to have and have packed up all his belongings and handed them over to headquarters to be sent. Please accept my sympathy and respect, I miss him awfully,

Yours sincerely, Gyles MacKrell.

Herbert to his brother 20th September 1916. Well, old boy there are lots of things to tell you. Don't know where to start and also a chap has to be careful what he says these days. I suppose you are curious to know why the powers that be saw fit to pass a decoration along to your brother. Don't like talking about it but suppose I better as there's no telling when my turn will come to go west, as so many of my mates have passed their checks in recently. How to win a Military Cross (by one who knows.) How's that for a start, as I hope never to talk of this again, I'll try to tell you without frills, just what actually happened. Mine was one of 9 machines who escorted a bombing raid into Hun Land. We had just reached the lines when I noticed a Hun over and seemingly just about to attack our bombing machines. As our leader did not seem to notice him I left the formation and chased him. He went home in a hurry before I could get within range. By this time I was 2 or 3 miles away from the escort. Shortly after I sighted about seven Huns about eight or ten miles on their side of the line, and decided to attack them. We got one down (he was seen to crash) and the front gun jammed. While my observer was trying to fix it a Hun got on my tail, as I was turning to meet him he shot our rudder controls away. We immediately went into a spinning nose dive and fell from 10,500 feet to 5000 feet before I got her right. Don't think I'll ever forget ticking off the thousands of feet as they went by. As we were going down my observer looked at me in a pitiful sort of way, I waved my hand which means a washout, and said, "Heaven for us old boy I can't do anything." He nodded his head and smiled. I thought, well, I've a plucky devil to die with, anyway". Turned out he thought I said, 'All right I'll get her out.' Well, I managed to get to our side without a rudder, every now and then she would get the better of me and turn back to Hun Land. Archie went mad, shells were bursting above, under, and all around us, we could see the pieces falling like hail. I think only one piece hit us, our Guardian Angel was certainly flying near us that day, it seemed impossible that with the machine in the condition it was we could get through safely. Our third ordeal was to get on the ground without being killed. I could not go less than 50 miles an hour without letting the machine get absolutely out of control and if I tried to fly level she went round in circles. When within about 50 feet off the ground I pulled her up and side slipped on to a wing tip and the machine was quite useful for firewood. The observer was thrown about 12 yards, but not hurt. I got off with a kick on the shin. We spent the night in a dugout and got shelled a

bit that's about all. If you do the same as I, you may, if you are lucky get a Military Cross. Personally, I won't envy you your job. Please send for Mac and let him read this, as I don't want to write about it again. Oh, thanks for the cable, I don't know how many scraps I've had must be about 30 or 40, great sport sometimes. One trip 6 of us started, 2 returned, I fought my way back for about 20 miles.

Love to all, From HERB

Researcher: Lyn Fleming

Sources: The Victorian Paradise—UQ e space, Ancestry, Trove ,VFC

Diggers Books WWI

We are putting together the series of books on Widgee Shire and the effects of the Great War on the families of the time.

If you have family in the area who was affected in anyway and you are happy to tell the story for us, PLEASE contact Di Woodstock on di@magicality.com.au

We are currently compiling a complete list of the men and women who enlisted or were connected to the area during 1914-1919 and would love to have any photos or personal stories and copies of items you have.

We are especially interested in anyone who was in the first sailing of the **Omrah** in 1914. There was a large group of Gympie men who were band members and they all enlisted together and sailed on the **Omrah**— Please share their story with us if you have a connection at all.

Lest We Forget



The Gympie Researcher

PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE {Please note that some prices have changed}

- **MINING ACCIDENTS SERIES** by Betty D'Arcy, information on mine accidents from the annual reports of the Mines Dept. (Qld) Volumes 1-14 (1878-1945). Cost per volume \$13 plus p&h **B**, order whole set add p&h **E**, order 5 copies add p&h **D**
- **PIONEER REGISTER** of families of Gympie and Surrounds (pre 1900) \$30 plus p&h **B**
- **PIONEER HEADSTONE BOOK** of Tozer Park & King Sts Gympie \$30 plus p&h **B** {updated}
- **A GOLDEN FUTURE 1867-1967** Stories, reports & photos of Gympie (photocopy version) \$15 p&h **B**
- **HISTORIC SKETCH OF GYMPIE 1867-1927** Stories & photographs of people & events of that period, includes index. (photocopy version) \$15 plus p&h **B**
- **The Gympie Chinese Vol 1** Stories of the early Chinese people of Gympie. \$15 p&h **B**
- **COOLOOLA COAST CEMETERY** (Tin Can Bay & Rainbow Beach) transcribed 2001. Headstones, burial register in date order. Cost \$15 plus p&h **B**
- **GYMPIE FUNERALS— FUNERAL NOTICES (transcribed from their website)**
 1. **2010 part year** \$10 plus p&h **A**
 2. **2011 full year** \$15 plus p&h **A**
 3. **2012 full year** \$15 plus p&h **A**
 4. **2013 full year** \$15 plus p&h **A**
 5. **2014 full year** \$15 plus p&h **A**
 6. **2015 full year** \$15 plus p&h **A**
- **GYMPIE CEMETERIES**
 1. **Headstone Transcriptions to 1995** \$25 p&h **C**
 2. **Burial Register 1866-1994.** King Street, Tozer Park Road & Two Mile cemeteries \$35 p&h **C**
 3. **Burial Register 1995-1999** Two Mile Cemetery, Cooloola Coast Crematorium register of burials in other towns \$15 plus p&h **A**
 4. **Burial Register 2000-2004** Two Mile Cemetery, Cooloola Coast Crematorium register of burials in other towns \$15 plus P&H **A** (Set of all 4 books) \$90 plus p&h **D**
 5. **Cemetery Crawl on Tour #1 (Tiaro, Munna Creek, Miva & Gunalda)** \$15 plus p&h **B**
 6. **Cemetery Crawl on Tour #2 (Kenilworth, Brooloo, Bollier, Gheerulla)** \$15 plus p&h **B**
 7. **Cemetery Crawl on Tour #3 (Kilkivan, Woolooga & Boonara)** \$15 plus p&h **B**
 8. **World War 1 Crawl August 2014** \$10 plus p&h **B**
 9. **World War 1 Crawl April 2015** \$10 plus p&h **B**
 10. **World War 1 Crawl November 2015** \$10 plus p&h **B**
- **THE GYMPIE TIMES 2005 Personal Notices.** Births, Deaths & Marriages, Wedding Anniversaries, Funerals & Memorials for the 2005 year. \$15 plus **C**
- **GYMPIE TIMES SERIES**
 1. **1868-1874** Births, deaths and marriages, funerals and miscellaneous
 2. **1875-1884** Births, deaths and marriages, funerals
 3. **1885-1889** Births, deaths and marriages, funerals
 4. **1890-1894** Births, deaths and marriages, funerals & in memoriam
 5. **1895-1899** Births, deaths and marriages, funerals & in memoriam
 6. **1900-1904** Births, deaths and marriages, in memoriam, wills/probates
 7. **1905-1909** Births, deaths and marriages, in memoriam, inquires/court (Set of all 7 books) \$95 plus p&h **D** or each book \$15 plus p&h **A**
- **GYMPIE CEMETERY CRAWL BOOKLETS** Presentations of headstones by our members. Approximately 10 names described per booklet. Includes some photos of headstones. Cost \$5 each plus p&h **B** for 3 booklets (we are up to book 39 now) (see website for a list of names)

Postage codes: A=\$4 B=\$5 C=\$8 D=\$10 E=\$16 to any part of Australia



Gympie Family History Society Inc ^{Page 19}
P O Box 767,
Gympie QLD 4570
Ph: 07 5482 8211

Membership Form

Membership #:

Name/s:

Address:
.....

Email:
(Please print email address clearly)

(are you happy to receive newsletters by email?) Yes / No

Phone: (h).....(m).....

Fees: **\$35** for a single person
 \$45 for two persons at the same mailing address

Bank Account: Bendigo Bank BSB 633-000 Acc 153118963 {please put your name as reference}

I/We hereby apply for membership renewal of the Gympie Family History Society to **31st August 2016** and agree to be bound by the rules of the Society.

Signature/s _____

Office use only: Card: Receipt No. Computer M/Ship Folder filed

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The Gympie Researcher