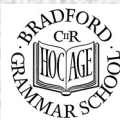


ARTHUR SOWERBY BURN



29th August 1915

1874-1915 Aged about 40

Lance Corporal no. 714, C Squadron, 10th Australian Light Horse Regiment. Arthur Burn was born in Bradford in 1874, the second son of John and Isabel Mary Burn. In 1881 his father was the manager of a spinning mill, having risen from being a wool merchant's clerk ten years earlier. Arthur was a pupil at Bradford Grammar School from 1883 until 1888, when he was fourteen. The family are difficult to trace subsequently, and perhaps split up. It seems that Arthur and his elder brother chose military careers. Arthur Burn is next encountered as a private soldier in the 16th Regiment of Lancers, with whom he served for eight years. In late January 1900 the regiment arrived in South Africa from Bombay to fight in the Second Boer War. He received the Queen's Medal with clasps for five engagements, then in January 1901 he was wounded at Lindley in the Free State, between Bloemfontein and Pretoria. He subsequently served with the South African Constabulary and the Natal Carbineers, a volunteer unit, perhaps during the Bambatha (Zulu) rebellion of 1906.

Burn next emigrated to Western Australia, near Perth, where he worked as a stockman. When war broke out, he volunteered in December 1914 and joined the 10th Light Horse Regiment, which were recruited in Western Australia. He gave his age as 38 years and 8 months—in reality he was two years older. Perhaps he feared he would not be accepted if he stated his true age. He embarked at Fremantle on 19th February 1915 with the 2nd Reinforcement draft bound for Egypt. They left their horses there and served dismounted. They disembarked at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli, on 21st May a month after the initial landings. They spent the following ten weeks in the trenches at Walker's Ridge without a break. Much discontent was caused by the unrelenting diet of tinned bully beef.

Heat, flies and water shortages caused many men to fall sick—at one point a quarter of the regiment's four hundred men were sick. It was estimated the men were 45% below normal efficiency. The regiment made its first attack at 4am on 7th August. They were to attack across a narrow saddle known



as The Nek. Peter Weir's 1981 film *Gallipoli* is modelled on their experience, a pointless frontal assault in which the third and fourth waves were ordered forward by their Australian brigade commander despite the failure of the first attacks. This action cost them 81 killed and 58 wounded. Nevertheless, they continued to hold the front line for a further two weeks, their condition further weakened by want of sleep. The 10th were finally relieved on 26th August, but after only one night out of the line, they were sent north to the flanks of Hill 60, which they were to assault at 1am on the morning of 29th August. This was dubbed "an abominable little hill" by a New Zealand officer whose men took part of it a week earlier. The 10th attacked in two waves across a space only 30 to 60 yards wide, and successfully seized their objective, a 200 yard stretch of Turkish trench, which they held against three determined counter-attacks. The unit's War Diary recorded "*Our casualties were heavy but good work was done*", one officer winning the coveted Victoria Cross. They had 85 casualties, of whom Burn was one of the 14 dead. His body was not recovered and his fate was uncertain. It was not until 1916 that it was confirmed that he had died. His name is recorded on the Lone Pine Memorial. He was unmarried.



Acknowledgements:

Ancestry.com was used to reconstruct the Burns family through the census and probate records. Information regarding his service in the 16th Lancers, his enlistment in 1914, and the uncertainty regarding his death came from the Australian service records (<http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=3171347>, http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/items/ACCNUM_LARGE/RCDIG1066935/RCDIG1066935--20-.JPG, <http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/pdf/RCDIG1062823--1-.pdf>). The experiences of the 10 Light Horse at Gallipoli can be read in the regimental war diary (<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/RCDIG1000265/>). For Peter Weir's *Gallipoli*, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallipoli_\(1981_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallipoli_(1981_film)). The photographs of the 10th Light Horse are from the Australian War Memorial (<https://www.awm.gov.au/unit/U51044/>). Both are copyright expired and in the public domain. The photo of Lone Pine Memorial was taken by Keith Roberts, OB, who also placed the cross in memory of Arthur Burns. The latter's brother Lieutenant John Burns went to Nigeria in 1914, but I have been unable to trace him further.

Fremantle, WA, c. 1915. 10TH Light Horse waiting to embark for Egypt.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Gallipoli, Turkey, 1915. Walker's Ridge, Gallipoli, after the charge of the 10TH Light Horse Regiment AIF. In the foreground can be seen a heap of unclaimed kits after the charge in which seven officers of the regiment were killed. The "Officers' mess" in the right hand corner consists of sand bags on galvanised iron. (FROM THE COLLECTION H.H.V. THROSELL, VC)



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