

NORMAN CROSLAND AMPT



22nd August 1915

1888-1915 Age 26

Private, 62, 'A' Squadron 4th Australian Light Horse; 2nd Lieutenant, 1st Battalion, The Border Regiment. Norman Ampt was born on 26th November 1888 in Bradford. His father Carl Otto Bernhardt Ampt was a German from Rastatt, where his father was a brewer. Carl came to Bradford as a young man in the 1860s where he was a merchant in the wool trade. In 1884, aged 39 he married Mary Elizabeth Crosland Bentley, a farmer's daughter fourteen years his junior. She was known as Elsa. They had three children, Carl William (later known as Charles), Norman Crosland, and Doris Bentley Ampt. By the time of his death in 1911 he was a man of substance, leaving an estate of £12,000.

Norman Ampt was at Bradford GS from 1898 to 1902, then he followed his elder brother to Sedbergh School, where he was in Mr Wilson's house from 1902 to 1906. According to *The Sedberghian*, "though he won no great renown at athletics and was not gifted with any great ability at his books, he was a pleasant and a popular member of his house." Ampt was at home on the rugby field and played for the Sedbergh First XV, going on to play for Headingley RFC. He was also a promising cricketer, gymnast, fives player and runner. He won the modern science prize in March 1906, just before his Sedbergh career ended. He may have been a member of the School OTC, as his brother certainly was—in 1914 Norman claimed he had two and a half years service in the 5th (Territorial) Battalion of the Border Regiment.

In 1909 Ampt settled in Melbourne in Australia, where he worked as "station manager". He was a well-built man for his time, an inch short of 6 feet tall and weighing 13 stones. His complexion was fair and his hair brown. He visited Britain in 1911 following his father's death. When war broke out he was one of the first to enlist in the Australian army, on 18th August, as Private no.62 in the 4th Light Horse Regiment. They sailed for Egypt on 19th October 1914 where they spent the winter guarding the Suez Canal. Ampt's qualities led to his promotion to 2nd Lieutenant in April 1915, when he was also admitted to hospital for treatment on an ingrowing toe-nail. In late March the 1st Battalion Border Regiment, a Regular Army unit, disembarked at Alexandria, part of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force bound for Gallipoli. Norman



met his former school fellows among them and his request for a transfer was granted — "*The younger Ampt has just joined us,*" another Sedberghian wrote, "*a fine stalwart figure and a good advertisement of Sedbergh.*"

The 1st Border landed on X Beach, Cape Helles, Gallipoli on 25th April with 29th Division. They performed very creditably but suffered heavy casualties, however Ampt did not join them until they were withdrawn to rest on the island of Imbros in mid-July. After less than a fortnight at Gallipoli he was put on the sick list, suffering from sunstroke. He rejoined the battalion, now at Suvla Bay, at 10am on 21st August as it prepared to assault Scimitar Hill. Under heavy fire from the Turkish defenders, parties of the assaulting units were able to seize footholds on the hill, but it proved impossible to dig in so stony was the ground. Of the 1/Borders 14 officers who took part, 13 were wounded, while 38 rank and file were killed and over 300 wounded or missing. According to a fellow officer, Ampt was hit "*whilst gallantly leading his platoon through a most murderous fire of shrapnel, maxim and rifle fire*"; another wrote, "*All the officers and men held him in the highest esteem, both as an officer and a gentleman.*" He died of his wounds the following day on a hospital ship and was buried at sea. His name is recorded on the Helles Memorial, Turkey.

BGS OBs—'We will remember them'



Thanks to the OBA for permission to use the photograph that is in the Roll of Honour (the same one was published in the Yorkshire Rugby Football Union and Sedbergh School rolls of honour). As usual my research began with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website, and I used Ancestry.com to research the family history (indexed under Ampt, Amph and Amp) and the British military records. There is no service record for Norman, but his brother Carl/Charles' Service file is available—he attested in 1916, but the square bashing and sports of his basic training aggravated an existing ankle injury incurred playing rugby at school, and in 1917 he was transferred to the reserve and he never saw active service. He died in 1945, while their sister Doris survived until 1988. She married Herbert Jennison.

Norman's career is filled in from the Australian records, available at http://static.awm.gov.au/images/collection/items/ACCNUM_LARGE/RCDIG1067009/RCDIG1067009--4-.JPG and <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=3032895>. I am very grateful to the archivist of Sedbergh School who sent information about Norman's career there to the BGS Head Master, Kevin Riley, who kindly forwarded it to me. The Old Sedberghian Pilgrimage obituary can be found at <http://pilgrimage.sedberghschool.org/category/surname/a>.

The cross was placed at Helles Memorial by Keith Roberts OB, who also took the photo ©, to whom we are very grateful. This biography was compiled and composed by Nick Hooper (Nhooper1956@googlemail.com).

 @BGSHist @NickHooper13

