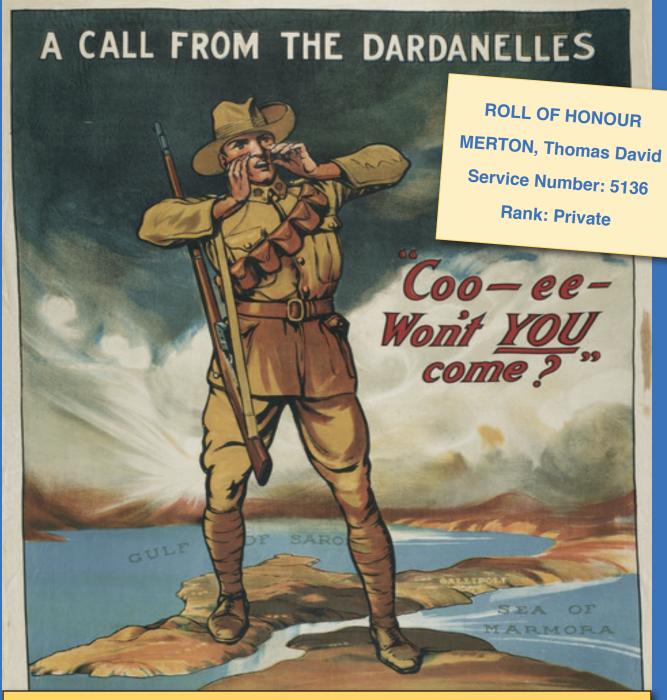
Commemoration for the Lives of the Braidwood and District ANZACS

"We will remember them well"



From 1914 - 1918, 465 volunteers from Braidwood and the District joined the Australian Imperial Force in World War I. 88 lost their lives, never to return home. This is their story.





THE SPIRIT LIVES 2014 - 2018

Introduction

This year, 2015, marks the centenary of the start of the Gallipoli campaign and Australia's involvement as a nation in the greatest and most terrible conflict ever seen to that time. Australians joined their Armed Forces in large numbers. Their motives were as varied as their upbringings, from a need to save the Empire, of which Australia was an integral part, to the desire to have a great adventure.

Braidwood and district were no exception. Over the four years from 1914 to 1918, from a population of about 5000, 465 men and women from what is now the 2622 postcode area – including Braidwood, Majors Creek, Araluen, Mongarlowe, Nerriga, Ballalaba and Jembaicumbene joined the Navy or Army. Of these 377 returned to Australia. Sadly, 88 lost their lives.

A varying amount of their history is recorded in the Australian War Memorial. Some of their names, but not all, are recorded on local memorials. More is recorded in limited local histories and newspapers, not readily available to the general public; and the people who lived with and knew these distant relatives are also passing on.

The Braidwood RSL Sub Branch has collected all the information available from the Australian War Memorial and local sources, including the Braidwood Museum. Families, still resident in the district, have added their family knowledge and their precious memorabilia.

This booklet is the available story of **Thomas David Merton**, one of the 88 Braidwood volunteers who did not return from World War I. It contains his details as recorded in the World War I Roll of Honour, his Enlistment Papers, Field Service records, any Casualty notification, correspondence relating to his death, details of decorations won, any available photos, and, in some instances, family correspondence or recollections.

Thomas David Merton died for his country, for you and for me. Please pause a moment to remember him.

Lest We Forget.

WORLD WAR I

World War I lasted four years, from 4 August 1914 until 11 November 1918. It began after the assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne. The axis powers were Germany and Austria. Russia and France were the initial allies. When Germany invaded Belgium, Britain entered the war on the side of Russia and France.

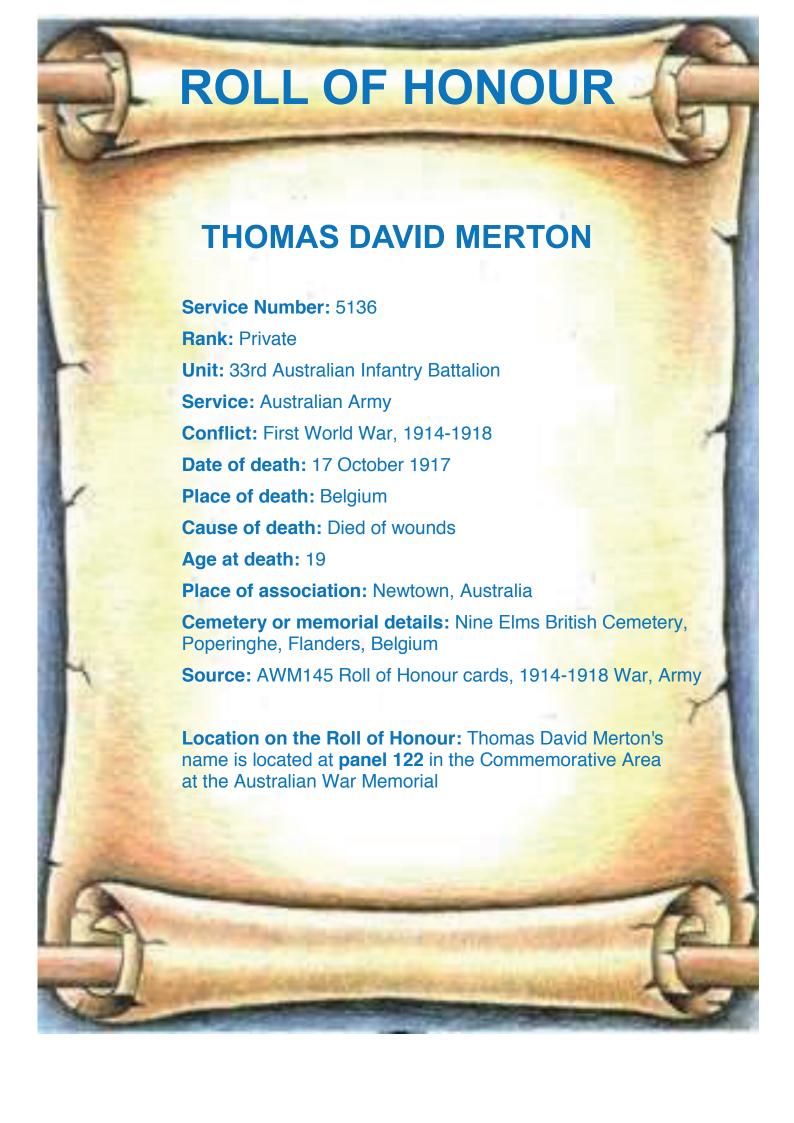
The war was in Europe, the Western Front was in France and Belgium. The Eastern Front was Russia and Austria-Hungary. Africa was another front because of colonial possessions on that continent, and after Turkey entered the war on 1 November 1914, the Middle East became another theatre of war.

Australians generally thought of themselves as an integral part of the British Empire and the Australian Army and Navy were part of the Imperial Forces. In 1914, Australia's Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher, immediately promised Australian support for Britain 'to the last man and the last shilling.' The Australian population was less than five million. 324,000 Australians served overseas. 61,720 lost their lives. 155,000 were wounded. 4,044 became prisoners of war (397 died while captive).

The first Australian troops were sent to Egypt in 1915. The ANZACS – Australian and New Zealand Army Corps – were engaged in battle on the Gallipoli Peninsula against the Turks to control the Dardanelles' and open the way to Eastern Europe with their fateful landing on 25 April 1915.

The ANZACS were evacuated on 19-20 December 1915. The Gallipoli campaign resulted in the deaths of 7,600 Australians and the wounding of 19,000. Despite the defeat, the legend attached to the heroism, comradeship and valour of the soldiers remain a source of Australian pride and national identity.





33rd Australian Infantry Battalion

The 33rd Battalion was formed in January 1916 at a camp established at the Armidale showground in New South Wales. The bulk of the battalion's recruits were drawn from the New England region and thus it was dubbed "New England's Own". The Battalion's first, and only, commanding officer was Lieutenant Colonel Leslie Morshead, who would become famous as the commander of the 9th Australian Division during the Second World War.

The 33rd Battalion became part of the 9th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division. It left Sydney, bound for the United Kingdom in May 1916. Arriving there in early July, the battalion spent the next four months training. It crossed to France in late November, and moved into the trenches of the Western Front for the first time on 27 November, just in time for the onset of the terrible winter of 1916-17.

The Battalion had to wait until the emphasis of British and Dominion operations switched to the Ypres Sector of Belgium in mid-1917 to take part in its first major battle; this was the battle of Messines, launched on 7 June. The battalion held the ground captured during the battle for several days afterwards and was subjected to intense artillery bombardment. One soldier wrote that holding the line at Messines was far worse than taking it. *The battalion's next major battle was around*

Passchendaele on 12 October. The battlefield, though, had been deluged with rain, and thick mud tugged at the advancing troops and fouled their weapons. The battle ended in a disastrous defeat.

For the next five months the 33rd alternated between periods of rest, training, labouring, and service in the line. When the German Army launched its last great offensive in the spring of 1918, the Battalion was part of the force deployed to defend the approaches to Amiens around Villers-Bretonneux. It took part in a counter-attack at Hangard Wood on 30 March, and helped to defeat a major drive on Villers-Bretonneux on 4 April.

Later in 1918, the 33rd also played a role in the Allies' own offensive. It fought at the battle of Amiens on 8 August, during the rapid advance that followed, and in the operation that breached the Hindenburg Line at the end of September, thus sealing Germany's defeat. The 33rd Battalion disbanded in May 1919.



Private T. Merton, son of Arthur Merton, a former resident of Majors Creek, and a nephew of John Stuart, was killed in France. The soldier had recently won a Distinguished Service Medal for bravery.

Letters from the Front by Roslyn Maddrell

C.

A.I.P. 38.

D/3. 17.10.17.

MERTON T. 5135.

He was in C.Co. XI Pl. - mine and was a sniper.

His Christian name was Thomas. He was a transfer to
us from the 17th. Bn. about a year before. He was
badly wounded in the book by a piece of shell then we were
holding the line up near the Foulers-Ypres Pailway, near
Passchendaels, in the afternoon, on or about 17th. Cot.
He was on his way to Co. HQ. at the time. I saw him
about h hour after he was hit. Crl. Gunn, C.Co. (a ill
with the Pn.) was making as S/B. and I believe was one who
carried him Joun to the D.S. When I saw Horton they were just
going to take him thers. I heard he had died soon afterwards.

NOH.

Reference: Pte.C.M. McCathy. 827. C.Co. 56 Gen.Hol.

Btaples. 6.3.18.



No. 5136a. Private Thomas David MERTON, 33rd. Battalion.

DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL

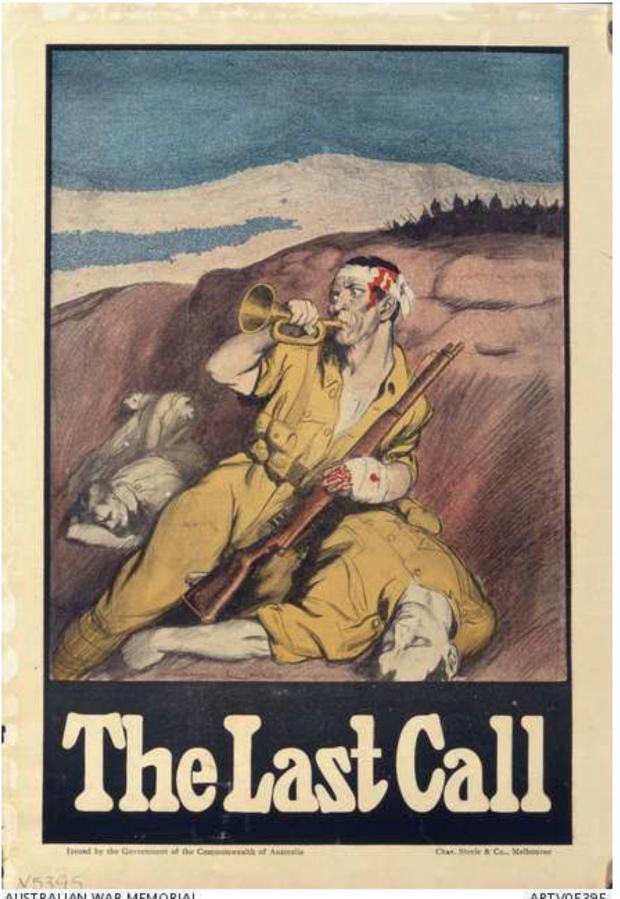
"On the morning of February 23rd. 1917, Private Merton displayed great gallantry, determination and initiative. 8 a.m. he asked and received permission to take advantage of the fog and go into NO MAN'S LAND to snipe and examine the enemy's wire. On nearing the German second line of wire he heard a working party picking in the trenches. He at once moved to a shell-hole between the third and last line of wire, a distance of 30 yards from the enemy's trench. and 250 yards from ours. Here he disguised himself. On the lift of the fog he saw an enemy observer, whom he killed. Shortly afterwards he shot another who was observing close to the same spot. Later two men appeared, one of whom pointed in Merton's direction; he shot this man and he fell into the trench. Eventually a man jumped over the parapet and hid in the wire. This caused great commotion and much talk in the enemy's trenches. While in the act of throwing a stick-handle grenade he was shot by Private Merton. The grenade fell close by, but failed to explode. A fifth man appeared and got over the parapet to throw bombs. Private Merton accounted for him before he reached the wire. The enemy then bombed from his trench and threw about 20 Private Merton meanwhile withdrew and came under heavy fire from two machine guns. Two "Granaten-werfers" were also fired at him. Private Merton returned to our trenches at 11 a.m. He sniped also from the enemy's first line of wire on the 22nd. and remained there until recalled."



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

E01088

9 October 1917: Belgium: Western Front (Belgium), Passchendaele Area, Passchendaele: A 4.5 inch Q.F. Howitzer gun bogged and abandoned on Westhoek Ridge during the attack at Passchendaele, in the Ypres sector. The building on the left was used as a Regimental Aid Post by the 5th Australian Infantry Brigade during the battle.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

ARTV05395

Depicts an Australian First World War recruitment poster with an image of a wounded soldier sounding his bugle for assistance as he leans over the bodies of wounded soldiers in a trench. In the background, coming over the horizon, are German soldiers. Norman Lindsay (1879-1970) was a painter, draughtsman, illustrator, cartoonist, printmaker, writer and sculptor. He joined the Sydney 'Bulletin' magazine as a staff artist, 1901-09, 1910-23 and 1932-58. During the First World War he produced jingoistic cartoons and pro-conscription posters. 'The last call' and 'Fall in', the last of the series of six Lindsay posters commissioned by Australian recruiting authorities in 1918, had not been used when the Armistice was signed. The former was drawn from photographs of the brother of Lindsay's cook and housemaid at his home at Springwood, NSW.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL E00933

14 October 1917: Belgium: Western Front (Belgium), Passchendaele Area, Passchendaele: Members of the 40th Battalion taking the opportunity to 'clean up', after coming out of the trenches west of Passchendaele, in the Ypres Sector. This camp was between Dragoon and Hussar Farms, near Ypres, and was occupied by troops in a brief respite from the fighting. Note the tents in the background.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL E01163

6 November 1917: Belgium: Western Front (Belgium), Passchendaele Area, Broodseinde: The Cemetery near the cutting on the Ypres Roulers railway on Broodseinde Ridge, in the Ypres sector. Passchendaele can just be seen in the distance on the right.



ITARY FORCES

TRILIAN IMPERIAL FOR

	ersons Enlisted for Service Abroad.
Wo.zesp	ne MERTON THOMAS DAVID 1 " DE Rec. 17 Bute 33 10 /3 aller ned on 27-1-16
Questions to be put to t	he Person Enlisting before Attestation.
1. What your Name?	I Thomas Reaced Merton
/ / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /	2 In the Parish of . Majors in or
2. In r near what Parish or Town were you born!	near the Town of Braidwood
	in the County of Money
Are you a natural born British Subject Naturalized British Subject (N.B.—I latter, papers to be shown.)	or a s. Ratical Born
4. What is your age?	a Prosto One & Two Months
5. What is your trade or calling 7	
 Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice! where, to whom, and for what period! 	
7. Arp you married?	1 A Hather Mrs a menton.
	8. Million August Million St
8. Who is your next of kin! (Address to be stat	rent 1 No Statem St
	Deld wey 1
9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Pow	
 Have you ever been discharged from any part Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as rigible and Worthless, or on account of tion of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal tude, or have you been dismissed with D from the Navy1 	Doovie- Servi isgrace
 Do you now belong to, or have you ever served Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Roya or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and now serving, state cause of discharge 	1 Navy. 11 feft Straining Areas
12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your p	revious 1 19 CAG
 Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Ma Service? If so, on what grounds? 	desty's } 12
14. Do you understand that no Separation Allowst be issued in respect of your service be amount which together with Pay would eight shillings per day.	rend an i reach 14
15. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against a and enteric fever?	
Purces of the Commonwealth of Australia with	m willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military in or boy and the limits of the Commonwealth.
my service for the support of my wife	than two-fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during three-fifths
Date 27-1-16 wile and chil	Senters of person colleted

Signature of person collisted.

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FIELD SERVICE

Army Form B. 2090A.

D 352 3

HEPORT of Death of a Soldier to be forwarded to the Wer Office with the least possible delay after receipt of notification of death on Army Porm B. 213 or Army Form A. 26, or from other official decommutary sources.

OR CORPS 33	ra Battali a		ery es Company /	
Regimental No.	5136	Name .	Frivate	
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E.E.F.

Australian Imperial Force.

KIT STORE.



110 GREYHOUND ROAD, HAMMERSMITH, LONDON,

W. 6.

AMPRE

TELEPHONES -- HAMMERSMITH 1900, 1901.
TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS -- "AIFKITS."

inventory of Effects of-

5136a, Merton. T.D., 33rd Batt'n. A.I.F.

Forwarded to-

Father.

Mr Arthur Merton, 123, Station Street, Newtown, Sydney,

Sydney, New South Wales.

Effects:-

Ex. 3rd Rehelon, France. 5.2.18. (10345).

l Mark Note, 3 Coins, Scissors, Knife, Mirror & Comb in Case, Wallet, Purse, Diary, Cards, Photos, Letters, Medal Ribbon.

30821

Regime

33rd Battalion Casualty Form Active	Regimental	Number	100
		5136 .	
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MERTON Ch	detine Vana on		

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Proceeded overseas France Southampton 21.11.16 FR 1372 DO 19/2292E On the morning of February 23rd 1917 Private Merton displayed great gallantry, determination and initiative. At 8 am he asked and received permission to take advantage of the fog and go into NO MANS LAND to snipe and to examine the enemy's wire. On nearing the German second line of wire he heard a working party picking in the trenches. He at once moved to a shell hole between the third and last line of wire, a distance of 30 yards from the enemy's trench and 250 yards from ours. Here he distinguished himself. On the lift of the fog he saw an enemy observer whom he killed. Shortly afterwards he shot another who was observing close to the same another two menappeared one of whom pointed in Merton's direction. He shot this spot. Later two menappeared one of whom pointed in Merton's direction. He shot this man and he fell into the trench. Eventually a man jumped over the parapet and hid in the wire. This caused great commotion and talk in the enemy's trenches. Whilst in the act of throwing a stick handle grenade he was shot by Private Merton. The grenade fell close by but failed to explode. A 5th man appeared and got over the parapet to

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BASE RECORDS OFFICE, .AIF. 29th August, 1917.

Dear Madam,

I have much pleasure in formating hereunder copy of extract from Supplement No. 50025 to the London Gazette of 17th April, 1917, relating to the conspicuous services rendered by your son, No. 5136 Private T. D. Merton, 33rd Battelion,

X

AWARDED THE DISTINGUISHED CONTUCT MEDAL

HIS MAJESTY THE KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the assist of the Distinguished Conduct Medal to the undermentioned soldier for note of gallentry and devotion to duty in the field :-

No. 5150 Frivate THOMAS DAVID MERTON.

For conspicuous callentry and devotion to duty. He advanced under cover of a fog and tack up a position in "No Man's Land" from which he shot five of the enemy. He has at all times displayed great courage and initiative.

X

X

×

X

The above has been promulgated in Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, No. 133 of 21st August, 1917

Youre faithfully

Major.

Officer 1/c Base Records.

Mre. M. Merton, 125 Station Street, Nostoon, Bydney, N.B.W.

123 Station St nestown sydney Officer La Charge Base Reenth Dear Sir My four Grirale J. D. Meston haring and of brands pu bother 17 th /1917 whence The outer in charge wish his & Land all his personal telougungs were sent on to foruld be you thankful it telp Ine. Arras antarted the D.C. M. A premied to midal from the King by they fune previous I I do not them if he had it an hur a tranco. It is kon to how has come through rould the Very pleased to preum paul Man Truly Kelle Metro

In Memory of

Private

Thomas David Merton

DCM

5136, 33rd Bn., Australian Infantry, A.I.F. who died on 17 October 1917 Age 19

Son of Arthur D. and Ellen Merton, of 123, Station Road, Newtown, Sydney, New South Wales. Born Major's Creek, New South Wales.

Remembered with Honour

Nine Elms British Cemetery





Commemorated in perpetuity by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



The Eastern end of Duncan Street showing the Clyde Road in background, bicycle track on the left and the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (built 1861) on the right. Braidwood Dear Braidwood by Netta Ellis.

Acknowledgements

Everybody responded enthusiastically to the idea of capturing the information about Braidwood's 88 World War I veterans who lost their lives. The Braidwood RSL Sub Branch is most grateful for the support they received in carrying out this task and would like to acknowledge those of whom we are aware: Karen, Chris and Renee Nelson, Roslyn Maddrell, Karen Shea, Jill Clarke, Rod McClure, Ben and Meaghan Frohling, Diane McGrath, Us On Mondays Quilting Group, Len Mutton & Co and local shopkeepers for their World War I window displays.

Thank you to the students and teachers of Braidwood Central School and St. Bedes School who have embraced these soldiers and have honoured their memories on Anzac Day 2015.

The Braidwood RSL Sub Branch raised a good proportion of the funds for the cost of producing these booklets. The efforts of the members of the sub branch involved are very much appreciated. This money was augmented by welcome funding from the Federal Government through the ANZAC Centenary Local Grants Program and the Braidwood Community Bank.

To all those who helped in any way, many thanks. Your efforts have ensured we remember these Braidwood and District Veterans well.

Back Cover: Peace Day, 11th November 1918, Wallace Street, Braidwood. "Wild day in Braidwood: When Braidwood woke up on Tuesday morning to find the 'glad tidings of great joy' awaiting it that Germany had signed the armistice and the frightful carnage of the past four years or so had come to an end it simply went mad with delight. No other words could adequately describe the excitement that followed." "Braidwood Letters from the Front" by Roslyn Maddrell.

ROLL OF HONOUR

Alley, Clair Underwood

Archer. Fred

Backhouse, Victor John

Barnett, Frederick George

Barry, Charles Louis

Beatty, Walter Cusack

Bell, John Henry Edward

Black, George Scott

Bruce, Thomas Fraser

Byrne, Cecil John

Callan, William Henry

Catlin, Robert Henry

Clarke, Lester Thomas

Cook, Thomas John

Crandell, Christopher George

Cregan, Clarence Theodore Augustus

Cullen, Henry Thomas

Davis, John Henry

Davis, Oscar Raymond Stanley

Dawson, Edric Athol

Dayball, Arthur Joseph

Dempsey, Charles Frederick

Dempsey, Charles

Dowell, Frederick Robert

Feeney, William

Fisher, Osborne

Flack, John Foster

Garnett, Henry James

Geelan, Robert Michael

Gosling, Fred

Gough, James

Green, Francis Henry

Healy, Myrtle James

Howard, John Alexander

Huggett, William

Hunt, Frederick William

Hunt, John

Hush, Percy Alfred

Hush, Thomas

Hush, Austin Septimus

Innes, Henry George

Kelly, Herbert Albert

Kemp, Leslie Smith

Keyte, Robert

Knight, Charles Oliver

Lee. Thomas James

Lennon, James

Lupton, Spencer

Lynch, James Joseph

Matthews. Francis

McCool, Francis Leslie Neil

McDonald, Alexander Joseph

McLean, Donald

McRae, Finley Arnold

Meade, Arthur Stuart

Merton, Thomas David

Montgomery, Stanley

Moore, William

Newberry, Alwyn (Alwin) Horace James

O'Brien, Thomas Daniel

O'Reilly, John

Pooley, Edward

Rex, Horace Joseph

Riley, Frank

Roberts, Frederick Bede

Robinson, William James

Rodgers, Albert

Seidel, Alfred George

Seidel, Henry Edward

Sharpe, George Lyle

Sharpe, Reginald

Sherman, Edgar Robert

Sherman, Percy Frederick

Simmons, George

Smith (Greenwood), George

Spicer, William Henry

Steele, Alexander Norman

Stein, Daniel Godfrey

Stewart, David Walter

Styles, Reginald Lucian

Torpy, Patrick Edward

Torpy, Thomas Patrick

Walker, William Albert

Watt, James

Watt, Oscar Harold McClure

White, Alister

Whitelaw, Thomas Philip

Wilson, Samuel Charles

ADBROWN