

1 Myrrhee: a Place with Old People and Tall Trees

2 By Evan Evans

3 Myrrhee is a rich agricultural locality, situated approximately midway between Wangaratta and Mansfield in
 4 the foothills of the north east Victorian highlands. In Myrrhee there is no pub, post office or shop, but there is
 5 the Myrrhee State Primary School which proudly celebrated its Centenary in 1985 and two community halls.
 6 One of which is the Memorial Hall, which of course contains the two conventional honour boards to those who
 7 have served Australia in war. The Myrrhee School itself nestles in a 'crick'^[1] between the Fifteen Mile and
 8 Boggy Creeks.
 9

10 Mt Bellevue is the areas high point, which sits approximately in the middle of the Myrrhee district. This was
 11 a high point that the Australian explorers Hume and Hovell climbed when they passed through the district on
 12 their 1824 expedition from Sydney to Geelong. They reported, "*Halfway up this mountain the stone is of the*
 13 *worst quality, but on the top the stone has a portion of lime in it. The soil is of excellent quality and the grass*
 14 *and herbage is equal to any in the Murrumbidgee.*" (*Hume and Hovell Expedition, 1824*).^[2, 3] This 'red dirt,'
 15 either on the hill tops or washed into the valleys to form alluvial deposits can bountifully grow anything from
 16 cereals, hops, tobacco and potatoes, or can sustain grazing stock and dairying. In later times, fine wine grapes
 17 have become prominent. The districts relatively consistent rainfall, typically in excess of 1m per year, ensures
 18 that the districts production is reliable.
 19

20 As squatters, from 1853 the Evans family once farmed the Whitefield run which encompassed much of the
 21 district of Myrrhee. The Whitefield Run's fragmentation was induced through a series of Crown Lands
 22 Alienation Acts and Crown Lands Occupation Acts that were introduced between the 1860s to the 1880s.
 23 Along with substantial but ultimately futile forays into stations around the Hilston district in NSW due to the
 24 ravages of drought, rabbits and dogs. This winnowed the family's holdings back to John Evans' "Redcamp"
 25 property on the Boggy Creek and the Manarhee property on the Fifteen Mile Creek, run by his oldest son Jack
 26 (see below). The family was part of those risk-taking generations that pioneered Australia.
 27



28 Looking over the 'Glenburnie' Paddock to the 'Bald Hill range',
 29 'Redcamp' on the Boggy Creek, Myrrhee, c1910



30 Hop production on 'Manharee' on
 31 the Fifteen Mile Creek, c1940

32 The scion of the family, John Evans and his wife Eleanor Lucy (nee Whitty) had eleven children, nine boys
 33 and two girls. Unfortunately, the oldest child and daughter succumbed to Diphtheria at 3 years and died, but
 34 the remainder of their children survived into adulthood. Thereby it can be concluded, Myrrhee was a good
 35 crick. Marion Flanigan, an elder of the Myrrhee district recounts that shortly after marrying her husband Ian
 36 and coming into the district, his grandmother sagely commended her for choosing to "live in an area with
 37 many old people and tall trees."

38 The Great War of course was to come and rudely interrupt the industrious agrarian idyll of the Myrrhee district.
 39 In total 55 men who had attended the Myrrhee School or were associated with the district signed up to serve
 in the AIF. A inclusive net was cast with an Englishman from Gloucester who presumably worked in the area,
 2nd Lt Roy Bailey (#35, KIA 5/1/1918, near Cambrai) included. Roy initially went to Sth Africa where he

40 fought with the Umvoti Mounted Rifles, seeing action in what was then German South Africa. At the
 41 successful conclusion of this foray he then returned to England to take up a commission with the Royal Marines
 42 1st Bn in June 1917.

43
 44 In Myrrhee, the average enlistment age of the men was on average 26 years and 7 months with the majority
 45 enlisting during 1916 (27) or 1915 (18). There were others who tried to enlist but their age and parental
 46 objections delayed them (**Pte Daniel Nolan**, #55) or like my grandfather Evan Evans who had suffered football
 47 injuries to his knees which resulted in his enlistment being rejected despite multiple attempts. The men were
 48 enlisted into a range of AIF battalions across the service from infantry to light horse, artillery,
 49 engineers/pioneers and ambulance, with even one of the Hancock's (**Pte Fred Handcock**, #44) being in
 50 tunnelling. Overall, the 37th Bn was the most popular Myrrhee Battalion with nine men being assigned to it.
 51

52 The downside for the districts pride in the numbers of men enlisting was the inevitable losses. In total, 13 men
 53 were killed in action, three died of wounds received in action and a further two were lost to sickness. As would
 54 be expected, there were a number of the men discharged as a result of wounding (shell/gun and gas) as well as
 55 a few severe cases of shell shock. With the Districts significant contribution to WWI in terms of men,
 56 particularly the losses, it was not surprising that the district decided to produce a memorial beyond the
 57 conventional Honour Roll. This special memorial took the form of the pictorial Honour Roll for alumni of the
 58 Myrrhee State School and Residents of the District 1914-1920 (below, with related to the service summary in
 59 the following table).

60



Photograph of the Honour Roll Board for the Myrrhee State School and residents of the district for the "World's Greatest War," 1914-1920, for King and Country. Right hand panel provides the number key for the men's photo panels (Photo provided by Ernie Handcock)

61 Despite canvassing a range of Handcock, Evans and Flanigan Myrrhee octogenarians and the Myrrhee School,
 62 I have not been able to ascertain the details of the committee who commissioned the roll, the maker or the year
 63 that it was compiled. A small bronze plaque used to be on the board probably had the date and maker on it
 64 but it has gone missing sometime during the last century. Marian Flanigan again recounts that the decision to
 65 include all those men broadly associated with the district, not just those who attend the Myrrhee School was
 66 somewhat contentious at the time, however I am grateful the committee used an inclusive approach. The
 67 consensus of the current Myrrhee elders is that board was commissioned by the Myrrhee School Committee
 68 in the early 1920's and that it was paid for in the traditional way. That is working bees to cut timber, raffles
 69 and the surplus' from social events.

70 Commissioning of a pictorial honour roll to commemorate the service of the districts men appears to have been
 71 relatively rare. I am aware of only three such honour rolls in Australia. One such is the Willunga (SA) pictorial
 72 Honour Roll that will be a feature of the Australian War Memorial's "After the War" exhibition later this year
 73 (see below). This Honour Roll presents the pictures of 64 servicemen from WWI from the Willunga area
 74 (Maclare Vale, SA). A similar but far larger Honour Roll to that of the Myrrhee School, is the magnificent
 75 Honour Roll in the ANZAC rooms of the Coal Creek Heritage Village in Korumburra, Gippsland. This Honor
 76 Roll Board was produced by local Korumburra photographer Mr A. Pam who presented it to the people of
 77 Korumburra on Armistice Day, November 11th, 1920. It was originally presented to be hung in the Korumburra
 78 Primary School and contains the pictures, within the 6 by 4 foot frame there are 271 portraits; eight are those
 79 of local dignitaries, with the remaining 262 being those of diggers who served during WWI.^[4]
 80



81
 82 The Willunga (South Australia) Honour Roll Board (Picture AWM) which will feature in the 'After the War' exhibition
 83 later in 2018. The board was produced with funds provided by Willunga's Cheer-Up 'girls' and was for permanent
 84 exhibition in the Willunga Agricultural Hall. Willunga is in SA's Maclare Vale that hosts the "Queen stage" of the
 85 Tour Down Under cycling race each year.
 86

87 The Handcock brothers occupy a special place on the Honour Roll. My great uncle, **Capt Gerald Evans** (#12)
 88 wrote to his mother from France 11/6/1916. "The Handcock's must be aggressive, six of them going!" And
 89 that was before another two brothers enlisted over the coming months. Presumably Gerald had seen an article
 90 on this contribution in the local paper, The Wangaratta Chronicle. Newspapers, although 2-3 months old, were
 91 like gold to the men in France to keep in touch with news from back home, so were eagerly shared around.
 92

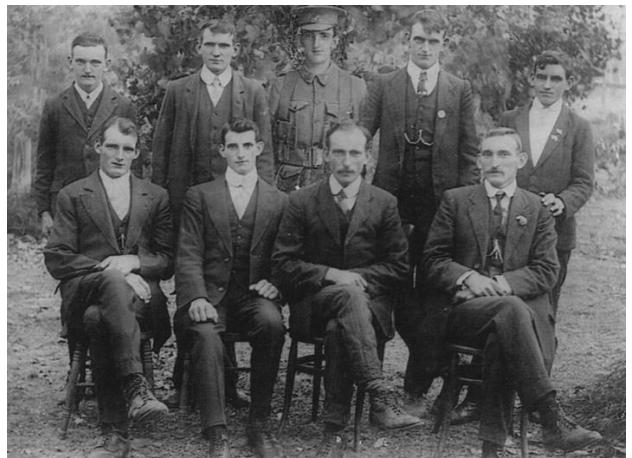
93 Overall, Charles and Harriett Handcock who commenced hop growing in 1893 on the Upper 15 Mile Creek
 94 Rd, Myrrhee, contributed eight men to the AIF. They were in order of enlistment: 1. **Pte Jack** (#39), 2. **Spr**
 95 **Bert** (#41), 3. **Pte Ralph** (#37), 4. **Pte Frank** (#42), 5. **LCpl Charles** (#40), 6. **Pte Henry** (#34), 7. **Pte Fred**
 96 (#44) and 8. **Pte Richard** (#47), see the colorized photo below. The grandson of Henry Handcock, Neville
 97 Handcock, still growing hops on the family property, which is no mean feat given the vicissitudes of the hop
 98 market, particularly over the past 30 years. It was a visit with Henry Handcock's two surviving sons, Ernie
 99 and Vic Handcock, who proudly suggested that I view the Myrrhee School Honour Board.
 100

101 The youngest son, Peter did not enlist as he was too young. Peter is shown in the black and white photo of the
 102 family in early 1915 (below - right, back). As Jack Handcock had already gone overseas, the photographer
 103

104 left a space for him in the back row. He later stripped a photo of Jack in uniform to complete the group. The
 105 only clue to the manipulation is that Jack has no legs shown in the photograph.
 106



The 'aggressive' Handcock Bros 1914-1918 (collage of colourised photos). Back: Bert, John, Frank. Front: Fred, Henry, Richard, Charlie, Ralph (identifications supplied by Vic Handcock, 4/2018).



The Handcock boys c1915 in civilian clothing
 Back: Richard, Fred, John (added later), Ralph, Peter (too young). Front: Bert, Frank, Charles, Henry. (identifications supplied by Vic Handcock, 4/2018).

107
 108 In the media of the day, the family was held up as the epitome of loyalty and patriotism to Australia and the
 109 Empire. After the seventh son (Fred) enlisted The Age (6/7/1916) elevated the family as "an example to
 110 slackers" and trade union strikers, while the Wangaratta Chronicle (21/4/1917) reported that Mr Charles
 111 Handcock was presented with a "handsome solid marble clock as an expression of appreciation and
 112 admiration for the sacrifices they have made in giving their sons so freely and willingly in response to their
 113 Country's Call." The clock was donated to the Wangaratta Historical Society Museum in 1967.^[5]
 114



1. Pte Paul A Haynes
 RN1347, 37th Bn to 59th Bn,
 b 7/1897, E 18/3/1916
 KIA 9/4/1918, LeHamel, France
 P: Albert & Elizabeth Haynes,
 Moyhu/Wangaratta



2. LCpl William Forge
 RN1191, 37th Bn to 59th Bn,
 b 12/1897, E 12/2/1916,
 Dis 10/6/1919
 P: William Forge, Myrrhee



3. Pte Llewellyn Evans
 RN5335, 24th Bn, b 9/1879,
 E 18/3/1916, Dis 30/4/1919
 P: Mrs Elsie Evans, Heidelberg,
 Melbourne



4. LCpl Eric G Kidgell
 RN2497, 16th Bn, b 4/1889 (Qld),
 E 25/5/1915 (Perth)
 Dis 29/4/1916 (Perth),
 d 25/2/1955
 P: Mrs Annie Kidgell, Myrrhee

115 Table abbreviations: Ranks: Pte = Private, LCpl = Lance Corporal, Dvr = Driver, Gun = Gunner, Bomd = bombardier, Sap = Sapper,
 116 Sig = Signaller, Tpr = Trooper, Cpl = Corporal, LSgt = Lance Sergeant, Sgt = Sergeant, Farr Sgt = Farrier Sergeant, CSM =
 117 Company Sergeant Major, Lt = Lieutenant. Honours: MiD = Mentioned in dispatches, MC = Military Cross. Other: Bn = Battalion,
 118 LH = Light horse, Arty = Artillery, Brig = Brigade, Reg = Regiment, RN = Registration number, b = born, E = enlistment, KIA =
 119 Killed in action, DOW = died of wounds, DoI = Died of illness in service OS, Dis = Discharged, d = died after WWI, P = parents or
 120 next of kin
 121

122 Unfortunately, some of the Handcock boys eventually made the supreme sacrifice for King and Country. Pte
 123 Albert **John (Jack) Handcock** (#39), 7th Battalion, was the families first, KIA 2/5/1915 at Lone Pine,
 124 Gallipoli. Jack also had the unfortunate distinction of being the first of the Myrrhee District men to lay down
 125 their life for their Country. For the Handcock's, Jack's loss was bookended by the loss of **LCpl Charles**
 126 **Handcock** (#40), 37-38th Battalion who died of pneumonia (after flu) in Abbeville, France on the penultimate

127 day of the war (10/11/1918), the last of the Myrrhee men to die during WWI. The other Myrrhee man to die
 128 of illness was **Trooper Edward Bryan** (#54) who died of malaria in Egypt on 26/8/1918.
 129

130 Three other Handcock boys were wounded during the war. Most seriously wounded on 6/10/1917 was **Pte**
 131 **Frank Handcock** (#42), wounded at Pozieres on 8/1916 and on the 6/10/1917 during the Battle of Third Ypres
 132 (Passchendaele). Gunshot wounds resulted in his right leg being amputated above the knee and one of his
 133 arms being paralysed. In a letter to the Wangaratta Chronicle (20/2/1918), Frank put on brave face to say, “*it*
 134 *is amusing to see the chaps trying to use their artificial legs,*” and that he was “*anxious to get one to see how*
 135 *I get on.*” Back then physical wounds and severe shell shock (initially begrudgingly) were attended to but
 136 nobody had even thought of PTSD. Tragically Frank took his own life 15 years later, leaving a widow and
 137 four young children behind (The Argus, 24/2/1933). He was by no means alone in this fate.
 138

139 As most of the Myrrhee boys enlisted from early 1915 onwards, so few had the opportunity to serve on
 140 Gallipoli. In some respects, this was fortunate as on Gallipoli the Diggers spent long stretches in the trenches,
 141 food and water were poor, and diseases such as dysentery, flu were rife. Commenting on this ‘good’ fortune,
 142 **Capt Gerald Evans** (#12) wrote to his mother from on the 17/5/1916, while he was in the trenches near
 143 Fromelles. “*The work is fairly strenuous here but they take us out for a spell when we have been here for a*
 144 *while, so it is very different to Gallipoli where they had to stay in the trenches for months on end on bad food,*
 145 *the food is good here.*” Still, as many of the Myrrhee men were to later find, the number and density of shells
 146 would be far greater than at Gallipoli at places such as Pozieres, Bullecourt and Passchendaele.
 147



5. Driver Richard H Bray
 RN9597, 11th Field Eng Coy to
 11th Field Ambulance,
 b 3/1892, E 20/1/1916
 Dis 13/4/1919, d 26/7/1960
 P: Mrs Louisa Bray, SA



6. Gunner Clifford Haynes
 RN1759, 7th Bn to 24th Field
 Arty, b 4/1894, E 4/1/1915
 Dis 17/7/1917^a
 P: Albert & Elizabeth Haynes,
 Moyhu/Wangaratta



7. LCpl Archie Patterson
 RN1257, 37th Bn,
 b 7/1891, E 29/1/1916
 Dis 10/6/1919
 P: Emerson Patterson,
 ‘Wallacedale,’ Myrrhee



8. Driver John T Nolan
 RN597, 1st Divisional Train,
 b 1/1890, E 18/8/1914
 Dis 4/8/1915, d 3/2/1934
 P: John Nolan, Myrrhee



9. Cpl William G Kidgell
 RN2556, 12th Machine Gun Coy
 b 1/1882, E 16/6/1915,
 KIA 6/8/1916 Pozieres, France
 P: Mrs Annie Kidgell, Myrrhee



10. CSM WT Wilf Jarrott
 RN912, 37th Bn, b 1/1896,
 E 11/1/1916, KIA 7/6/1917
 Messines, Belgium
 P: Thomas & Martha Jarrott,
 Myrrhee



11. Gun Gilbert J Simmonds
 RN19882, 8th Field Artillery,
 b 6/1891, E 30/11/1915,
 Dis 30/4/1918 (shell shock)
 P: George Simonds, Burwood,
 Melbourne



12. Capt D Gerald Evans
 MC, MiD, 22nd Bn to 8th Bn,
 b 8/12/1889, E 18/2/1915,
 DOW 20/9/1917
 Battle of Menin Rd, Belgium
 P: John & Elinor Evans,
 ‘Redcamp,’ Myrrhee

149 One of the Myrrhee boys who did get to serve briefly on Gallipoli was **Sgt Bill Usherwood** (#20), a good
 150 friend of Gerald Evans' (#12), had a particularly interesting time just getting to Gallipoli. Gerald's letter to
 151 his mother (29/11/1915) described the boat trip. *"The boat that Bill Usherwood went across in was torpedoed
 152 but only a few men were lost (sic HMT Southland, enroute Egypt to Lemnos). There are three officers with us
 153 now, who were on the boat, the men behaved wonderfully and the ships stokers & engineers rushed the boats.
 154 The captain shot several of them. **Lieut Pearce** (below, sic later Capt, MC, 21st Bn, KIA 4/10/1917, photo
 155 below) who went through the same school of instruction as I did, called for volunteers & went down & kept
 156 the engines going & they managed to beach the prematurely,"* as described by a cobber and in a letter that ended up in the Redcamp archives.



Capt Joseph Pearce MC
 b 2/1886, E 18/3/1915, KIA
 4/10/1917, Third Ypres,
 Zonnebeke, Belgium

"Dear Mr Usherwood, Your letter inquiring for any news which I know concerning your brother and my mate (Sgt. Tom. Usherwood)... Your brother Tom and myself have been mates from when we went into Broadmeadows together and as I had the next section to him we were very seldom apart..... We were fairly lucky for some time and after the first attack we reached our objective with slight loss, the five N.C.O.s of the platoon still going strong. The last words Tom said to me, expecting orders, said to me, "It's a stiff job and has to be done, and we'll do it." We did it but I'll never forget that night..... The last I saw of good old Tom, he was doing splendid work getting his men forward and digging in. It was soon after this that one of the other N.C.O.'s saw him wounded. I wish with all my heart that I could give you more cheerful news but I know that should I ever fall my last wish would be that my dear people should not be kept in suspense. I cannot in anyway say anything else other than that your brother died a good soldier's and man's death." 27th May 1917, letter from an unknown cobber of Bill Usherwood's.

157



13. SQM Sgt James E Kidgell
 RN593, Served Boer War
 B 11/1879, 38 years of age
 1914, d 1915?



14. Cpl Horace Bridger
 RN1143, 37th Bn, b 11/1897,
 E 22/1/1916, Dis 26/3/1918
 P: Joshua Bridger, Plaiston,
 London



15. Pte John M Jarrott
 RN5399, 8th Bn, b 1898,
 E 11/1/1916, Dis 21/3/1919,
 d 24/1/1939, Culcairn NSW
 P: Thomas & Martha Jarrott,
 Myrrhee



16. Bomdr Francis C Kyle
 RN3658, 3rd Field Arty Brigade
 b 2/1884, E 13/10/1914
 Dis 18/5/1918 (gassed)
 P: Mrs Margaret Tuomey,
 Melbourne.

158

159 For many of the Myrrhee men, time out of the line in Egypt and at the Western Front enabled the catching up
 160 with various cobbers in the same or other units. Shortly before being KIA at Messines on 9th July 1917,
 161 Belgium, **CSM William Jarrott** (#10) wrote the following letter to his parent that was published in The
 162 Wangaratta Chronicle where,

163 *"he says he has just been in heavy engagement I which he received a slight wound to the face. His company
 164 received special mention for bravery and he was promoted to Warrant Officer. He was sending home a
 165 souvenir which he took from a pack he seized while making a raid on an enemy trench. **Charlie** (#40) and
 166 **Henry** (#34) **Handcock**, **Leslie** (#17) and **Arnold** (#23) **Forge**, **Jim Leslie** (#26, KIA 20/7/1917) and
 167 **Horace Bridger** (#14) are all with him (sic, in the 37th Bn). The later two are now Corporals. He speaks
 168 of the severity of the winter which lasts for six months in this part of the world, and despite all the clothes
 169 he had on he felt the cold severely. He says he was in the best of spirits and going strong."*

170



17. Pte Leslie Forge
RN1833, 37th Bn,
b 2/1887, E 10/2/1916
Dis 2/7/1919, d 11/8/1951
P: Catherine Forge, Myrrhee



18. Pte Reuben C Rodman
RN2051, 37th Bn,
b 1/1896, E 17/9/1915
Dis 26/8/1919, d 7/9/1974
P: Mrs E J Rodman, Upper
Hawthorn, Victoria (Mother)



19. Pte John E Patterson
RN6079, 3rd Bn, b 4/1886,
E 7/2/1916, DOW 7/5/1917,
Bullecourt, France
P: William & Annie Patterson,
Cookardinia, NSW



20. Sgt TWC Bill Usherwood
RN263, 23rd Battalion,
b 8/1885, E 13/2/1915
KIA 4/8/1916, Pozieres, France
P: Thomas & Annie Usherwood,
Mossiel, NSW



21. Pte Frederick A Foster
RN2002, 55th Bn to 17th Bn
b 3/1889, E 14/1/1916
KIA 15/4/1917, Lagnicourt
France
P: WH & Ada Foster, Forbes,
NSW



22. Pte Charles H Fitch
RN631, 10th MG Coy to 37th Bn,
b 12/1896, E 19/2/1916
Dis 1/3/1919,
P: Charles Fitch, Boxhill,
Melbourne, Victoria



23. LCpl Arnold Forge
RN2063, 37th Bn, to 5th Bn
b 5/1894, E 1/5/1916
Dis 15/5/1919, d 28/7/1963
F: Robert Forge, Myrrhee



24. Pte Walter A Forge
RN3631, 2nd Pioneer Bn,
b 1874, E 12/10/1916
Dis 6/3/1920
F: Robert Forge, Myrrhee
*Married Florrie Ada Rushton,
5/6/1920, London, UK*

171

172 As can be seen from his picture, **CSM William Jarrott** (#10) and in a later portrait in the AWM collection (<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1148380>), was solidly and powerfully built like most of the Jarrott family. The picture of his brother **Pte John Jarrott** (#15) shows a much more finely built and younger man. In a letter to his mother, Gerald Evans remarked on John's suitability for war (29th October 1916), *"Think I told you young Jarrott was with this Battalion now, poor kid, Tommy should have kept him on the crick for a couple more years, he is not developed enough for this game."* Gerald was correct in this assessment as John's service record shows a series of sicknesses and time in England recovering. Still John stuck out the war and served as well as he could.

180

181 Only two men from Myrrhee served as officers. They were **Lt Roy Bailey** (#35, Royal Marines, KIA 5/1/1918) and **Capt Gerald Evans** (#12, 8th Bn, DOW 20/9/1917). Unfortunately, both paid for this responsibility with their lives. Gerald was also the only Myrrhee man to be decorated. Gerald was recommended for the Military Cross three times, finally being awarded his MC for the action at 2nd Bullecourt (8-9th May, 1917). Gerald was also awarded Mentioned in Dispatches for 1st Pozieres (24-28th July 1916) and for leading a successful raid on the 29th September 1916 at Zillebeke near Ypres in Belgium. Perhaps it was the Australians love and enthusiasm for sport that better prepared them for battle.

187



25. Pte AC Lewis
Not found



26. Cpl James F Leslie
RN1223, 37th Bn,
b 10/1893, E 12/2/1916
KIA 20/7/1917,
Neuve Eglise, Belgium
P: James & Isabella Leslie,
Aberdeen, Scotland



27. Bombr Henry White
RN9117, 6th Field Arty Brig,
b 10/1893, E 23/8/1915, KIA
7/8/1916, Pozieres, France
P: William White, Malvern,
Melbourne



28. Cpl Benjamin J Marshall
RN22350, 7th Field Arty Brig,
b 7/1889, E 26/1/1916
Dis 4/6/1919,
P: Benjamin J Marshall,
East Brunswick, Melbourne



Capt Austin Mahony MC, MiD
RN1056, 24th Bn, b 1/1894,
E 8/3/1915, KIA 5/10/1918,
Montbrehain (east of Peronne), France.
Australian Army's final action of WWI

Gerald was a champion sportsman, being a member of the both the prestigious 1st VIII rowing crew and the 1st XVIII football team in 1907 at the Melbourne Grammar School. After school, he returned to Redcamp and played with his brother Evan (Captain) for the Moyhu football team that won the 1909, 1910, 1911 premierships and were runners up in 1912, 1913 and 1914 in the Ovens and King Football League. Match reports in The Wangaratta Chronicle consistently reported his match impact as Moyhu's star ruckman. In the 1913/14 seasons, Hansonville raised and to be **Capt Austin Mahony MC**, joined the Moyhu team. Austin loved football in particular and was reputed to take up any chance to play football on the regular Battalion or Brigade sports days when they were not in the line.^[6] Perhaps also, the sight of these strange Australians apparently risking life and limb playing football was another reason why the Aussie Diggers made such a positive impact on and are still so revered by the citizens of France and Belgium.



29. Dvr Percival J Kidgell
RN853, 4th Field Arty Brig,
b 10/1886, E 28/6/1915
Dis 15/7/1919,
P: Mrs Annie Kidgell,
Myrrhee



30. Sig Francis (Ken) Evans
RN2399, 51st Bn, b 13/10/1884,
E 3/4/1916, KIA 13/10/1917
Zonnebeke, France
P: John & Elinor Evans,
'Redcamp,' Myrrhee



31. Farr Sgt Alex G Patterson
RN7232, 5th Field Arty Brig,
b 8/1883, E 7/9/1915
Dis 28/3/1919,
P: W Patterson, Henty,
NSW



32. Dvr William Southey
RN2092, 8th Field Arty Brig,
b 8/1885, E 10/11/1916
Dis 6/8/1919,
P: W Southey, Chinchilla,
Qld

193 a trench, under fierce in coming fire, and attack at notorious places such as Lone Pine, Pozieres, Bullecourt, Broodseinde, Zonnebeke, Passchendaele, Villers Bretonneax or Mont Saint Quinten.

194
195
196 Gerald's special 'skill' was that he was prepared to face fire and make sound decisions while leading his men.
197 The best understanding of the basics of this ability was given by **Sgt Bill Usherwood** who saw Gerald and the
198 8th Battalion coming out of the line at Pozieres on the 27th of July 1916 and writing to Gerald's brother Evan.

199 "As I said before he had just come out of the warmest corner in this part of the globe, and consequently
200 was somewhat dirty & unshaven and a bit ragged and he hadn't had a sleep for several days.... It means
201 that he has been with his men playing a big part in the biggest game being played in the world today, with
202 the result that his company took & held the most advanced position we hold in our line today and the fact
203 that I saw him tired & dirty is clear proof that he wasn't only showing his men how to play the game but
204 was helping them to play it and it takes a man to do that, a Gentleman and a sportsman, and when we get
205 them for leaders, the rank and file won't fail and the result of the game is never in doubt. Unfortunately,
206 we get too few such."

207 **Sgt Bill Usherwood**, unfortunately would be missing in action, never to be found, little more than a week later
208 at Pozieres on 4th August 1916.
209



33. Dvr Bryan B Hart
RN5069, 8th Field Arty Brig,
b 8/1885, E 19/7/1915
KIA 19/10/1917,^a
Passchendaele Belgium
P: John Hart, Tolmie-Mansfield



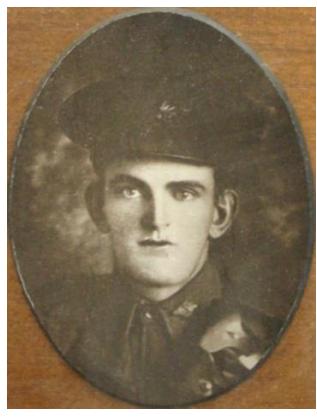
34. Pte W Henry Handcock
RN1846, 38th Bn,
b 4/8/1878, E 27/3/1916,
Dis 30/4/1919
P: Charles & Harriett Handcock,
Myrrhee



35. 2nd Lt Royal HS Bailey
1st Bn, Royal Marines, Light Inf
b 12/1/1887, E 26/06/1917
KIA 5/1/1918, Villiers-Pouich,
France (near Cambrai)
W: Ethel Bailey, Bristol, UK



36. Pte Harry Jones
RN2485, 8th Bn, b 1/1894,
E 17/6/1915, KIA, 18/8/1916
Pozieres, France
P: Mrs Emma Jones, Littleport,
England (Mother)



37. Pte J Ralph Handcock
RN2021, 4th LH Reg/2nd Pioneer
Bn, b 28/9/1894, E 1/10/1915,
Dis 30/6/1919, d 5/3/1989
P: Charles & Harriett Handcock,
Myrrhee



38. Pte Roy Stickels
RN680, 37th Bn,
B12/1892, E 15/3/1916
Dis 27/12/1917 (TB),
P: Edward Stickels, Myrrhee



39. Pte AJ Jack Handcock
RN1350, 7th Bn, b 2/1892,
E 21/9/1914, KIA 2/5/1915,
Lone Pine, Gallipoli
P: Charles & Harriett
Handcock, Myrrhee



40. Sgt Charles Handcock
RN39, 38th Bn – HQ, b 7/1886,
E 7/2/1916, DoI 10/11/1918,
Abbeville, France
P: Charles & Harriett Handcock,
Myrrhee

210 The Evans brothers were fated to meet only one more time in this life and that was at Dernacourt, near Albert
211 in France on the 21st March 1917. As **Sgt Ken (Francis) Evans** (#30, KIA 13/10/1917) described the meeting
212 in a letter to his mother written on 22nd March 1917.

213 "I saw Gerald for a few minutes yesterday. I was marching through a village where his Battalion had been
214 billeted for four days and he happened to be standing on the side of the road, I couldn't stop but we saw

215 *one another at about the same time, and he walked along side me for a good way & we had a bit of a talk,*
 216 *I was more than glad to see him as I have been wishing to for some time & he looks really well. He was*
 217 *leaving there that afternoon and we are moving in the opposite directions at present.”*

219 The Official Diary of the 8th Bn indicated that Gerald was billeted in Dernacourt while Ken's 51st Bn was
 220 moving from Buire-sur-l'Ancre to Mametz on the way to the front line in the region of Vaulx-Vracourt
 221 (28/3/1917 to 13/4/1917). Dernacourt is almost on a direct line between Buire-sur-l'Ancre and Mametz.



41. Spr RE Bob Handcock
 RN3045, 5th Field Co Engineers
 b 8/1887, E 25/3/1915,
 Dis 19/6/1919, d 20/11/1961
 P: Charles & Harriett Handcock, Myrrhee



42. Pte RF Frank Handcock
 RN4177, 21st Bn, b 5/1895,
 E 1/10/1915, Dis 18/4/1918,
 d 23/2/1933
 P: Charles & Harriett Handcock, Myrrhee



43. Sgt Reginald W Minter
 RN6559, 6th Field Amb. to
 3rd Aust Gen Hosp, b 5/1893,
 E 21/4/1915, Dis 19/12/1919
 P: Mr Walter Minter, Forest
 Gate, London, England



44. Pte Fred A Handcock
 RN7568, 1st Tunneling Coy
 b 5/1893, E 20/4/1917,
 Dis 23/7/19, d 18/4/1963
 P: Charles & Harriett Handcock, Myrrhee



45. Pte Fred J Marshall
 RN2368, 44th Bn, b 4/1890,
 E 11/5/1916, Dis 21/2/1918
 P: Emma Marshall, Benalla/
 Wangaratta, Victoria (Sister)



46. Pte Henry Wallace
 RN6835, 5th Bn, b 11/1887,
 E 2/9/1916, Dis 17/3/1919
 P: H Wallace, Hansonville,
 Victoria



47. Pte Richard M Handcock
 RN2634, 2nd Pioneer Bn,
 b 1/1898, E 4/7/1917
 Dis 23/1/1919
 P: Charles & Harriett
 Handcock, Myrrhee



48. Pte Harry Plant
 RN4246, 20th Bn, b 12/1896,
 E 14/10/1915, DOW 20/9/1917,
 Menin Rd, Belgium
 P: Maria Patterson, Myrrhee,
 Victoria

222 And, so it turned out for all the men who enlisted from Redcamp, *Sap Ken Evans* (#30), **Capt Gerald Evans**
 223 (#12), **Sgt Bill Usherwood** (#20) and **Cpl Jim Leslie** (#26), they would all make the ultimate sacrifice for
 224 both King and Country.

225 Acknowledgments

226 I would like the octogenarian elders of Myrrhee, Marion Flanigan, David Evans, Ernie Handcock and Vic
 227 Handcock for their insights and suggestions, without which this article would not have been possible. I would
 228 particularly like to thank Ash Graham and Robyn Kilgour at the Myrrhee Primary School for providing access
 229 to the Myrrhee Primary School Honour Board.



49. LSgt Herbert Simmons
RN6851, 5th Bn, b 10/1881,
E 26/8/1916, Dis 6/11/1919,
P: Mrs MM Simmons (wife),
Noble Park, Victoria



50. Pte Thomas Bowen
RN6851, 8th Bn, b 1/1874,
E 1/1/1917, KIA 20/9/1917,
Battle Menin Rd, Ypres
P: Mrs Mary A Bowen (wife),
Angledool, NSW



51. Pte Leonard Forge
‘Discharged through
sickness in Australia’



52. Pte David C Fleming
RN15896, 2nd/1st Divisional
Signal Coy, b 2/1897,
E 4/10/1916, Dis 8/9/1919,
P: Mrs. Jessie Fleming, King
Valley, Victoria



53. Pte Allan Patterson
Discharged through
accident in Australia?



54. Tpr Edward D Bryan
RN1128, 8th LH Reg.,
b 4/1894, E 9/8/1915,
DoI 28/8/1918, Egypt (malaria)
P: Edmund & Margaret Bryan,
Garfield, Victoria



55. Pte Daniel J Nolan
RN6414, 22nd Bn, b 6/1894,
E 7/10/1916, Dis 5/9/1919,
P: Mr John Nolan, Myrrhee,
Victoria

^a The WWI honour board in the Myrrhee Memorial Hall notes that C Haynes made the “supreme sacrifice” this does not appear to accord with AWM nor The AIF Project records. In addition, B Hart who did make the “supreme sacrifice” and is listed above C Haynes on the Honour Board is not so listed. I suspect the * was inadvertently placed in the wrong place on the Honour board.

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Footnotes and Citations

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1. ANON Crick: ‘on the crick’ is an old Australian colloquialism for a child being nursed in the crook of its parents arm. It is also an expression that can be used as a synonym for a cradle.

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3. Hume, H. Brief statement of the facts in connection with the overland expedition from Lake George to Port Phillip in 1824-1825. Yass: J.J. Brown, 1855.

4. Korumburra Roll of Honour, <https://open.abc.net.au/explore/62033>.

5. Wangaratta Historical Society Museum, The Handcock Clock.
<https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/51e495572162ef201c863909>, 1917.

6. Ganey, M.V. Two captains: from Gallipoli to Montbrehain. Melbourne: Arramu Publications, 2015.

7. Lay, C., P. Diary of Percy Lay, 1914-1918. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1357964?image=1>, 1918.

* ‘Made the supreme sacrifice’