

Edward Thomas Cleary
Uncle of Mary O'Neill's father, Patrick .

Born: 16th March, 1880

Place of Birth: Picton

Fought in the Boer War in South Africa

Regimental Number: 292

Boer War

Edward was evacuated wounded from Blomfontein in Africa. He was carried by bullock wagon to a war hospital - the journey took 3 weeks. He survived the Boer War and volunteered for Gallipoli.

Gallipoli

He was a member of, 12 Light Horse Regiment B Squadron

*NO. 292 Address Picton Rank Pte Age:34 Occupation Railway Shunter
Joined: 12/01/1915*

The Australians and the Turks at War

There are many stories, historical and apocalyptic, of the Australians and the Turks at war. The proximity of the trenches and the size of the battlefields in many ways made this a very intimate war. One of the memorials in the Kabalope Museum was a photo of John Simpson Kirkpatrick with a wounded Turkish soldier on his donkey. Another "Aussie" letter in this Museum describes the Turks as "people" not the enemy.

One of the most impressive statues at Lone Pine is that of a Turkish soldier carrying a wounded allied soldier. When I returned from Gallipoli, I did more research to find the meaning of this statue. It was recorded in the War Annals of Lord Acton. It was an actual incident that took place after a cease fire had been declared, so that all sides could leave the trenches and reclaim their dead and wounded. The soldiers had returned to their trenches and it was the most dangerous time before warfare resumed. A Turkish soldier raised a white garment with his rifle, proceeded to get out of his trench and walk slowly to a soldier, who had not been collected and was still alive. He lifted the soldier from the ground, carried him to the allied trenches, returned to his trench and warfare resumed.

I walked the hills at Gallipoli and was amazed to discover how close the Turk and Allied trenches were. After some months, it was possible for Ted and the soldiers in his trench to recognize the different soldiers voices of the Turkish soldiers. As the war progressed Ted knew that the Turkish soldiers were not getting enough food. The Australians sometimes attached their “bully beef” tins of meat to a piece of string and threw them over to the Turkish trenches. The Turks returned dried apricots.

Ted was wounded at Gallipoli and he had a torn kidney. He was evacuated to the Island of Lemnos and later taken to England. After surgery and recovery, he was declared fit to return to Egypt. He was part of the 12 Light Horsemen Charge at Beersheba.

At Beersheba, he was Batman for Colonel Cameron and Major Featherstonhaugh. This position meant that he looked after and cared for their horses. He had always loved horses. He also ran messages. This was very dangerous as he ran between the trenches. Ted was always a country boy at heart. He loved horses and like all members of The Twelfth Light Horse there was an intimate connection with their horse. Their Charge is documented in

***THUNDERING OF THE HOOVES
History of 12 Australian Light Horse Regiment 1915-1919.***

It broke Ted’s heart when the war ended for the Australian Government declared that the horses would be collateral damage of the war and they would not be transported home.

Ted would not leave his horse in a foreign country, for he saw how badly animals were treated. Like many of the Light Horsemen he gave his horse a final nose-bag of feed, spent his last minutes with the horse, then walked with some of his battalion and their horses into the sea for the last time, shot them with a single bullet and walked from the sea carrying their saddles.

The Horses Stay Behind

***In days to come we’ll wander west and cross the range again;
We’ll hear the bush birds singing in the green trees after rain:
We’ll canter through the Mitchell grass and breast the bracing wind:
But we’ll have other horses. Our horses stay behind.***

*Around the fire at night we'll yarn about old Sinai;
We'll fight our battles over again; and as the days go by
There'll be old mates to greet us. The bush girls will be kind
Still our thoughts will often wander to the horses we left behind.*

*I don't think I could stand the thought of my fancy hack
Just crawling round old Cairo with a "Gyppo" on his back.
Perhaps some English tourist out in Palestine may find
My broken-hearted *waler with a wooden plough behind.*

*I think I'd better shoot him and tell a little lie:
He floundered in a wombat hole and then lay down to die,
Maybe I'll get court-martialed; but I'm damned if I'm inclined
To go back to Australia and leave my horse behind.*

Written by Trooper Bluegum

**'waler' refers to a specific
breed of New South Wales
horses*

*As far as I know, Ted was the only member of our family to fight in The Boer War
and Gallipoli.*

*Ted's brothers Jack and John Cleary also fought in W.W.1. Jack was in The Sixth
Light Horse.*

*My Mother had a brother who fought in W.W.11 – William Mansfield and a cousin
Jack O'Reilly.*

*There are 31 cemeteries on the Gallipoli Peninsula. They contain 22,000 graves,
but it was only possible to identify 9,000.*

*Churchill's view of this campaign was: "A good army of 50,000 man and sea power
– that is the end of the Turkish menace."*

One of the headstones on a grave at Gallipoli reads

*" To live in the hearts
Of those we leave behind
Is not to die."*

And another "O for the touch of a vanished hand."

*It is heartbreaking to remember.
Mary O'Neill.*