

The General Sir Harry Chauvel Foundation

March 2020 Newsletter



There's Movement at the Station... pass the word around

To assist with promoting an area of Australia connected with the Australian Light Horse that was deeply impacted by the recent fires across North-Eastern Victoria, we are promoting attendance at this year's 'The Man from Snowy River Bush Festival'. The first article of this newsletter is directly related to the event and those connected with the heritage of the area. To find out more about the festival, go here (<https://www.bushfestival.com.au/>).

News from the Upper Murray

Visitors to the 2020 Man from Snowy River Bush Festival might consider spending a little time at the Man from Snowy River Museum and the Festival's Art and Photography Exhibition. In the Museum, given pride of place beside the display of the Light Horse artefacts is Major William 'Lauchie' McGrath's officer's service dress uniform on loan from the 8th/13th Victorian Mounted Rifles Regimental Collection.

The Museum holds a small, but diverse assemblage of Light Horse artefacts that offer glimpses into the lives of those from challenging times in our history: the bit from a bridle donated by May McCrohan and

some leather leggings; General Sir Harry Chauvel's mess cutlery; and a kit bag belonging to Trooper D S Reynolds, No 1 Troop, A Squadron, 8th Light Horse. More unusual is the Bridle Bit from a 'Scots Grey Regiment Horse, shot down during the Boer War'. Apparently, the bit was collected by Cecil Davis and carried through the rest of the War in his kit bag. A photograph of the 8th Light Horse, Indi Troop gives the collection its context.

Year 5 and 6 students and teachers of Corryong College published a compilation of biographies of the fifty-seven biographies of those who came from the Upper Murray. Copies are on sale at the Museum and the Information Centre.

Festival visitors might also note that the Louis Laumen equestrian, bronze maquette of Chauvel will be on display in the Art and Photography exhibition in Corryong's Memorial Hall. Also on display will be a small collection containing books, documents and newspaper clippings demonstrating the relationship between Banjo Paterson, the Upper Murray and the Light Horse.

The Museum also prides itself in telling the story of Banjo Paterson's links with the Upper Murray.

The 2019-2020 Bushfires

We commend all the Australian Defence Force efforts to support rural communities at this time of bushfire danger and destruction, and in the recovery phase afterwards. It is good to see the deployment of so many Army Reservists who are helping their local community and farther afield.

It may interest readers to know that Sir Harry himself was caught up in the Black Friday bushfires of January 1939. They threatened the homestead of his daughter Elyne Mitchell ('Towong Hill' near Corryong), where he was visiting at the time, and at the

age of 73 he rode around directing the firefighting effort. According to his biographer Alec Hill, at one point, Sir Harry actually climbed a tree close to the house to hack away burning branches.

Sad to say, while the homestead was saved back then, it did not survive the 2020 bushfires.

We offer our condolences to all Australians who have suffered in the bushfires and their aftermath.

Ref: Alec Hill 'Chauvel of the Light Horse' (MUP 1978), pp. 222-23

Inaugural Light Horse Anthology Award

In December we announced that the 2019 winning article is called 'Major Harry Worthington GMVC'. It describes the life and times of a veterinary surgeon who went to war in the Middle East as part of the Australian Light Horse in World War One. That man was Alan Henderson's uncle, so we are seeing here the fruits of Alan's family history research.



Harry Worthington's service as a vet was essential to the well-being of the horses. Michael Tyquin's book about the Australian Army Veterinary Corps refers to them as 'The Forgotten Men'. The 2019 Chauvel Award winner has contributed significantly to helping expand our knowledge of them and what they did.



The judges commented that Alan's article is "well-written, well-researched and suitably referenced". They considered that "it gave a good sense of the man, as well as of the Sinai-Palestine campaign".

A call for Anthology articles in 2020

Our online Anthology displays articles about Light Horse soldiers, their horses, their families, the communities that they came from - and hopefully were able to return to after the war. It also depicts the Light Horse legend and explores how modern Australians commemorate their exploits, such as the anniversary of the famous Charge at Beersheba.

Each year, the Chauvel Foundation awards a prize to the author who has contributed best to our Anthology. An independent panel of judges recommends the winner from a shortlist of highly commended articles.

We are calling for contributors to offer articles in 2020. See the Chauvel website at

<https://www.chauvelfoundation.com/anthology>

Some suggested topics are:

- * How the troopers and their families re-adjusted to life back home after the war
- * the horses and the remount depots,
- * Banjo Paterson's work with the Light Horse and his poetry
- * keen Light Horsemen who volunteered to become pilots in the Aust Flying Corps

- * Book reviews about the Light Horse, and articles about family members or local lads, are also always welcome

Book Release

Dr Anne Flood, The History of the 1st Light Horse Regiment A.I.F. 1916 – 1919: In the Footsteps of the First

Dr Anne Flood's recently published *The History of the 1st Light Horse Regiment A.I.F. 1916 - 1919* is a meticulously researched and lovingly written tribute to the men of the 1st Light Horse and an excellent resource for their descendants, historians and interested readers. Anne has clearly been to great effort to ensure she has included the best possible photographs and maps enabling her readers to build an excellent picture of the Firsts day-to-day challenges and their lives during the Palestine Campaign between 1916 until the end of the First World War on 11th November 1918. Anne takes her reader right up to the 1st Light Horse Regiment's homecoming in 1919. Anne draws heavily on the 1st Light Horse Regimental Diary and other primary source material and ably provides necessary explanations, making the book not only readable, but also enjoyable and informative for the layperson. Anne has dedicated her book to the memory of Frederick Henry Wood and her father Frederick Noel Wood - she has

done them proud. The book can be sourced at the Australian War Memorial and directly from Anne Flood anneflo@tpg.com.au (mailto:anneflo@tpg.com.au).

President's Remarks

It has been a tough summer in so many ways for all of our communities. While it is reminiscent of the many challenges of bygone eras, it does not make the present experience any less raw. I am hopeful that the remainder of 2020 is something that we can look forward to.

The New Year is bringing the Foundation's objectives into focus.

We are reviewing the composition of the Board to ensure that we have the right mix of skills to set us on the path for the future. Our Board has some very dedicated and hardworking members however, there is an urgent need for the appointment of a Secretary and if there is any one among our followers who has time, enthusiasm, some knowledge of the military and is familiar with secretarial duties in particular the statutory matters of an Incorporated Association then, I invite you to contact me. You can work from home and you only need to be prepared to attend Board meetings on a bimonthly basis.

During the year ahead events are being planned to provide you with the opportunities to hear more about Chauvel and the first of these will be our attendance at "The Man from Snowy River Bush Festival" to be held in Corryong from 2nd – 5th April. You are encouraged to be there even if only for a day to support the Festival and the district of Corryong.

I also would like to confirm Dr Anne Flood who has just launched her book about the 1st Australian Light Horse Regiment has accepted to be appointed as an Ambassador for the Foundation. Anne lives in Wagga Wagga.

Also appointed as an Ambassador is Mrs Susan Meyer whose uncle was a member of the 4th Light Horse Regiment and who has compiled an extensive collection of his letters written during his service during the war and she has printed them along with her collection of photos. Susan lives in Drysdale.

We will continue to promote the memory of Sir Harry and his leadership through tough

times in the hope that by drawing on his example, we can take some courage to meet the challenges ahead. There will be further news of our progress in subsequent newsletters. For the moment, a word or two about the Light Horse Anthology.

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Each year, the Chauvel Foundation awards a prize to the author who has contributed best to our Anthology. An independent panel of judges recommends the winner from a shortlist of highly commended articles.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the three Anthology Award judges for 2019:

MAJGEN Iain Spence CSC RFD (Retd) who is a university academic and historian and also Colonel Commandant of a modern Army Reserve unit with Light Horse predecessors. At the time of sending this newsletter, I have been advised that MAJGEN Spence has passed away on 28 February 2020. We wish to pass on our sincere condolences to his family.

Dr Bob Marmion, a historian with the Fort Queenscliff Museum and Historical Association

Craig Tibbitts, research project manager at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra

Lieutenant Colonel Graeme Smith RFD
President
Chauvel Foundation

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