

# Six degrees of separation

By Melanie Murphy (2018)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P08497.001

*This story is dedicated to my Great Uncle, Corporal George Arthur Mills (Archie) (25 February 1877-4 October 1917), to my much loved Auntie Gladys Dawn Mills (Glad) (2 May 1929-23 October 2017) and to all the men and women who served during World War 1 for my freedom.*

*This story has been inspired by my research into my Great Uncle's service and sacrifice during World War 1 as part of my Frank MacDonald Memorial Prize study tour of Belgium and France in April 2018. The story is based on facts uncovered, but also on my informed interpretation of letters, documents, articles and events. Parts of this story have been inspired by "Up At Quinn's" by Jane Greenwood.*

## Six Degrees of Separation

By Melanie Murphy

He could hear the thunder rumbling in the distance just beyond the thirsty landscape. Brief flashes of light penetrated his closed eyelids. He knew it would be here soon as, where he came from – wheat country<sup>1</sup> - the cicadas always fell silent before the rain. “About time,” he mumbled to himself as he stumbled out of his warm bed and into the thick pre-dawn air. He stood under the generous veranda of his homestead. Waiting. Listening. Soon, it came. Slow and steady at first and then in rapid thuds as the raindrops penetrated the parched earth and drummed on his iron roof. Relief washed over him. It’s over, he thought. The drought is finally over.

\*\*\*\*

Fragments of memories fluttered through his mind as he stood shoulder to shoulder with others of the 8th battalion (F company)<sup>2</sup>, waiting in sombre silence for the order to advance. The calm before the storm, he thought, much like the cicadas.

Just three years earlier he’d crowded aboard the early morning train<sup>3</sup> (from St Arnaud to Broadmeadows) with his mates and brother Syd (Sydney Gordon)<sup>4</sup> amid a sea of well-wishers. A band had led the procession from the St Arnaud Town Hall<sup>5</sup> to the station playing *Australia Will be There*, though he scarcely heard it for the beating of his own heart. At one stage he was hoisted on someone’s strong shoulders and carried along by the crowd. He remembers his mother waving a handkerchief and his six siblings<sup>6</sup> blowing kisses as the train pulled away from the platform. *Goodbye Arch! Good luck! God be with you, son!* He pushed the memory back and locked it up again. It was too hard to bear. Perhaps later there would be time.

Here it was still dark. The outline of the ridge at the top of a gradual rise in the ground – his objective<sup>7</sup> – was only faintly visible against the deeper blackness of the sky. The men shifted uncomfortably. The waiting was the worst. When the nerves got to you it made standing still almost impossible. Although, he thought, he was the calmest of all the lads – on the surface at least. Even when he came close at Gallipoli during the second wave when it seemed to rain bullets (and one pierced his neck)<sup>8</sup>, he still managed to joke and flirt with the nurses in Egypt<sup>9</sup>. He was single after all. In between fighting back on the beachhead and the evacuation (in December) he had a few other close shaves, such as when a bullet scalped

---

<sup>1</sup> Lowe's Loose Bag, St Arnaud. He was a farmer (as per Appendix: Figure 1), and research shows St Arnaud had many wheat farmers during this era. <http://www.victorianplaces.com.au/st-arnaud>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/showPerson?pid=209409>

<sup>3</sup> See “extract from St Arnaud Mercury” 28-9-1914 (Appendix: Figure 2)

<sup>4</sup> Appendix: Figure 3a and Figure 3b

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix: Figure 4

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix: Figure 5

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.smh.com.au/national/heroes-at-the-gate-of-no-return-20100423-tj4c.html>

<sup>8</sup> Appendix: Figure 6

<sup>9</sup> Appendix: Figure 7

him and the time he was buried by an eight-inch shell<sup>10</sup>. He had even boasted to his mother that “shells can burst all around me and still I go on without ducking my head.”<sup>11</sup> Even after experiencing the horrors of the Western Front (France 4 January 1917) he still wrote home that:

*“You can get used to anything in wartime. I can sleep through the heaviest bombardment and wake up to find the hut next door blown out of existence”.*<sup>12</sup>

Of course these near misses had affected him. How could they not? But after being promoted to Corporal (August 1915)<sup>13</sup> he knew he had to step up for the boys which, at times, verged on cockiness. Morale and mateship were his way of coping and, as such, he enjoyed creating light-hearted moments amid the gruelling monotony of war, especially as many of them were his mates. He was known for making jokes about the bloody flies: “Don’t worry too much, son. You can’t stop ‘em. You’ll even find they give the bully a bit of flavour.” This strong and confident character shone through in his letters home:

*“Well I, for one, am more determined than ever to win...The boys are alright, singing like sky larks and are quite cheerful in the trenches. ... and when I have time I work on a tunnel I am making for winter quarters for myself, Bob Dickie, Ted Shunkie, Ern Knowledge and two others you do not know.....” (30 Nov 1915).*<sup>14</sup>

Those men, those friends, kept him alive. Gosh they had had some fun. A smile forms on his lips as he remembers the time in Gallipoli when his lads had thrown tins of bully beef into the Turks’ trenches instead of grenades - and the Turks had thrown cigarettes back. With the aid of an interpreter he had cheekily asked the Turks to surrender<sup>15</sup>, but half an hour later they were exchanging bullets again. It was good to have a worthy enemy, Arch thought, but it made it hard knowing they were really just like you.

Sometimes he did take the humour a touch too far. Like the time his joke backfired and he was hospitalised in France at the start of the battle at Pozieres with an accidental bayonet wound to the stomach<sup>16</sup>. That wasn’t the only time he had been admitted to hospital as the result of a questionable decision. Far from it. Like all the Anzacs, he was fascinated by the strange and exotic sights of Egypt. His curiosity and boredom got the better of him, even after warnings about the fact that “soldiers always face danger on active service: Clap from the harlots and bullets from the enemy.” They weren’t far wrong<sup>17</sup>.

---

<sup>10</sup> Appendix: Figure 8

<sup>11</sup> Appendix: Figure 9

<sup>12</sup> Appendix: Figure 10

<sup>13</sup> Appendix: Figure 11

<sup>14</sup> Appendix: Figure 9

<sup>15</sup> Appendix: Figure 8

<sup>16</sup> Appendix: Figure 12a and 12b

<sup>17</sup> Appendix: Figure 13

In between the light-hearted moments (and hospital visits), he had put his head down and led the boys with confidence, even being mentioned in despatches for a very successful raid on enemy trenches (30 September 1916)<sup>18</sup>. But it did take a toll. While in front of the boys he put on an act of bravado and humour, in the stillness of the night, when the guns fell silent, he would often wonder how much more he could take. How many more friends could he watch suffer and die? How many more times would he have to wonder if this would be the day his number would be up? It was pure torment. For Arch the war was as much a physical fight as a mental one. And he was growing weary.

\*\*\*\*

The front was strangely quiet on the night of 3 October 1917<sup>19</sup>. The full moon shone brightly until a change in the wind brought low clouds with it. Soon after midnight it began to rain. Although relatively little rain had fallen prior, the battleground of Broodseinde was awash. Continuous shelling had pulverised the earth, causing the many small streams which flowed there to break from their usual paths and flood the ground. Arch and his mates had worked their way over the shell-blighted and swampy bed of the Zonnebeke Valley using the duckboards as a guide throughout the night. Now, standing together, a grey dawn slowly crept over the ridge.

He finally brought out of its hiding place his memory of the last time he saw his family; their faces tear-stained and proud. *Miss you Floss, Nell, Ernie, Eddie, Addy and Maud. Miss you Mum.* He hadn't let them come to wave them off at the ship, Benalla, as he knew it would make it too hard for him and Syd to leave. No one wanted them to go, but no one stopped them. They all knew the seriousness of what he was fighting for.

\*\*\*\*

Zero hour was set for 6am. Any minute now, Arch thought. I'm tired of waiting.

From his left he heard the shouts as the first wave leapt from their trenches. "Hoo roo boys," Arch encouraged, attempting to disguise the quiver in his voice. Now, as he waited for his turn, the air was suddenly still, like the moment when the cicadas were silent before rain.

\*\*\*\*

He could hear the thunder-like rumbling of the heavy guns in the distance. Brief flashes of light penetrated his closed eyelids as he clasped his gun. He knew it would be here soon. Finally the whistle blew. "About time," he mumbled to himself as he stumbled up and over

---

<sup>18</sup> Appendix: Figure 14

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/battles\\_broodseinde.html](http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/battles_broodseinde.html)  
<https://natlib.govt.nz/blog/posts/now-so-long-sister-mine-my-family-s-passchendaele-story>

the parapet and into the thick mud and damp dawn air. For a brief moment it almost felt as though time stood still under the generous expanse of the waking sky. Soon, it came. Slow and steady at first and then in rapid thuds as the shells penetrated the earth around him<sup>20</sup> and gunfire drummed through the ragdoll bodies of his mates. Relief washed over him. It's over, he thought. The fight is finally over<sup>21</sup>.


---

<sup>20</sup> Appendix: Figure 15a and Figure 15b

<sup>21</sup> Appendix: Figure 16a, Figure 16b and Figure 16c

# Appendix

*Duplicate* CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

AUSTRALIAN  MILITARY FORCES. 3 MO

## AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. 416 Name George Arthur Mills  
 Unit 8th Bn. A.I. Forces  
 Joined on 26/8/14

*Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.*

1. What is your Name? ... 1. Geo Arthur Mills
2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born? ... 2. In the Parish of Conover West in or  
near the Town of St. Arnaud  
in the County of River Ravi
3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown.) ... 3. Yes
4. What is your age? ... 4. 35 6/12
5. What is your trade or calling? ... 5. farmer
6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? ... 6. No
7. Are you married? ... 7. No
8. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) ... 8. (Mother) H. Mills  
G. Mills - Lower Loose Bag  
St. Arnaud
9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? ... 9. No
10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Incorrigible and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with Disgrace from the Navy? ... 10. No
11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge ... 11. one day war in Camp & Rifle Club
12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? ... 12. No
13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? ... 13. No
14. (For married men and widowers with children)—  
Do you understand that no Separation Allowance will be issued to you either before or after embarkation during your term of service? ... 14. —

George Arthur Mills do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to allot not less than two-fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during my service for the support of my wife and children.\*

Date 25/8/14 G. A. Mills  
Signature of person enlisted.

D. 37/6.14 - C. 10220. \*This clause should be struck out in the case of unmarried men or widowers without children under 18 years of age.

Figure 1

Figure 2

A 85216

AUSTRALIAN



MILITARY FORCES.

# AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

## Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

695

Name Mills Sydney Gordon

47

Unit ~~8th Br. I.A.F.~~ Ang. Prov Corp

Joined on 21/8/14

### Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

What is your Name? Mills Sydney Gordon

In or near what Parish or Town were you born? ... 2. In the Parish of Coonover Bush in or near the Town of St Arnaud in the County of Geelong

Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown.) ... 3. Natural Born

What is your age? ... 4. 24 yrs.

What is your trade or calling? ... 5. Farmer

Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? ... 6. no

Are you married? ... 7. no

Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) ... 8. Charles James Isaac Bay Via St Arnaud

Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? ... 9. no

Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Incorrigible and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with Disgrace from the Navy? ... 10. no

Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge ... 11. 2 1/2 years Corporal in Rangor.

Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? ... 12. yes

Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? ... 13. no

(For married men and widowers with children)— Do you understand that no Separation Allowance will be issued to you either before or after embarkation during your term of service? ... 14. no

I, Sydney Gordon Mills do solemnly declare that the above answers made me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to allot not less than two-fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during my service the support of my wife and children.\*

Date 21/8/14

S. G. Mills

Signature of person enlisted.



Figure 3a: <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=7981270>



Figure 3b: Brother: 695 Pte Sydney Gordon MILLS, Australian Provost Corps, returned to Australia, 16 December 1918.

[https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/83124035/person/40508673552/media/70a9441f-2c0f-484c-a4a6-b2fddbc00728?\\_phsrc=nKX19&\\_phstart=successSource](https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/83124035/person/40508673552/media/70a9441f-2c0f-484c-a4a6-b2fddbc00728?_phsrc=nKX19&_phstart=successSource)



Figure 4

WIFE		HOCKING, Harriet			
Born	1 Oct 1853	Place	Adelaide S-P		
Chr.		Place			
Died	15 June 1918	Place	Coonooer West		
Bur.	18 June 1918	Place	St. Annaud		
WIFE'S FATHER	HOCKING, Nicholas				
WIFE'S OTHER HUSBANDS					
SEX	CHILDREN		WHEN BORN		
M	List Each Child (Whether Living or Dead) in Order of Birth		DAY	MONTH	YEAR
F	SURNAME (CAPITALIZED) GIVEN NAMES				
1	F	MILLS, Sarah <i>Jess</i>	12	Apr	1873
2	F	MILLS, Ellen <i>Nell Arch</i>	17	Jan	1875
3	M	MILLS, George Arthur	25	Feb	1877
4	M	MILLS, Ernest	28	Dec	1878
5	F	MILLS, <del>Adelaide</del> George Edgar	29	Feb	1881
		MILLS, Adelaide	7	Feb	1885
		MILLS, Maud	3	Feb	1889
		MILLS, Sydney Gordon	26	Nov	1890
No 695 PRIVATE, REGIMENT OR CORPS.					
DISCHARGED 24.03.1919 - SERVED					

Figure 5

Information from Ian Bruce Hubble's personal collection.

Army Form B. 103. Regimental Number 416

**Casualty Form - Active Service.**

Rank Cpl Private Surname MILLS Christian Name George Arthur

Regiment or Corps "G" Coy 8th Battalion A.I.F.

Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Age on Enlistment \_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months

Enlisted (a) 26.8.14 Terms of Service (a) \_\_\_\_\_ Service reckons from (a) 26.8.14

Date of promotion to present rank \_\_\_\_\_ Date of appointment to lance rank \_\_\_\_\_

Extended ( ) Re-engaged ( ) Qualification (b) \_\_\_\_\_  
or Corps Trade and rate \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Officer \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Report From whom received	Report	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks
		Embarked ...			
		Disembarked ...			
	O.C. Troops "Clan McGillivray"	Embkd to join M.E.F. Gallipoli Campaign	Alexandria	5.4.15	
2.5.15	C.O. 8th Bn.	WOUNDED	Anzac	25.4.15	B213 No. 32 2.5.15
30.4.15	1st A.G.H.	Wounded Neck Adm	Heliopolis	30.4.15	A36 Ad. 30.4.15 M.F.C. 1589 DO. Pt. 2 47
1.5.15	do	Trans to No. 2 A.G.H. Mesa	do	1.5.15	DO. pt. 2 47
5.6.15	No. 2 A.G.H. Hos. GSW. Back	Adm.	Ghezireh	1.5.15	DO. 88
26.6.15	do	Discharged to duty	Cairo	22.6.15	C. 1977
15.8.15	C.O. 8th Bn.	Promoted to Lance Cpl	Gallipoli	13.8.15	B213 DO. Pt. 2 83 (2)

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section D, Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered in this form.

(b) Signaller, Store, Signaller, etc.

W. 1029-10278 2000a 9/17 (1914), C. P. & S., Ltd., Form B/103 2/11/1917 P.T.O.

---

Date 24/8/14

Place Broadmeadows

W. K. Bolton Capt  
Signature of Examining Medical Officer.

**CERTIFICATE OF COMMANDING OFFICER.**

I CERTIFY that this Attestation of the above-named person is correct, and that the required forms have been complied with. I accordingly approve, and appoint him to "A" Coy 8th Battalion

Date 26 August 1914 W. K. Bolton Col.

Place Broadmeadows Commanding 8th Battalion A.I.F.

Figure 6

8  
Army Form B. 103. C

**Casualty Form—Active Service.**

1 of 2000  
Class  
The Army

Embarked to join Alexandria 2/4/15.

W. 4492-542-000-000-9-14-G.A.T.S. Paris B. 1251. H. E. 8. EIGHTH BATTALION

Regiment or Corps 6 Coy 8th Bn A.I.F. Caled 8/5/15.

Regimental No. 416 Rank Repl Name George Arthur Mills

Enlisted (a) 26/8/14 Terms of Service (a) \_\_\_\_\_ Service reckons from (a) 26/8/14

Date of promotion to } \_\_\_\_\_ Date of appointment } \_\_\_\_\_ Numerical position on }  
present rank } to lance rank } roll of N.C.Os. }

Extended \_\_\_\_\_ Re-engaged Sheet 1 Qualification (b) \_\_\_\_\_

Report	Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place	Date	Remarks taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents.
Date <u>2/5/15</u> From whom received <u>2088</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Angaz</u>	<u>25/4/15</u>	<u>B 213 no 32 2/5/15</u>
<u>24/15</u> <u>Adm</u> <u>Wounded neck</u>	<u>adm</u>	<u>Salt Lake</u>	<u>24/4/15</u>	<u>A 26 Ad. 30/4/15</u> <u>M.F.C. 1589</u> <u>D.O. Part 2, 47</u>
<u>15</u> <u>Do</u>				<u>Transferred to no 2 Coy</u> <u>Hpl Mon 1/5/15</u> <u>D.O. Part 2, 47</u>
<u>15</u> <u>N° 2</u> <u>Aux Coy</u>	<u>G. S. W. Beck</u>	<u>Salt Lake</u>	<u>24/4/15</u>	<u>Adm. 4/6/15</u> <u>Report recd 4/6/15</u> <u>11/5/15</u> <u>No. 88</u>
<u>6/6/15</u> <u>Do.</u>	<u>G. S. W. Beck</u>	<u>Do</u>	<u>Do</u>	<u>Adm. 11/5/15</u> <u>Discharged to duty</u> <u>11/6/15</u>
<u>26/8/15</u> <u>N° 2.</u> <u>Gen Hq.</u> <u>Leveh</u>	<u>Discharged</u> <u>To Duty</u>	<u>Cairo</u>	<u>22/6/15</u>	<u>C. 1977</u>
<u>5/4/15</u> <u>90. 8th</u> <u>Battn</u>	<u>Promoted to</u> <u>Lance Corporal</u>	<u>Salt Lake</u>	<u>12/8/15</u>	<u>B 213</u> <u>D.O. Part 2, 13(c)</u>

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section D, Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.

(b) e.g., Signaller, Shoing Smith, etc., etc., also special qualifications in Technical Corps duties.

Signature of Person Enlisted. Mills

Date 24/8/15

Place Broadmeads

Signature of Examining Medical Officer. W. Macken Capt

CERTIFICATE OF COMMANDING OFFICER.

I CERTIFY that this Attestation of the above-named person is correct, and that the required forms have been complied with. I accordingly approve, and appoint him to 6th Coy 8th Battalion

Signature of Attesting Officer. W. K. Bolton Col.

Date 26 August 1915

Place Broadmeads

Commanding 8th Battalion A.I.F.

Figure 7

St Arnaud Mercury (Vic. : 1914 - 1918), Saturday 5 February 1916, page 4

### A SOLDIER'S LETTER.

PRIVATE G. A. MILLS.

Writing from Lunnoe Island, Private G. A. Mills in a letter to his sister states:—We have left the trenches, where for a while matters were exciting. I was blown over with a bomb once; hit on the head with a bullet another time—but it was only on top and just cut through my scalp; and I was buried by an 8 inch shell another time. This all happened within a week. A few days afterwards a piece of shell landed on my coat-tail. I was lying on my back reading when a big jagged lump of shell dropped. On another occasion I had just taken my men off the post and was a few yards away when I heard an explosion, and on going to investigate I noticed that the post was blown down and ammunition and bombs scattered everywhere. It would have killed some of us for certain if had been posted. Water is very scarce. I sleep in my clothes and equipment every night. Syd and Tom came and had a dose of shell fire. They were then sent back to Egypt. Hard luck for them, wasn't it? I get the papers pretty regularly. Our lads and the Turks had a bit of fun. We throw tins of beef into their trenches, and they throw cigarettes at us. By the aid of an interpreter, we had a confab. We asked them to surrender, but they declined.

Figure 8

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/92100862?searchTerm=Private%20G%20A%20Mills%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20&searchLimits=>

St Arnaud Mercury (Vic. : 1914 - 1918), Saturday 5 February 1916, page 4

---

A SOLDIER'S LETTER, PRIVATE G. A. MILLS. Writing from Lemnos Island, Private G. A. Mills in a letter to his sister states:--We have left the trenches, where for a while matters were exciting. I was blown over with bomb once; hit on the head with a bullet another time--but it was only on top and just cut through my scalp; and I was buried by an 8 inch shell another time. This all happened within a week. A few days after-wards a piece of shell landed on my coat tail. I was lying on my back reading when a big jagged lump of shell dropped. On another occasion I had just taken my men off the post and was a few yards away when I heard an explosion, and on going to investigate I noticed that the post was blown down and ammunition and bombs scattered everywhere. It would have killed some of us for certain if had been posted. Water is very scarce. I slept in my clothes and equipment every night. Syd. and Tom came and had a dose of shell fire, They were then sent back to Egypt. Hard luck for them, wasn't it? I get the papers pretty regularly. Our lads and the Turks had a bit of fun. We threw tins of beef into their trenches, and they threw cigarettes at us. By the aid of an interpreter, we had a confab. We asked them to surrender, but they declined,

St Arnaud Mercury (Vic. : 1914 - 1918), Wednesday 23 February 1916, page 4

---

A SOLDIER'S LETTER, CORPORAL G. A. MILLS, Mrs, H. Mills, of Dooboobetic, is in receipt of a letter from her son, Corporal G. A. Mills, under date November 30th, 1915, Anzac, as follows:-I am still alive and kicking. The spell has done me a wonderful lot of good. I was feeling rather bad when we left for the Rest Camp, but now shells can burst all around me and still I go on without ducking my head. I used to duck at one time, but I think no sleep was the cause of it. Snow has been falling for two or three days, and the cold was very severe. Only a few days previously I had to go into the shade while having dinner. Since then there have been real hard frosts. I was sent out to bring an outpost in. The hills are very steep, and steps have to be cut into them. I fell half a dozen times, and sometimes rolled over and over. When I got to the bottom I had to turn sharp round and go up a gorge, where a regular torrent of water was rushing down, but I got back with the men all covered in mud from head to heel. You will think we have tackled a hard job. Well, I for one am more determined than ever to win. The boys are alright, singing like sky larks, and are quite cheerful in the trenches. I am guarding some ammunition at present, and when I have time I work on a tunnel I am making for winter quarters for myself, Bob Dickie, Ted Shunkie, Ern. Knowles, and two others you do not know. I am in charge of the men, and no one comes near us much, I heard our Xmas mail was sunk. Well it was a pity, for I sent several letters by that mail, I have not heard from Syd, for a fortnight, but as he is not here he will be alright, not that I am in much danger, I wish you all a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year.

## A SOLDIER'S LETTER.

CORPORAL G. A. MILLS.

Mrs. H. Mills, of Doobobotto, is in receipt of a letter from her son, Corporal G. A. Mills, under date November 30th, 1915, Anzio, as follows:—I am still alive and kicking. The spoil has done me a wonderful lot of good. I was feeling rather bad when we left for the Best Camp, but now shells are burst all around me and still I go on without ducking my head. I used to duck at one time, but I think no sleep was the cause of it. Snow has been falling for two or three days, and the cold was very severe. Only a few days previously I had to go into the shade while having dinner. Since then there have been real hard frosts. I was sent out to bring an outpost in. The hills are very steep, and steps have to be cut into them. I fell half-a-dozen times, and sometimes rolled over and over. When I got to the bottom I had to turn sharp round and go up a gorge, where a regular torrent of water was rushing down, but I got back with the men all covered in mud from head to heel. You will think we have tackled a hard job. Well, I for one am more determined than ever to win. The boys are alright, singing like sky-larks, and are quite cheerful in the trenches. I am guarding some ammunition at present, and when I have time I work on a tunnel I am making for winter quarters for myself, Bob Dickie, Ted Shunkie, Erv. Knowler, and two others you do not know. I am in charge of the men, and no one comes near us much. I heard our Xmas mail was on. Well it was a pity, for I sent several letters by that mail. I have not heard from Syd, for a fortnight, but as he is not here he will be alright, not that I am in much

will be alright, not that I am in much danger. I wish you all a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year.

Figure 9

3

February 1916

Letter from **Corporal G A Mills** writing to his sister from Lemnos Island[no date]

*"We have left the trenches, I was blown over with a bomb hit on the head with a bullet only just cutting my scalp and I was buried by a 8 inch shell another time, all within a week. A few days later a shell landed on my coat tail, I was lying down reading at the time. Then on just leaving a post, an explosion blew it up. Water is very scarce. Syd and Tom have been here and have now gone back to Egypt. We had a bit of fun with the Turks, we threw them our tins of beef and they threw us cigarettes. With the aid of an interpreter we had a conflag. We asked them to surrender, they said no."*

14-9-1916

Death At St Arnaud Hospital **Vera Mills** eldest daughter of Ernest and Emma Mills of Coonoor West. Aged 2 years 8 months. The funeral will leave the residence of Mrs John Perry, Butcher st, St Arnaud, at 2 pm on Saturday.

Mr & Mrs H Mills and Mr & Mrs M Knight of Terrapee and two Mills grandchildren – Vera & Alice – daughters of Mr F. Mills had been visiting John Claxton of Coonoor East. They were just leaving when the noise of the brake on a wheel frightened the horse, which bolted. Mr Knight who was driving and Mrs Knight and Alice were thrown out at a turn in the road. The horse rushed on and at the next corner, a few chains away. Mrs Mills and Vera were thrown out. Vera was severely injured when her head struck the tyre of one of the wheels. She was knocked unconscious. Mrs Mills was badly bruised and shaken. Mr & Mrs Knight suffered severely. Alice was not hurt. The horse continued until the buggy crashed into a tree. Vera was brought to the St Arnaud Hospital but she never regained consciousness. She died at 9 o'clock the next morning. An inquest was held by Mr F E Davies, J P.

3-3-1917

Letter from Private **Archie Mills** of Coonoor Bridge writing from France 4-1-1917 – He has been out of the trenches for a weeks. When he took bad he was in charge of the platoon, the platoon Sergeant having been promoted to S M. The men are a fine lot. When in England on leave he saw **Syd and Tom Harley**. 'You can get used to anything in wartime. I can sleep through the heaviest bombardment and wake up to find the hut next door blown out of existence. I didn't hear a thing. Kind regards to all my friends.'

15-3-1917

In a letter by Lance- Corporal Charles Alexander of St Arnaud from Delhi Hospital, Tidworth, and dated 1-12-1916 – He met **Arch Mills** of Coonoor Bridge at the First Dressing Station in France. He has a slight bayonet wound.

20-7-1917

The survivors of the original Anzacs- men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Division who embarked for the front in October 1914 – have completed 1,000 days service overseas. There were 20,000 men when they sailed from Australia and there are 5,000 still at their posts. Volunteers are called for to take their places – you can pick which soldier you want to replace – Among the list of names – **Corporal G A Mills, Private S C Mills, & Private T Harley**.

21-11-1917

Word has been received that **Corporal G A Mills** was killed in action on 4<sup>th</sup> October, age 40 years. He is the son of Mrs Mills of Dooboobetic. He was one of the original Anzacs, enlisting at the outbreak of the war, he served for over 3 years.



Figure 10

Unit		Report		Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks
Date	From whom received	Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B219, Army Form A 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.				Taken from Army Form B219, Army Form A36, or other official documents.
29.8.16	C.O. 8th. Bn.	Promoted to Corporal		Gallipoli	23.9.16	B213 DO.88/
7.1.16	O.C. Troops	Disembkd ex "Empress of Britain"		Alexandria	7.1.16	D.3460
4.3.16	C.O. 8th. Bn.	To be Temp Sgt. to complete establishment		Serapeum	26.2.16	B213/76 AP.5 DO.27/2701
11.3.16	do	Reverts to Cpl on Sgt Dillow rejoining Bn.		do	9.3.16	B213/77 AP.5
26.3.16	O.C. Troops "Megantic"	Proceeded to join B.E.F.		Alexandria	26.3.16	AP.6460
31.3.16	do	Disembarked at		Marseilles	31.3.16	LR.5163
29.7.16	C.O. 8th. Bn.	Wounded in Action		France	24.7.16	AQ.1341/B213
26.8.16	29 C.C.S.	Bayonet Wd. Abdomen Adm & tld to No.16 A.T.		do	24.7.16	AK.234/10
30.7.16	16 Gen Hosp	Bayonet Wd. Abdomen Acc. Adm Treport			24.7.16	AT.1877/31 C 5.8.16.
13.8.16	do	do do To Con Depot		do	12.8.16	AM.8/36
13.10.16	3 Con Depot	Discharged to duty Etaples		-	19.8.16	AK.341/22
22.8.16	1st. A.D.E.D.	Joined from Hosp		Etaples	22.8.16	AK.234/1
11.9.16	do	Proceeded to join Unit		do	4.9.16	AK.234/37
8.9.16	C.O. 8th. Bn.	Joined Bn.		Field	7.9.16	B213 AQ.5735
		Mentioned in Despatches for participation in a very successful raid on the enemy trenches on 30th. September 1916. Routine Orders by Mjr. Gen. E.E. Walker 1st. Aus. Div. dated 6.10.16				AX.21
29.12.16	C.O. 8th. Bn.	Sick to Hosp		France	23. 3.16	AQ.13672 B2

*G.A. Mills*  
 Signature of Per

Taken and subscribed at Roxmeadows in  
 the State of Victoria  
 this 26th day \_\_\_\_\_ of  
August 1914, before me—

*R. Blackman*  
 Signature of Atte

\* A person enlisting who objects to taking an oath may make an affirmation in accordance with the Third Schedule to the above form must be amended accordingly. All amendments must be initialed by the Attesting Officer.

See

Figure 11

*Adm*

HW.

MRS. H. MILLS

LOWES LOOSE BAG  
ST. ARNAUD V.

NOW REPORTED SON CORPORAL GEORGE A. MILLS ADMITTED 16th  
GENERAL HOSPITAL 24th JULY BAYONET WOUND ABDOMEN ACCIDENTAL SEVERE  
WILL PROMPTLY ADVISE IF ANYTHING FURTHER RECEIVED

BASE RECORDS  
30/8/16

Figure 12a

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=7981257&S=7&R=0>

of No 3  
in France  
4 No date available

✓

Statement of Service of No. 416 Name G. A. Mills

Unit in which served.	Promotions, Reductions, Casualties, &c.	Period of service in each rank.		Remarks.
		From—	To—	
8th Batt A.I.F.	Plc. Wounded neck. 25/4/15. Ad. 1st A.G.H. 30/4/15 No 2 G.H. mess. 1/5/15 L/Cpl. 13/8/15 Adm No 2 A.G.H. 4/8/15 Dis. to duty. 22/8/15 Cpl. 23/8/15 Appointed 2nd Sgt. Reverts to rank of Cpl. on account of Sgt. Dillow. R. Retained. 9.3.16.	26/8/14		Part 2 $\frac{42}{275}$ 1/7/15 Part 2 $\frac{83-2}{1181}$ 15/9/15 Part 2 $\frac{88-4}{1442}$ 28/9/15 Part 2 $\frac{88-4}{1443}$ 28/9/15 P2. 27. 2701. 16.3.16 P2. 33/4811. 26.3.16
	ADMITTED 22/6/16 to HOSPITAL Report. Bayonet Wound Abdomen (Accidental)	24/4/16		P2 51/6256 3/8/16
	WOUNDED in Action France	24/4/16		P2 51/6499 12/8/16
8th Bn	Cpl. To Hosp. Sick France Cpl. Do-Hosp. Sick ca 17-P.B.D.	22/12/16	4/3/17	P2 2. 324 9/1/17 P2 14 1494 20/3/17
	Cpl. Adm to 8th Chas Ad. ctm. 23/12/16 Discharged to duty from 1st Gen. Hosp. Total Period 36 days	16/2/17		P2 18 1420 23/2/17
	Cpl. To Hosp Sick 1st A.I.F. Etaples	8/11/17		P2 75 5841 1965
8th Bn	Cpl. Rgt from hosp	29.5.17		P2 3144 6/6/17
	To Hosp Sick	30.6.17		P2 149/2659 18/4/17
	Adm 1st Gen. Hosp. Occ. Disease	30.6.17		P2 53/3575 3/4/17
8th Bn	Cpl. Rgt from hosp KILLED IN ACTION.	19.9.17	4.10.17	P2 68/4750 6/10/17 P2 41/5232 23/10/17 P2 1902

I have examined the above details, and find them correct in every respect.

Figure 12b

Unit		Report		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc. during active service, as reported on Army Form B-219, Army Form A-26, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army B-219, Army Form or other official documents.
(a)	(b)	Date	From whom received				
		29	9.3.17	18th.G.Hosp	Mumps Adm	Etaples	7.3.17 AK.924/44
		7	25.3.17	do	do To B/D	do	24.3.17 AK.1041/8
		4	31.3.17	1st.A.D.B.D.	From Hosp	do	24.3.17 AK.1041/8
		11	14.4.17	do	To Hosp	do	8.4.17 AK.1041/8
			9.4.17	26th.G.Hosp	Phlebitis Adm.	do	8.4.17 AK.1041/8
			14.4.17	do	do To Con Depot	do	14.4.17 AK.1041/4
		26	"	6 Con Depot	Adm	do	14.4.17 do
		31	16.4.17	do	Phlebitis To 5 Con Depot	do	16.4.17 AK.1041/8
		29	16.4.17	5 Con Depot	do Adm	Cayeux	16.4.17 AK.1041/8
		26	14.5.17	do	Trans to B/D	do	14.5.17 AK.1147/2
		30	19.5.17	1st.A.D.B.D.	From Hosp	Etaples	14.5.17 AK.1147/2
			26.5.17	do	To Unit	do	26.5.17 AK.8477
		13.	2.6.17	C.O.8th.Bn.	Rejoined Bn.	France	29.5.17 B213 A16/
		13.	7.7.17	do	To Hosp sick	do	30.6.17 B213 A16/
		22.	30.6.17	1st.P.Amb.	Chancre Adm & tfd to C.C.S.	do	30.6.17 AK.1374/2
		11.	7.7.17	9th.C.C.S.	Chancre Soft Adm	do	30.6.17 AK.1374/2
		8.	9.7.17	39 Con Hosp	Trans to AT.28		7.7.17 "
			24.8.17	do	N.Y.D. Adm.	Havre	9.7.17 AK.1374/2
			25.8.17	1st.A.D.B.D.	V.D.S. To B/D	do	24.8.17 AK.1487/7
			28.9.17	C.O.8th.Bn.	From Hosp	do	24.8.17 A59/34 B2
		29			Rejoined Bn.	Field	19.9.17 B213 A16/

*G. J. Mills*  
 Signature of Per

Taken and subscribed at Rosemeadows in  
 the State of Victoria  
 this 26th day \_\_\_\_\_ of  
August 1914, before me—

*R. Blackman*  
 Signature of Atte

\*A person enlisting who objects to taking an oath may make an affirmation in accordance with the Third Schedule to the above form must be amended accordingly. All amendments must be initialed by the Attesting Officer.

See 1

Figure 13

EIGHTH BATTALION  
**Casualty Form—Active Service.**

Army Form B. 103. Regimental Number 46

Rank Cpl. Regiment or Corps 8th Bn. S.I.F. Christian Name Geo. Arthur.  
 Surname Hills Age on Enlistment \_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months.  
 Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Service reckons from (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Enlisted (a) \_\_\_\_\_ Terms of Service (a) \_\_\_\_\_ Date of appointment to lance rank \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of promotion to present rank \_\_\_\_\_ Qualification (b) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Extended { } Re-engaged { } or Corps Trade and Rate \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Officer i/c Records.  
Sheet 2

Report	Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc. during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents
20	11/9/16 1st A.D.B.D. Proceeded to prison	Staples	4/9/16	AK 224/17
21	8/9/16 O.C. joined Bn.	Staples	7/9/16	AK 224/17
22	Mentioned in Despatches for participation in a very successful raid on the enemy trenches on 30th of September 1916. Routine Orders by Gen H. B. Hall for 1st Australian Division. Dated 3/10/16.			
18	13-10-16 3 Low height. exchanged to duty - Staples		17/1/16	AK 224/17
26	25/12/16 1st S.N. NYD adun	Rouen	24/12/16	AK 668/23
23	29/12/16 40th Bn. Sick to Work	France	22/12/16	AK 668/23
25	27/12/16 38th Bn. Grouched adun 23/12/16 to 17/1/17		24/12/16	AK 668/23

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or called into Section D, Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or callment will be entered.  
 (b) Signaller, Sholing Smith, Bn.  
 (c) Wt. 1301/3182. 1,000,000. 1/16. P.P.Ltd. Forms B.103.

Signature of Person Enlisted. Hills  
 Date 21/8/14  
 Place Broadmeadows

W. Macken Capt.  
Signature of Examining Medical Officer.

**CERTIFICATE OF COMMANDING OFFICER.**

I CERTIFY that this Attestation of the above-named person is correct, and that the required forms have been complied with. I accordingly approve, and appoint him to 1st Coy 8th Bn

Signature of Attesting Officer. W. K. Bolton  
 Date 26 August 1914  
 Place Broadmeadows Commanding 8th Bn A.I.F.

Figure 14

Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing  
Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War  
1DRL/0428

416 Corporal  
George Arthur Mills

8th Battalion



1780412N

695 Pte S.G. Mills,  
A.P.C., Fisbury,  
Wilts.

30th September 1918

Dear Sir,

In regard to the death of your brother 416 Cpl. G.A. Mills  
8th Battalion, A.I.F., we have a further unofficial report of his  
death from Lieut. R. Lowday of the same Unit who was in the 3rd.  
London General Hospital, Wandsworth. He stated that he saw Cpl.  
Mills killed instantaneously on October 4th by machine gun fire on  
Brookside Ridge during our attack, and that the ground was held.

We regret that as nearly a year has elapsed since his casualty  
occurred we are unable to keep his name on our enquiry lists but  
should any further report be received we will at once advise you of it.

With our sincere sympathy,

Yours faithfully,

(Miss)

Secretary.

0-11-18

Figure 15b: George sank forever into the mud and desperation of the Western Front, his remains sucked into history, unmarked and unknown.

Army Form B. 103. Sheet 3 Regimental Number... 416

**Casualty Form - Active Service.**

Rank ~~Private~~ <sup>Cpl</sup> Surname MILLS Christian Name George Arthur

Regiment or Corps 60y 8th Battalion A.I.F.

Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Age on Enlistment \_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months

Enlisted (a) 26.8.14 Terms of Service (a) \_\_\_\_\_ Service reckons from (a) 25.8.14

Date of promotion to present rank \_\_\_\_\_ Date of appointment to lance rank \_\_\_\_\_

Extended ( ) Re-engaged ( ) Qualification (b) \_\_\_\_\_  
or Corps Trade and rate \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Officer \_\_\_\_\_

Report		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B.103, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army Form B.103, Army Form A.36, or other official documents.
Date	From whom received				
		Embarked ...			
		Disembarked ..			
13.10.17	G.O. 8th. Bn.	KILLED IN ACTION	Belgium	4.10.17	B213 A16/41 DC.72/5232 VL.507
ANZAC SECTION, 3rd. Echelon, G.H.Q. British Expeditionary Force.			(Sgd) H.F. WAWN	Captain, Officer i/c Records.	
		<i>Buried between road running through 1025<sup>c</sup> and main road in B.29 (Plat 25) few hundred yards S.E. from there</i>			<i>B.1686 11860 Row 2</i>

(\*) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section L, Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.  
(N) Signaller, Shewing Smith, &c. W. 9888-342730 2000m 8/17 (Post), C. P. & S., Ltd., Form B.103 B/1907. P.T.O.

G.A. Mills  
Signature of Person Enlisted.

Taken and subscribed at Proserpine in  
the State of Victoria  
this 26<sup>th</sup> day \_\_\_\_\_ of  
August 1914, before me—

H. Blackman Lieut.  
Signature of Attesting Officer.

\* A person enlisting who objects to taking an oath may make an affirmation in accordance with the Third Schedule of the Act, and the above form must be amended accordingly. All amendments must be initialed by the Attesting Officer.



Figure 16a

**FIELD SERVICE.** D36714 Army Form B. 2090A.

REPORT of Death of a Soldier to be forwarded to the War Office with the least possible delay after receipt of notification of death on Army Form B. 213 or Army Form A. 36, or from other official documentary sources.

REGIMENT OR CORPS: 8th. BATTALION A.I.F. Squadron, Troop, Battery or Company: ----

Regimental No. 418 Rank Corporal

Surname MILLS Christian Names George Arthur

Died: Date 4th. October 1917 Place In the Field, Belgium

Cause of Death\* KILLED IN ACTION

Nature and Date of Report Army Form B.213 dated 13th. October 1917

By whom made Commanding Officer 8th. Infantry Battalion A.I.F.

\* Specially state if killed in action, or died from wounds received in action, or from illness due to field operations or to fatigue, privation or exposure while on military duty, or from injury while on military duty.

State whether he leaves a Will or not: (a) in Pay Book (Army Book 64) received (b) in Small Book (if at Base) --- (c) as a separate document ---

All private documents and effects received from the front or hospital, as well as the Pay Book, should be examined, and if any will is found it should be at once forwarded to the War Office.  
Any information received as to verbal expressions by a deceased soldier of his wishes as to the disposal of his estate should be reported to the War Office as soon as possible.  
A duplicate of this Report is to be sent to the Fixed Centre Paymaster at Home, or to the D.F.A.G., Indian Expeditionary Force, or Field Disbursing Officer, as the case may require, together with the Deceased's Pay Book (after withdrawal of any will from the latter). If the deceased's Small Book is at the Base, it should be forwarded to the War Office with this Report.  
ANZAC SECTION, 3rd. Echelon, G.H.Q. B.E.F.

Station and Date: 9th. January 1918. Signature of Officer in charge of Section: W. K. Bolton **Captain.**  
Adjutant-General's Office at the Base: ----- **Officer i/c Records.**

W208 M1168-300,000-11. A. & B. - 5/17 - (10489) - Form B.2090A.

he has the free use of his joints and limbs; and he declares he is not subject to fits of any description.

I consider him fit for active service.

Date 24/8/18

Place Broadmeadow

W. K. Bolton **Capt**  
Signature of Examining Medical Officer.

**CERTIFICATE OF COMMANDING OFFICER.**

I CERTIFY that this Attestation of the above-named person is correct, and that the required forms have been complied with. I accordingly approve, and appoint him to A Coy 8th Battalion

Date 26 August 1917 W. K. Bolton **Col.**

Place Broadmeadows ----- **Commanding 8th Battalion A.I.F.**

Figure 16b

## The St. Arnaud Mercury

First copy issued Feb. 13, 1864.

SATURDAY, NOV. 17, 1917.

### LOCAL AND GENERAL.

Mr. B. Swanton advertises that he is prepared to dip sheep at his dip at Snares Hill at 8/6 per hundred.

The Borough Council in this issue publishes notice of intention to make a general rate and gas charge.

Mr. Marchant, captain, will visit St. Arnaud on Thursday, 15th December, and may be consulted at Pennington's Hotel.

At a meeting of the Hard Times Dances committee on Tuesday night, Mrs. Blencowe and Miss Morrison were appointed judges of the fancy costumes.

Mr. A. E. Sheppard, blacksmith, announces that he has commenced business at Cape Cove, and is prepared to execute all orders for general blacksmith's work.

A soiree party and dance, under the auspices of the A.L.P., is announced to take place in the Town Hall on Thursday evening 22nd inst. The price of admission are—Double tickets 4/8, single ticket 3/4, extra lady 1/8, all free of tax.

Official intimation was received by relatives on Tuesday last that Private P. J. Fay, of St. Arnaud, had been reported wounded. Mr. and Mrs. Jas. McNally, of Oroporo, have also received word that their son, Gunner J. H. McNally, has been reported wounded.

A double-seated Ford motor car, with American body, and fitted with all the latest conveniences, has been purchased by Mr. Donald Stewart, of St. Arnaud. The sale was effected through the agency of Messrs. G. and W. McGlashan, of the Roundy Garage, Napier street.

Mrs. Wm Woods is in receipt of word from the Defence Department intimating that her son, Private W. J. Woods, who was recently reported wounded, was admitted to Edlington General Military Hospital, England, on 15th October, suffering from gunshot wound in the right thigh, neck, and partial amputation of the right hand—

partial amputation of the right hand—severe

The series of pictures screened at Joyland on Wednesday provided an excellent entertainment, which was much appreciated by a large audience. The star, "Shell 43," was very interesting. The programme for tonight has been especially selected, and will include a photo-drama, entitled "The Ninety and Nine," and a good variety of supporting films. The charge for admission is sixpence.

A Queen Competition in aid of the Lascelles Roman Catholic Church was won by Miss Myrtle Crane (Queen of Soldiers), daughter of Mr. George Crane, formerly of St. Arnaud. The total sum received was £348/1/2, of which Miss Crane raised £162/0/3. She secured 39,123 votes. The second on the list was Miss Stella Milte (Queen of Sport), 28,321 votes, £118. There were four competing queens.

Messrs. G. McKeehan & Co., advertise particulars of a clearing sale of draught horses, machinery and farming plant to be held at Coonover East on Monday next for Mr. William Shepherd. Special off-shore sales will be held at Banyans on Tuesday next, and at Bealiba on Wednesday next. Entries for these sales, and also for the weekly sales at St. Arnaud on Thursday, are notified in the firm's advertisements. An unreserved clearing sale is announced to be held at Bushby's Bridge on Monday 26th inst., for Messrs. Nicholson Bros. A list of the firm's forthcoming sales is advertised.

Messrs. A. J. Simpson and Co. hold an off-shore sale at Redbank on Tuesday next, when over 2100 sheep will be offered. Entries are notified for the St. Arnaud market on Thursday. A special sale of shorn sheep takes place at Coonover Bridge, at Mr. Duncan Ross's yards, on Tuesday, 27th November. A special off-shore sale will be held at Landsborough on Wednesday, 5th December. The firm's annual off-shore sale at Navarre is a fixture for Tuesday, 11th December. The opening stock sale at Burke's Flat will take place on Wednesday, 12th December.

The death has to be recorded of one of the original Anzacs in Corporal U. A. Mills, son of Mrs. H. Mills, of Dandenong, who has been reported as killed in action on October 4th. The message was received by the Rev. F. Boyllog, who broke the sad news to the bereaved mother.

## Figure 16c

Figure 16c: The death has to be recorded of one of the original Anzacs in Corporal G.A., Mills, son of Mrs. H Mills, of Dooboobetic, who has been reported as killed in action on October 4th. 'The message was received by the Rev. F. Boyling, who broke the sad news to the bereaved mother yesterday, being kindly motored out by Mr. C. Gardner. Deceased, who was 40 years of age, was unmarried. He enlisted on the outbreak of the war and thus rendered his King and Country over three years gallant service. The flag was hoisted half-mast at the local Town Hall yesterday.

Reference: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/88056657>

## Bibliography and additional references

Front cover photograph: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/R1646652>  
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P08497.001>

George Arthur Mills: <https://aif.adfa.edu.au/showPerson?pid=209409>  
<http://www.millsfamily.com.au/page60/page60.html>  
<https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/people/161057>

Broodseinde Ridge: <https://www.cwgc.org/learn/news-and-events/news/2017/10/03/09/18/8-facts-about-the-battle-of-broodseinde>

People at Broodseinde Ridge: <https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/campaigns/18/people>

Glossary of Slang and Peculiar Terms in Use in the A.I.F.:  
<http://slll.cass.anu.edu.au/centres/andc/annotated-glossary/m>



Above: 8th Australian Infantry Battalion

Reference: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U51448/>

## World War 1 Service

- 26 Aug 1914: **Enlisted** AIF WW1, Private, SN 416, Broadmeadows, Victoria [Report](#)
- 19 Oct 1914: **Embarked** AIF WW1, Private, SN 416, [8th Infantry Battalion](#), HMAT Benalla, Melbourne [Report](#)
- 19 Oct 1914: **Involvement** AIF WW1, Private, SN 416, [8th Infantry Battalion](#), [Enlistment/Embarkation WW1](#) [Report](#)
- 25 Apr 1915: **Wounded** AIF WW1, Private, SN 416, [8th Infantry Battalion](#), [ANZAC Gallipoli](#), GSW (neck/back - second wave landing) [Report](#)
- 25 Apr 1915: **Involvement** AIF WW1, Private, SN 416, [8th Infantry Battalion](#), [ANZAC Gallipoli](#) [Report](#)
- 13 Aug 1915: **Promoted** AIF WW1, Lance Corporal, [8th Infantry Battalion](#) [Report](#)
- 23 Aug 1915: **Promoted** AIF WW1, Corporal, [8th Infantry Battalion](#) [Report](#)
- 23 Jul 1916: **Involvement** AIF WW1, Corporal, SN 416, [8th Infantry Battalion](#), [Pozières](#) [Report](#)
- 24 Jul 1916: **Wounded** AIF WW1, Corporal, SN 416, [8th Infantry Battalion](#), [Pozières](#), 2nd occasion - Bayonet wound (abdomen - accidental) [Report](#)
- 4 Oct 1917: **Involvement** AIF WW1, Corporal, SN 416, [8th Infantry Battalion](#), [Broodseinde Ridge](#)

George received:

Star

British war medal

Victory medal

## St. Arnaud during WW1 17th - 31st December 1915

### News from the Front

Pte Edward Mortimore was killed in action at Lone Pine on 20th November.

Lieut Hal Young has been wounded and is in a London hospital.

Lieut Horrie Smitheram is ill and has disembarked at Malta.

Pte Will Taylor is in hospital at Heliopolis suffering from enteritis.

Pte Dan Cousins is missing and Pte George Torney has been wounded.

Pte Jack Kenneally and Pte Tom Smead are ill.

### Gallipoli Evacuated

Unbeknown to St. Arnaud residents the evacuation of all troops from Gallipoli commenced on 8th December with the last 20,000 men leaving during the nights of 18th 19th and 20th December.

Captain Bernie Duggan from Sutherland was in charge of the last 250 men to leave the peninsula.

Some of the St. Arnaud men who took part in the evacua-

tion were - Albert Box, Buckle McNicol, Roy Walsh, Fred Oldham, Frank Hoare, Herbert Dungey, Albert Lovett, George Ross, Arch Robertson, James Sutherland, William Smith, Gilbert Stevenson, Walter Dunlop, Charles Martin, George Mills, Tom Harley, Dan Morrison, Arthur Summerfield and Horace King.

The following article appeared in the St. Arnaud Mercury on 10-1-1916 -

'War News from London - The announcement is made officially that a complete evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula has been effected successfully by the Allied Forces.

The retirement from Gallipoli without the loss of a single life has no parallel in military or naval history.

All concerned deserve the most profound gratitude of the country.'

### Soldiers write home

The following letters were written shortly after the evacuation but did not arrive in St. Arnaud until late January 1916.

\* Pte George Mills writes from Lemnos Island - *We have left the trenches in Gallipoli, where for a while matters were exciting.*

*I was blown over with a bomb once, hit on the head with a bullet another time [but it was only on top and cut through my scalp] and I was buried by an 8 inch shell another time.*

*That all happened within the same week.*

*A few days afterwards a piece of shell landed on my coat tail.*

*I was lying on my back reading when a big jagged lump of shell dropped.*

*On another occasion I had just taken my men off the post and was a few yards away when I heard an explosion and going to investigate I noticed that our post had been blown down and our ammunition and bombs were scattered everywhere.*

*It would have killed some of us for certain if we had been posted.*

*Water is scarce and I slept in my clothes and equipment every night.*

*Syd and Tom came here and had a dose of shellfire, then were sent back to Egypt.*

*Hard luck for them wasn't it?*

*Our lads and the Turks had a bit of fun just before the end.*

*We threw them our tins of beef and they threw us cigarettes.*

*With the aid of an interpreter we had a confabulation, we asked them to surrender but they politely declined*

*Turkish trenches in several places were blown up and also our guns, which we were unable to get rid of.*

*The hospital tents and everything possible were set alight and so ended one of the greatest achievements in war history.*

*We are at present sailing for some place or other, I think it might be Egypt which will be a welcome change to the cold of Gallipoli.*

Letter of thanks from unknown soldier to Red Cross

*By a streak of luck or by good judgment Christmas billies were available on Christmas Eve and one was given to every officer and man.*

*If the people who packed those billies had seen their reception in the camp they would have felt more than repaid for their trouble.*

*Everyone was in his second childhood apparently and I have never seen so many thousands of delighted men anywhere.*

### Sailed from Melbourne

The following St. Arnaud men left on 29th December on the A64 HMAT Demosthenes - G Constable, H T Hosken, H Torney, A W Kirk, W T Langdon, T McGowan, H Queripel, G H Bugge, A E Postlethwaite and H [unclear].

### Matron volunteers

The Hospital

- By Heather Pritchard  
ling to Carapooee on the train.

### Fires

On Christmas night a house in Smith St was burnt to the ground despite the prompt arrival of the fire brigade who were hampered by very low water pressure.

Mrs Harris and her daughter-in-law had gone to the pictures leaving seven children at home.

Flames erupted when a lamp was knocked over and the children rushed outside except a 2 year old who hid under a bed before being rescued by the eldest child aged 15.

A swagman was sentenced to 6 weeks jail for lighting a fire and resisting arrest when he tried to boil his billy on the bank of a dam in Mr Petrie's paddock.

He had permission to camp there and the fire did no damage although it was a very hot day.

### Accidents

Alex Jamison of Paradise dislocated bones in his foot when he caught it in the gear wheel of his harvester as the horses moved off.

James Raeburn fell 12 ft injuring his spine while adjusting a windmill on George Simpson's farm at Paradise.

William Behan was [unclear] and was left lying on the Banyena Road with broken ribs and a badly gashed leg.

## Editorial

### Thank you and have a happy Christmas

IT has been another big year at the North Central News with plenty of events and issues to cover.

As a small team of seven at the paper with only two full time staff however we would not have the breadth of coverage we do without the loyal and dedicated support of our regular contributors, those on sports report rosters, community members informing us of events or issues, the schools etc.

The North Central News would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you all. Thank you for your efforts, photos and passion for sharing your story with the wider community.

*We wish you all a very happy and safe Christmas and New Year.*

## Northern Grampians Shire Mayor's Christmas message

WHEN you read this column, Christmas will be well and truly upon us, so I take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy, safe and merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year in 2016.

2015 has passed very quickly and now we need to plan for the next 12 months and beyond.

I hope my mayor's columns have been of value to you and that I can keep you informed through this medium next year.

I would personally speak about the business of the Northern Grampians Shire Council in my columns but I would like to take the Christmas opportunity to

about the rules of drinking and driving and getting home safely.

The penalties are severe and the risks far too high, so if in doubt take a cab or have a designated driver.

Also remember our responsibilities as mothers, friends and look out for each other so we all keep safe and ready for the next year of our lives.

I look forward to speak-

**Quote of the week**  
**"Smell the sea and feel the sky.  
Let your soul and spirit fly."**  
**Van Morrison**

Auntie G gave me this. It is a page that includes part of a letter from G A MILLS included in a page "St Arnaud during WW1 17th-31 December 1915", to mark the WW1 centenary in the North Central News, Weds Dec 23, 2015, page 2.

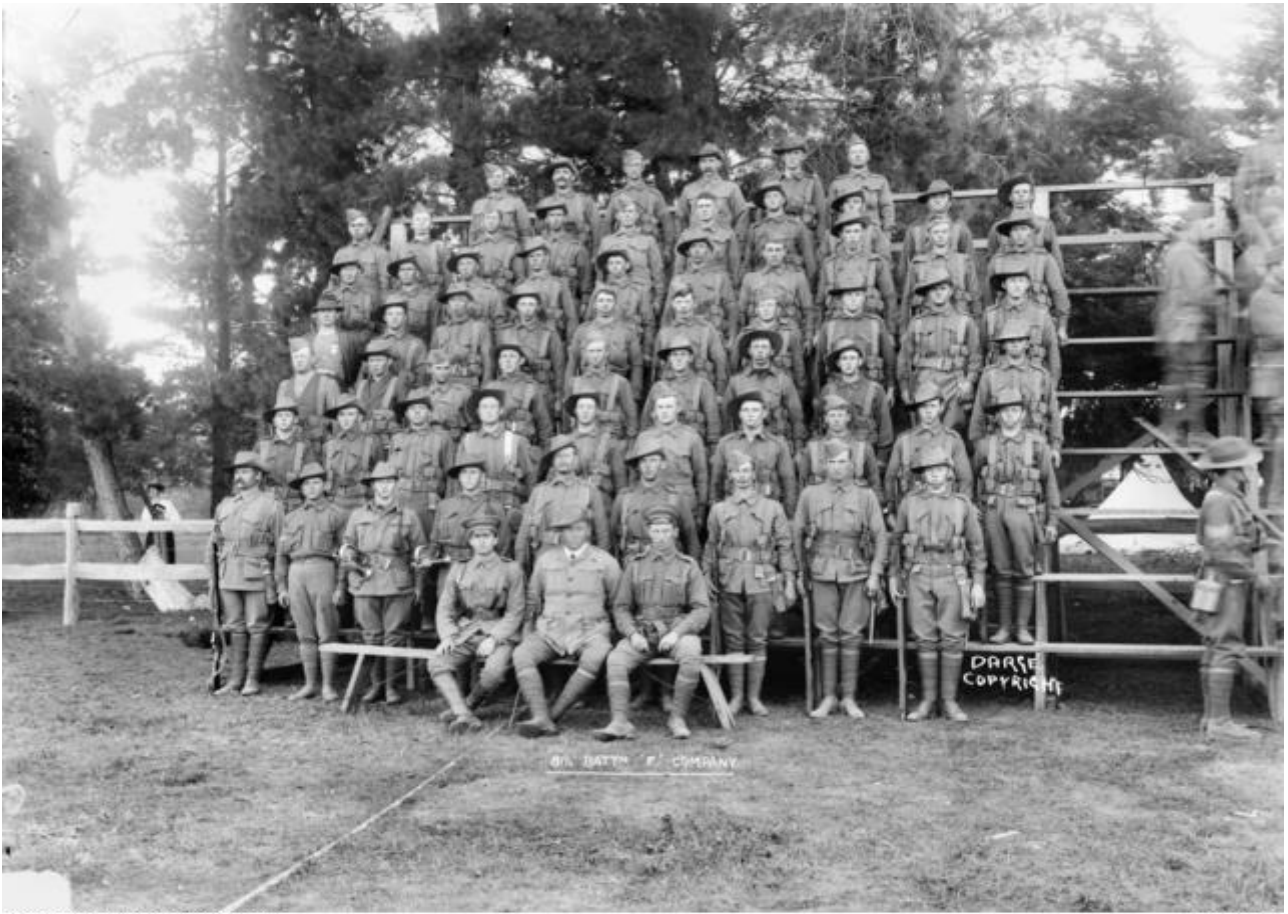
Love  
Dad

### MRS. HARRIET MILLS.

The hand of death has been very busy in our midst of late, many of the esteemed pioneers having passed away. We regret to have to record the demise of Mrs. Harriet Mills, a well known and highly respected resident of Connors West. The deceased lady was 66 years of age, and she had been ill for about eleven weeks. She died on Saturday last. Her late husband selected land at Connors West some 40 years ago, and hitherto farming operations were carried on successfully. The following are the members of the family who are left to mourn their loss:—Mrs. Everett, West Australia; Mrs. J. Claxton, Connors Bridge; Mrs. J. Smith, Gowar East; Mrs. Moore, Glenloch; Messrs Ernest and Gordon Edgar Mills, Connors West; and Private Sydney Gordon Mills, on active service. Another son, Private Arthur Mills, made the great sacrifice in October last. The remains of the late Mrs. Mills were buried in the St. Arnaud Cemetery yesterday, the funeral being largely attended. The coffin bearers were Messrs J. Claxton, R. Spence, J. Dunstan, and J. Ople; and the pall bearers, Messrs H. Davies, R. Moore, G. Hamilton, J. Parry, D. Hulley and J. Sturrock. The Rev. Canon Dalton officiated at the grave. Deceased's remains were enclosed in an oak coffin. Mr. W. L. Kell had charge of the mortuary arrangements.

Mrs Harriet Mills, Died Saturday 16 June 1918 aged 66 years, ill for 11 weeks.

When George Arthur Mills was born on February 25, 1877, in St Arnaud, Victoria, Australia, his father, George, was 32 and his mother, Harriet, was 23. He had three brothers and four sisters. He died on October 4, 1917, in Belgium at the age of 40, and was buried in Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

DAX2563

Above: Group portrait of members of F Company, 8th Battalion.

Reference: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/DAX2563/?image=1>





AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H05567

PORTRAIT OF 678 LANCE CORPORAL THOMAS M.D. HARLEY, 8TH BATTALION, KILLED IN ACTION, 1917-09-20.

Tom is mentioned in some of George's (Arch) letters.

Photo: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C73258>

Red Cross Wounded and Missing file: <file:///D:/Documents/Downloads/5627066.PDF>