

Family History



Frederick Norman Craig was born on the 6 March 1893, to John and Mary Craig of Adventure Bay, Bruny Island. Both John and Mary were immigrants to Tasmania, Mary travelling with her family from East Prussia aboard the Figaro to Tasmania, and John from Scotland. Mary's family established the first permanent settlement and commercial farm at Adventure Bay. John and Mary met at Bruny Island and were married on the 11 April 1884, and moved to Adventure Bay with Mary's family. Mary's father provided the pair with some of the family land, and part of their original house was a very large hollow tree. They never had a proper house until after the first of their children was born. After the death of Mary's parents, the Craigs received the land south of Resolution Creek and named it "Sea View", a name that land still holds today. Fred was John and Mary's sixth child, of 17 in total.

John and Mary continued farming, shipping small fruits, apples and dairy products to Hobart. John also worked with his sons in the local timber mill. Of their 10 sons, three enlisted in the First World War – William, Fred and George. Interestingly, there is no record on any of their enlistment papers that their mother was German. All three brothers had a different experience with the war. Fred found himself in Gallipoli and the Western Front where he was ultimately killed in action. William, who was taken a Prisoner of War by the Germans two weeks after arriving in France, ultimately returned home to raise a family in Perth. George survived the war, returned to Hobart and became an important member of the Hobart community.



*John and Mary Craig (Gen 1) with first seven children (Gen 2). Back left: Agnes. Back right: John.
Front from left: George, Will and Augusta. Mary on Mary's knee, Fred on John's knee.*



The John and Mary Craig family on John Jr's wedding day.

Standing at back: Fred, Mary, Will, Ruth, Augusta, George, Grace and Herbert.

Sitting in middle: Agnes, John Sr., Mary Sr. and John Jr.


Front: Dorothy (Dorrie), Ernie and Glad.



Enlistment

At the time of his enlistment, Fred was 21, single and working at the local timber mill at Adventure Bay, Bruny Island. He had a fair complexion and red hair – not dissimilar from his siblings. Fred joined on the 12 January 1915 in the Claremont Camp, 10km North of Hobart. He was the first recruit to enlist from Bruny Island and joined the 12th Battalion, 4th reinforcement. The 12th Battalion was, on the whole, a Tasmanian Battalion, and Fred was surrounded by fellow Tasmanians. Fred embarked from Fremantle, Western Australia on board the HMAT A8 *Argyllshire* on 19 April 1915 and was taken on strength to Gallipoli on 26 May 1915.

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AUSTRIAN  MILITARY FORCES.

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. 1221 Name *Fredrick Norman Gray* Unit *12th Bn 4th Rnfrs* ✓
 Joined on *12/1/15*

Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

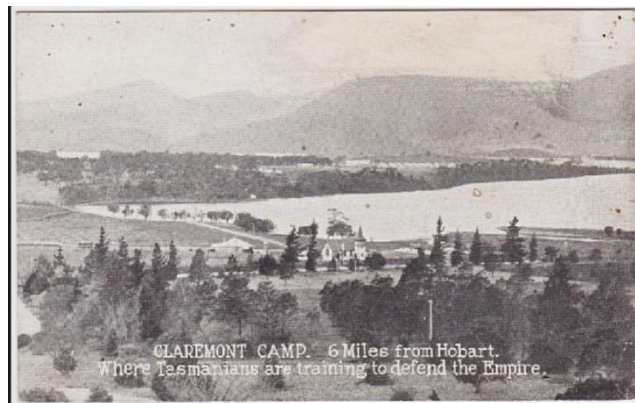
1. What is your Name?	<i>Fredrick Norman Gray</i>
2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born?	<i>Adventure Bay, Bruny Island</i>
3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Subject of the British Empire? (If not, the latter, please to be shown.)	<i>Yes</i>
4. What is your age?	<i>21 1/2</i>
5. What is your trade or calling?	<i>Timberman</i>
6. Are you, or have you been, or Approve? If so, when, to whom, and for what period?	<i>No</i>
7. Are you married?	<i>No</i>
8. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated)	<i>John Norman Gray, Adventure Bay, Bruny Island</i>
9. Have you ever been sentenced by the Civil Power?	<i>No</i>
10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Ineligible and Warranted, or in consequence of Expiry of Term, or of a Sentence of Final Discharge, or have you been dismissed with Disgrace from the Army?	<i>No</i>
11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marine, the Militia, the Special Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not, state the date of discharge.	<i>No</i>
12. Have you sailed the world, if any, of your previous service?	<i>Yes</i>
13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds?	<i>No</i>
14. (For married men and widowers with children.) Do you understand that no separation allowance will be paid to you after enlistment? (If not, state the amount of such allowance.)	<i>No</i>
15. Do you understand that no separation allowance will be paid to you after enlistment? (If not, state the amount of such allowance.)	<i>No</i>

I, *Fredrick Norman Gray*, do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and bound voluntarily to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to allow my name to be used in the pay payable to me from time to time during my service for the support of my wife and children.

Date *12/1/15* *F. N. Gray* Enlistment of person enlisted

*This form should be filled out in the case of unenlisted men or soldiers subject to enlistment under 18 years of age.





AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H00472

Group portrait of members of the 12th Battalion AIF. This battalion had taken part in the fighting at Gallipoli before being withdrawn to Egypt and then moved to France where it was heavily involved in the battle for Mouquet Farm in August 1916. Identified in the back row from left to right: 659A Private (Pte) Edward Gadesden Terry from Plenty, Tasmania; 6764 Pte George Henry Long from Copping, Tasmania (later killed in action in France on 22 July 1918); 6580 Pte John Stanley Leech from Stanley, Tasmania; 1821 Pte Frederick Norman Craig (later awarded Military Medal (MM) and killed in action in France on 24 April 1918); 3451 Pte John Bailey from Glenorchy, Tasmania (later died of wounds in France on 28 August 1918); 4322 Pte James Hamilton from Hobart, Tasmania; 7310 Pte Lloyd James Moore from Colebrook, Tasmania; 6853 Pte Francis William Stanley from Huonville, Tasmania; 6573 Pte Berlin Leslie Jones from Franklin, Tasmania; 3330 Pte Frank John Poley from Mathinna, Tasmania; 7242 Pte Clarence Best from Beaconsfield, Tasmania; 2870 Pte Frederick Charles Marshall from Hawthorn, Victoria; 7270 Pte James Durkin from Launceston, Tasmania; and 5496 Pte Francis Joseph Watt from Innisfail, Queensland.

Second row from left to right: 7236 Pte Oliver Bailey from Parattah, Tasmania; 7210 Pte Reginald St Clair Bailey from Parattah; 7340 Pte Sydney Bazel Stevenson from Hobart (later killed in action in France on 24 April 1918); 5731 Pte Henry Percy Jones from Jeri Cho, Tasmania; 5457 Corporal (Cpl) Albert Raabe from Ma Ma Creek, Grantham, Queensland; Lieutenant Alfred Willis Clemes from Hobart; 1209 Cpl John Edward Dillon from South Hobart; 7307 Pte James Nettleford from Beaconsfield; 7260 Pte Talbot Aloysius De Largy D'Alton from Queenstown, Tasmania (later killed in action in France on 18 September 1918); and 6093 Pte John Alfred Taylor from North Hobart.

Front row from left to right: 7274 Pte George Alfred Edward Fenner from Zeehan, Tasmania; 1632 Pte Harry Lionel Paul from Bridgewater, Tasmania; 3381 Pte Frederick James Fraser from Stanley, Tasmania; 7070 Pte Bernard James Redman from Burnie, Tasmania; 166 Pte Alfred Leslie Nichols from Dromedary, Tasmania; 1050 Cpl Stanley Pitchford from Gladstone, Tasmania; and 7295 Pte Frank Arthur John King from Queenstown, Tasmania.

Gallipoli

Fred arrived at Gallipoli on 26 May 1915, just one month after the fateful landing at ANZAC Cove. The 12th Battalion's role was integral in securing the beach, and the men of the 12th were some of the first ashore at 4.30am on the 25 April 1915. As a part of the 4th reinforcement, Fred and his comrades were responsible for establishing, securing and defending the front line of the ANZAC position. The 12th also supported in the attack on Lone Pine and remained at Gallipoli until the withdrawal in December 1915. Fred found himself unwell for a large portion of his time in Gallipoli, spending time on the ANZAC Fleet, Lymnos Island Hospital, Gallipoli Hospital and Alexandria with gastro, the mumps and dysentery.

Western Front

Along with the rest of the 12th, after the evacuation of Gallipoli, Fred returned to Egypt before being deployed to France and the Western Front in March 1916. It is here, that Fred spent his time battling in bitter trench warfare as a gunner. Fred's first major battle was that of Mouquet Farm in 1916. Charles Bean, the official war correspondent writes of Mouquet Farm; *The reader must take for granted many of the conditions—the flayed land, shell-hole bordering shell-hole, corpses of young men lying against the trench walls or in shell-holes; some—except for the dust settling on them—seeming to sleep; others torn in half; others rotting, swollen and discoloured.* It was in this landscape, that Fred found himself fighting against the Germans.

Mouquet Farm was the site of nine separate attacks by Australians on the Germans between August and September 1916, as a part of the larger battle of Pozieres. The attacks ultimately cost three Australian divisions over 11,000 casualties with no success. Fred was just one of countless Australians fighting a bloody and fruitless battle. It was at The Battle of Lagnicourt on 15 April 1917 that Fred was met with a situation that so many other ANZACs so bravely faced. The Battle of Lagnicourt in Northern France was the scene of fierce fighting in March and April 1917. The German forces had withdrawn to the Hindenburg Line, and the Allied forces quickly followed. Unfortunately the Allies were faced with well-prepared forces which were only removed after difficult and bloody fights. When the British pushed forward hard at Arras, they left their line weak at Lagnicourt, and the Germans (aware of this weakness) launched a counter-stroke at dawn on 15 April 1917, using 23 battalions. The German aim was not to permanently recapture Lagnicourt, but rather hold it for the day and permanently destroy any equipment that they found there. The Australians pushed back with a vigorous counter-attack, just after 7am, where they recaptured the village, most of the guns and forced the Germans to withdraw.

It was in this battle, on 15 April 1917, that Fred was awarded his Military Medal. He was awarded his medal for assisting in holding an important position by courage and skill as gunner. The official recommendation for Fred's Military Medal came on 18 April 1917, and reads; *During the enemy attack on Lagnicourt at dawn on April 15th 1917, Pvts CJ Allen and Craig were No 1 and 2 gunners of a Lewis Gun respectively. When enemy broke through on the left flank and attacked their company in rear, they carried their gun and ammunition to a position in front and under heavy fire from snipers and machine guns kept up a steady but deadly fire and repelling a heavy frontal attack, catching the enemy in a massed formation. By their soldiers qualities these two men materially assisted in holding an important position.* Fred's success was further recognised in the Tasmanian Mail on 13 September 1917. The article reads; *Information has been received that*

Private F.N. Craig has been awarded the Military Medal for bravery in succouring wounded companions in France. Private Craig is the fourth son of Mr and Mrs John Craig, and saw service on Gallipoli, having sailed with the second lot of reinforcements. He has two brothers on active service. Privates GH and WL Craig, the latter being a prisoner of war in Germany. Fred's Military Medal is currently being held by the Bruny Island History Room in Alonnah, Bruny Island for the public to view.

There is an interesting oral history that is told around Bruny Island around the circumstances in which Fred received his Military Medal. Fred's commanding officer was J.J. Dwyer (also of Bruny Island). Dwyer told Fred's family that ~~he~~ Fred stayed at his post keeping the enemy at bay while others got away. J.J. Dwyer was awarded the VC for the action because only officers were eligible for the award. Dwyer states that without the action of Fred, he would not have been able to receive his VC, and he owes his life to Fred.

After the successful counter-attack at Lagnicourt, Fred's final major fight was The Battle of Hazebrouck (sometimes known as The Battle of Lys) in April 1918. In March and April 1918, the 12th Battalion was helping fight the German Spring Offensive (a last ditch effort by the Germans to try and push back into France after no longer having to worry about the Eastern Front). Despite costing many lives, the Allies held strong and proved unshakeable to the Germans. From this point on, the Germans began losing their position in France and Belgium, before the ultimate signing of the Armistice in November 1918.

THE MILITARY MEDAL.

Information has been received that Private F. N. Craig has been awarded the Military Medal for bravery in succouring wounded companions in France. Private Craig is the fourth son of Mr. and Mrs. John Craig, and saw service on Gallipoli, having sailed with the second lot of reinforcements. He has two brothers on active service, Privates G. H., and W. L. Craig, the latter being a prisoner of war in Germany.

12th Battn.
A.I.F.

CRAIG (U.L.)
F.N. 1821

"Missing 24-4-18"

He was of B.Coy. 5th Pltn. I do not know initials or number. He was L/Cpl. and a M.M., Mol on Lewis Gun. On 23rd April we were at an outpost which we had taken that morning during counter attack of enemy, a German crawled up and sniped Craig through head, and he died instantly. I was in the post, this was about 4 p.m. I was wounded that night at 10 p.m. Germans were still attacking, but never got post. We had connected all the enemy posts by small trenches. Locality between Meteren and Merris near Meteren. I know nothing of burial.

Informant. Williams. Cpl. F.H. 1652
12th Battn. B.Coy. 5th Pltn.,
HAREFIELD.

A.D.G.
London
3-7-18
S.A.

H.

Fred was officially reported missing in action on the 24 April 1918. There are varying accounts of what happened to Fred on that fateful day. From various witness accounts, there are two perspectives on what happened. Cpl Williams F.H. of the 12th Battalion stated; *I belong to No 5 Platoon 12th Bn. A.I.F. and on 23rd of April 1918, I knew a Pte Craig who had charge of No 5 Platoon Lewis Gun Section but not know his regimental number and Christian names, he wore a military medal ribbon. About 4pm I was in the same post as Pte. Craig when I saw him shot through the head with a bullet and was instantly killed. Dated at Littlemoor Depot, Weymouth. This account of*

being killed by a sniper was supported by several other witnesses. A further statement was given by Private H.A. Balmor of the 12th Battalion. Balmor stated; *I know Private Fred Craig ... he came from Bruny Island, Southern Tasmania. I saw him lying in the open in "No Man's Land" on the left of the main street running into Meteren about the 24th of April 1918 just after midnight ... He was hit by M.G. Fire in the thigh and other parts of the body ... Craig was left behind.*

Despite the confusion surrounding the circumstances of Fred's death, his body has never been found. His enlistment record was officially updated to killed in action by Captain D.R. Crooks, officer in charge of records. The Tasmanian Mail published the following; *Private Frederick N Craig M.M. who has been reported missing is the fourth son of Mr and Mrs John Craig, of Adventure Bay. Private Craig entered Claremont Camp in January 1915, and left Tasmania in April following to reinforce the 12th Battalion, landing at Gallipoli in June. After the evacuation from there on December 19-20, 1915, he was transferred to France, where he won the Military Medal for succouring wounded comrades, being the first Brunyite to gain that distinction. Two of his brothers joined the A.I.F., Private William L Craig being now a prisoner of war in Germany and Private George H Craig still facing the foe on the Western Front. Private Fred Craig has been missing since April 24, and no further word has been received concerning him.*

Private Frederick Norman Craig is listed at the Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery in France. The Memorial commemorates the 10,732 Australian casualties who died in France and have no known grave.

Upon receiving the news of their son's death, Mary and John did not stop writing to the War Gratuity Board. Right until 1921, Mary was writing to the board trying to settle the bonds that were owed to the family for Fred's service. With 16 other children on Bruny Island and a small business to run, Mary was put in a tough position, needing to work hard and fight to prove that she was the rightful recipient of the bonds.

Adventure Bay
May 21st 1920

Department of Repatriation,
Tasmania

MAY 24 1920

During the late war one of my sons served in the A.I.F. He joined up in the 12th Battalion, a unit of the 11th reinforcements. Leaving Hobart on the date of April 5th 1915, he fought first in Gallipoli, subsequently in France. His number was 1821. Name, Private F.N. Craig. He fell in action in France, the date of April 24th 1918. I wish to know from you what action I am to take in order to obtain the amount of money due to me in accordance with the gratuity bonds. We were dependent on my son Fred previous to his enlistment, and would be pleased if you would forward the necessary forms & information, and if cash could be supplemented for bonds.

Yours sincerely,
Mary Craig.

Upon visiting the Western Front, I chose to commemorate Fred at Villers-Bretonneux Memorial. Rather than completing my pilgrimage at the memorial itself, where his name is listed, I chose the grave of an unknown Australian soldier. After all, there was just as much a chance that this was Fred than anyone else. To commemorate Fred, I left him a glass jar of sand from Resolution Creek Bruny Island. The beach that is just below his original homestead, which still stands today. I chose to read the following letter that I wrote to Fred while I was exploring France, something that I found much more emotional once I was in France.



I'm here today for the pilgrimage of Private Frederick Norman Craig. I have no family connection to Fred, but he lived just a kilometre from where I grew up on Bruny Island. Once I got deeper into my research I discovered that Fred is the Great Great Great Uncle of a very close friend of mine – and he had no idea that he had relatives who served in the war. If this pilgrimage has any purpose, it's that it has kept Fred's legacy alive, for future generations. I have written a letter to Fred, from myself explaining what I have learnt by following his journey.



Dear Fred,

What a journey you have had. From Adventure Bay, Bruny Island to the other side of the world. You joined up, to be a part of the great adventure, the first Brunyite to do so. You left behind 16 siblings – what an amazing family to grow up in. John and Mary (Mum and Dad) raised your eldest three siblings in a hollow tree! You come from such a tough bunch. Today, you might not believe how incredible your beautiful little corner of Bruny is looking. Two Tree Point and Resolution Creek looks exactly as it always has – and your original homestead "Sea View" still stands proud atop the hill. Your little beach, such a peaceful little corner. Our childhoods can't have been that dissimilar. Hunting in rockpools, swimming in the shallows, slow summer days.

You were just 21 when you gave up your job at the local timber mill to go on the grand adventure – you were closely followed by your two brothers – George and Will. Sadly, you were the only one not to make it home. From Claremont to Gallipoli, as a part of the 12th – what must have been going through your mind? Were you excited? Scared? Ready to do your part? You joined before the horrors on the beaches of Gallipoli, arriving just one month later in May. What could you have been faced with? You and the 12th, mostly young Tassie lads. Did they bring you comfort? Having a little piece of home on the other side of the world?

After surviving Gallipoli you headed for France, to face a whole new world of horrors. Sheer cliffs were replaced with duckboards, beaches for miles and miles of mud. First at Mouquet Farm and later in Lagnicourt. It was at Lagnicourt in

April 1917 that you earned your Military Medal. You and Private CJ Allen, faced with what could have certainly been death, held steady but deadly fire on the enemy. Were you willing to die in that moment? Or had the thought not yet crossed your mind? Protecting your comrades in that moment must have taken every ounce of strength and determination you had.

From surviving this, to travelling to Hazebrouck – which was ultimately to be your last stop, on the 24 April 1918. Here I stand, 101 years later to the day. You were pushing back against the Germans. Only seven more months and you could have made it home. Having spent the last week wandering through the fields and towns of France and Belgium, I wonder where you are. Every part of me wishes I could take you back to your beautiful little corner of Bruny. But instead, I bring a little bit of that corner to you. I collected this sand on a windy autumn day. Overcast, choppy, alone on the beach – one of my favourite ways to enjoy Bruny, and as I walked I wondered how many times had you walked this stretch, watching the tide, the ebb, the flow and just pondering life?

Your mother never gave up on you Fred. Her letters are remarkable, the effort and care she went to try and communicate with you and ensure you weren't forgotten.

You wouldn't believe it, that your great great great nephew is one of my closest friends. We had no idea until I embarked on this journey. He was moved to learn of your story and to pass it on to his family.

Fred, for a stranger, I have never felt closer to someone. I feel such a strong connection to you. I won't be able to walk the beaches of Bruny without you in my mind again – and I am so proud of that. Thank you Fred, for your service and dedication. You were lost, to the fallacy of war, but never forgotten.

Lest we forget.