

Christopher Stephen Sharp

Pre-Enlistment

Born 7 April 1893 in Newcastle, New South Wales

Moved to Tasmania at age 12 from Locksley NSW

His father was a Baptist Minister in Launceston,
Reverend S. Sharp

Attended Launceston High School

Awarded Bachelor of Arts, University of Tasmania

Worked at Swansea State School and Launceston
High

Married on August 16, 1913 to Bessie Marsh

Headmaster at Devonport High School when it
opened in Lodge Rooms at the Devonport Town Hall
in 1916

When headmaster of Devonport High, Sharp rented
75 Best Street from a teacher colleague, Mr London

MARRIAGES.
SHARP-MARSH.—On August 16, at Hobart,
Christopher Stephen, eldest son of Rev.
S. Sharp, Launceston, to Bessie, daughter
of William Barber Marsh, of setting-
bourne, Kent, England.



1916 Devonport High Football Team, furthest left, C.S. Sharp

Enlistment

Resigned from school at the end of 1916 after being accepted for active
service abroad.

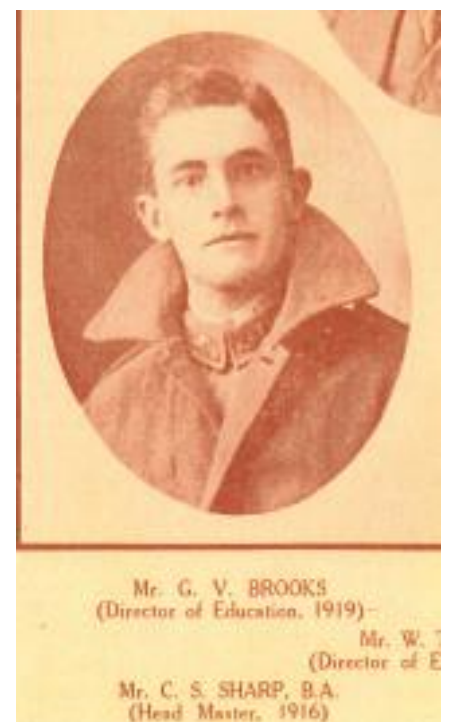
Christopher was the eldest of five – four of whom were boys. At this point
in history, three out of four brothers have enlisted, one was on a battle
cruiser (Alfred Edwin Sharp) and another was a gunner in France (Herbert)
(all survived the war).

The North-Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times wrote “we must
congratulate him on the step he has taken and admire that Christopher
was a married man with a young family who responded to the call of
duty.” The Mercury reported that his wife and family would remain in
Hobart, possibly Clarence Road, Bellerive.

On 4 January 1917, Christopher entered a training camp at Claremont.

Sharp’s wife gave birth to a son on 6 September 1917.

Travelled by train from Claremont to Devonport where his pupils bid him
farewell at the station. At this stage his rank has changed from Private to
Corporal.



Image, *The Devonian* 1926

Christopher Stephen Sharp

Departing Victoria

He spent several months in a Victorian training camp before departing on 30 October 1917 as a member of the 9th Reinforcements, 40th Battalion travelling on HMAT Aeneas. He recorded details about this journey and these were published in *The Advocate* as a three-part piece. He details the Australian character traits including telling furphys, playing games, whale watching and adjusting to the tropics.

WHEN YOU JOIN UP

(By Sergt. C. S. Sharp).

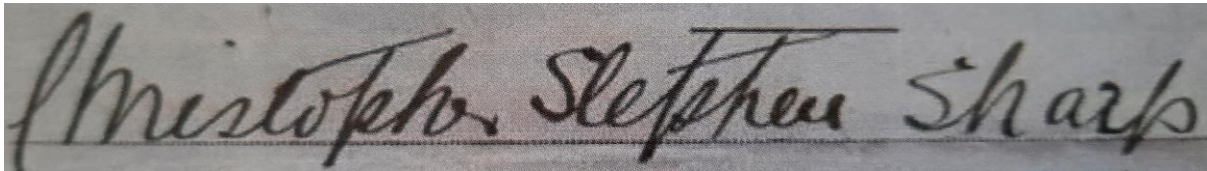
A soldier's life is not all 'beer skittles,' but it is not all hardship and fighting either. Our men have some wonderful experiences and some wonderful trips that would cost them hundreds of pounds were they taken in the capacity of a civilian. Sergt. C. S. Sharp formerly of Devonport, gives a graphic account of his trip to the 'Old Land,' and of the doings en route, that not only makes interesting reading, but gives an exact idea of what to expect when one decides to 'play the game,' and join up. Sergt. Sharp will speak for himself: - Au Revoir. Noon on October 30, 1917, was the hour when A60, laden with wool and copper and human freight, slowly drew out from the pier at Port Melbourne, and her long voyage across the ocean began. She was setting out to circumvent Teuton cunning and piracy, and to convey fighting men to the shores of Britain. Half an hour before the ropes were cast off, the vast crowd of civilian friends of the troops were allowed on the wharf. How they streamed up from the distant barrier to the ship's side! Myriads of paper streamers were soon fluttering in the breeze - the last frail physical union between soldier and friend, mother, sweetheart or pal. Hundreds of last messages of love and comfort were passed up and down on running cords, and so the last half hour sped. Then we cast off: one by one the streamers parted, until the last fragile tie snapped, and the separation was complete."

North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times, Friday 17 May 1918, p. 4.

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9th reinforcements to the 40th Battalion ready to board HMAT Aeneas, taken 30th October, 1917. Sharp has not been identified in either image, assumed present

Abroad

Sharp wrote about his arrival to England, and that the crew were offered bananas, oranges and postcards by the negroes who unloaded the ship. He described the gents as 'a fine lot of chaps'.

It was noted that Sharp marched into 10th training battalion, Sutton-Manderville on Boxing Day, 1917.

On 11 February 1918, Sharp was on command at Officers Training School, Candahar, Tidworth.

When arriving in England, Sharp moved to Sutton-Mandeville, a military training and transit camp. This included the Fovant camp, where Sharp arrived on 30 March 1918.

Sharp departed England for France via the port of Folkstone, Kent.

On 24 April, 1918, Sharp arrived in Etaples. Etaples was the scene of immense concentrations of Commonwealth reinforcement camps and hospitals. It served as a training and retraining ground for forces about to enter battle; a depot for supplies; a detention centre for prisoners, both allied and enemy; and, administered nearly 20 general hospitals that served the wounded from the Somme battlefields. It was remote from attack, except from aircraft, and accessible by railway from both the northern or the southern battlefields.

On 1 May 1918, Sharp is taken on strength by the 40th Battalion, 9th Reinforcements.

In 1918, the 40th Battalion played a major role on the Western Front including the Battle of the Somme where they held back the German offensive at Morlancourt. The 40th participated in a series of minor actions to assist in blocking the German offensive, which ultimately ended the war, with the 40th helping drive the Germans back to the Hindenburg Line.

Sharp attended hospital (field medical unit) between 16 and 20 May, 1918. There may have been a bullet wound, as correspondence indicates confusion over the location of the bullet in his buttock.

In August, the Advocate published correspondence from Sharp to advise that he was well and had returned from a long stint on the front line in France. He was intending on spending a months' time at school and welcomed the break from the harsh labours of the front. He described the Australian soldiers at the front as "hanging onto the job and doing their bit."

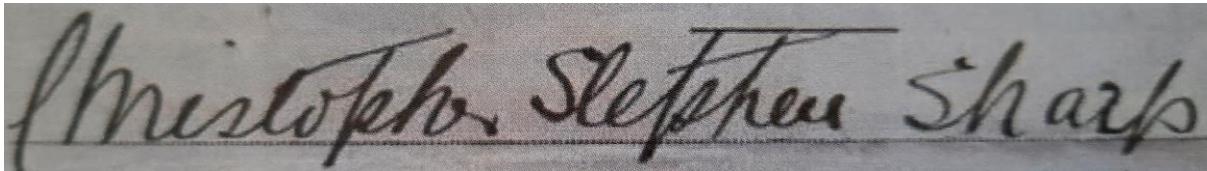
A month before the war ended, Sharp was reported in the 431st casualty list as *ill*. His personal records show that he was suffering from appendicitis. He was admitted to hospital on August 4 and journeyed back to the United Kingdom for medical care, arriving on 12 August at Reading War Hospital, Berkshire.

Discharged from hospital, to attend Littlemoor Camp, Weymouth. During this time, the 40th Battalion had suffered heavy casualties, which they had been unable to replace as enlistments had fallen, and it had consequently been withdrawn from the line for reorganisation and rest in October, as directed by Prime Minister Billy Hughes.

He left the war as Warrant Officer First Class, whilst holding the appointment of RSM (Regimental Sergeant Major).

He was among last to depart from Weymouth, England, returning to Tasmania via the Pakeha in 1920.

Discharged from service in Hobart on 14 January, 1920.



Awarded British War Medal and Victory Medal.

Sharp's name is in print on the Launceston High school honour board.

After the War

During the war, there were many attempts to produce newspapers, however, the plants were often bombed. With the cessation of hostilities towards the end of the war, there were various centres and courses of training established, including the AIF Education Service Journal. This was printed at Weymouth and was an informative and comprehensive record of the work done by men who were pending embarkation for Australia. This paper was edited by Warrant-Officer C. S. Sharpe and through this paper, he was able to display his passion about ensuring returned servicemen were cared for and employed, and that their efforts were not for nothing. The title of the paper was Fiveaustra and it published the following thought-provoking piece about how Australia needed to embrace the lesson learned by soldiers to move the country forward – BE UP AND DOING:

THE GREAT PEACE:

By Fiveaustra (ed. C.S. Sharp)

26 July 1919

At the Peace Day procession at Devonport, there was something that caused one to reflect for a moment on what the victory we were celebrating had cost. It was a display in memory of the slain and reminds us not only of the gallant boys who laid down their lives for us but helps us to remember that the fallen have left behind wives and little ones who are needing care and protection. 58,923 brave boys made the supreme sacrifice, 67,000 were wounded, and over 87,000 were sick. The question then arises for a moment: Was it all worth it? It is an important question, and though one at first is inclined to crush it as being absurd, one must ponder on it for a moment and note if by any chance there could arise a possibility of the sacrifice being too great; and one will conclude that there may be a possibility of these brave boys who passed beyond having died in vain.

Those who have not suffered must do their duty. It is in our hands today to prove the sacrifice as having been worthwhile. If Australia wastes time and fails to respond to the call for the best in us to push ahead in the great era of development that is opening up, then there is a change that the glorious achievements of Gallipoli, Pozieres, the Holy Land and those other great places will have been wasted. Australia today is entering a wonderful field of opportunity. Her sons have shown that they are of a breed that is well worth-while. The sacrifices made by those who could not fight are remembered with gratitude by those nations of Europe and our charity funds went to help, and if we do not shake off...every indication of 'don't care', then we will indeed have much to regret. The lesson the Great War, "BE UP AND DOING" has been well learned by the boys who have come home; it is up to Australia today to put that lesson into general practice.

Sharp worked in various schools in Fiji and Australia.

He worked as an Education Officer during WW2.

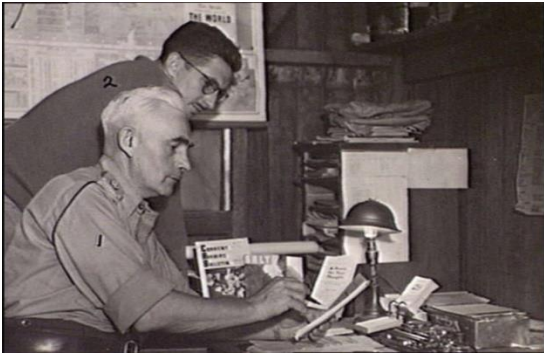
He also worked in radio stations across Australia.

He died on 24 June 1976, aged 83 and his memorial is in NSW at the Northern Suburbs Memorial Gardens and Crematorium, East Terrace 3, Wall 4.

Christopher Stephen Sharp



Three images taken 29 July 1943 in Barrine, Queensland, staff of the Australian Army Education Service, taken outside their hut. Front Row, Middle (2), Major C. S. Sharp, Deputy Assistant Director, nursing dog 'Little Hero', the unit mascot.



29 July, 1943. Sharp, person 1.



Troops of the 2nd Australian Corps enjoying a singsong in the Australian Army Education Service Hut at Headquarters, 2nd Australian Corps.