

Friends of Soldiers Walk Inc: Newsletter

Issue 12

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Management Plan

The Hobart City Council endorsed the Management Plan on Monday April 26th. The endorsement signals a new phase in the story of the Avenue with Council and community once more in a partnership to maintain this amazing Avenue. In the future the Avenue will be something we can all be proud of as a tribute to the local men who died in the Great War.

The plan as endorsed was basically the same as that circulated to members. One amendment is that soil sculpting will be investigated as a way of maximising the water getting to trees; that is following the original practice of flattening the area around trees to catch water and also directing runoff from the path towards trees. A formal launch will be organised for June/July.

Over the next year the main physical changes likely to be seen on the Avenue are the first removals of trees from the Avenue footprint, removal of blue gums (subject to DPIWE approval), the first trial of mulching around trees in poor health and so on. The propagation of replacement trees will also commence though we are not likely to see new plantings for some years yet.

The endorsement of the plan also means we can now plan for the FOSW role in restoration and over the next month the Committee will be developing a fundraising plan for consideration at a meeting of members. This will focus on raising funds to put nameplates at all trees. More on this in the next issue.

Next Working bee

We are aiming for **Sunday 1 August** for our next working bee. This will focus in part on putting more durable number labels by all trees. More visible it will make the trees easier to find but also indicate to the casual passer-by just how extensive the Avenue is. Thanks to the Mike Wilkie who has been working hard examining options and then producing them; more on this later. August will also see our third AGM, again details of date and venue in the next issue.

Website and Map Launch

This was held at the Gunpowder Magazine on the Domain on Friday April 23rd at 11am. There was a decent roll-out with Lt Col Jan Hyde (OC ADF Tas), Michael Hodgman MHA, Deputy Lord Mayor Eva Ruzicka in attendance with the actual launch by Alderman Peter Sexton, Chair Parks and Customer Services Committee. Alderman Sexton noted as part of his address that the Council had not done the best job in maintaining the Avenue over the years and apologised on behalf of the Council to relatives of those commemorated. These comments were warmly acknowledged by those present.

Press coverage came from Southern Cross News, who attended, WIN-TV and the Mercury, who did not. The site is now full operational at www.soldierswalk.org.au.

Copies of the map will be mailed to all members. It will also be distributed through local museums, tourist information centres, libraries and schools. The map has so far received excellent feedback and a big thanks must go to Mik O'Leary whose design skills are very much in evidence in both the map and the website. Also a big thanks to PML who worked a few miracles to get maps to Hobart for the launch and did a great job with the printing. Paddy Egan of Total Web Solutions also did excellent work with the programming to allow the database searches on the web site and who is hosting the site for us. Other recent publicity came via the ABC with a Sunday morning interview with Chris Wisby on May 9th.

Soldier's Letter



Tree #500 was planted for Gnr Reg Escott of Sandy Bay, both Reg and his brother Les enlisted. Reg enlisted 19 August 1915 and embarked with the 17th Battery 6th Brigade Australian Field Artillery. Reg lived at 69 Princes St Sandy Bay and worked as an accounts clerk at Jones IXL. He had been in the Cadets pre-war and then served in the militia. He attended the Battery Point State School. He was killed on 8 August 1918 near Framervilles in France. His tree is one of the few that remain near the Crossroads. The following article appeared in the Mercury in July 1918.

An Artillery Man in France

Private Reg Escott, son of Mr Escott of the Customs Department, Hobart, writing to a friend in Hobart under date May 9, says:-At last the German has made his long-talked-of offensive. He has done very well, indeed, up t

the present. We were in action up on the northern part of the line prior to the attack there on the 9th. At 4 a.m. we were loading our guns and horses at a station some distance from the firing line, when the great bombardment started. We were lucky, as we had pulled our guns out of action two days before the attack. Now we are down south, but beyond heavy artillery action we have not had any more infantry attacks by the enemy. Last night we advanced our line about 800 yards, capturing 200 prisoners and a number of machine-guns, some of which were captured from us last month. I am glad to hear that Tasmania has supplied two battle planes. It is hard to describe the good work done by our airmen. A large number of our aeroplanes have been up the last few days on account of good weather. I am pleased to say we have an Australian fighting squadron and an observing squadron operating with us. This morning four enemy machines came over and attacked one of our observing planes, bringing it down. An Australian machine gunner was successful in bringing down the famous German airman who was credited with 80



Reg (left) and Les (right) with family in 1915.

Allied machines.

An exciting incident took place a week ago. Shortly after 6 p.m. an enemy aeroplane was flying over our lines when it was brought down intact, the pilot having four toes shot off and the observer uninjured. General Birdwood came around the battery and inspected us this afternoon. He was telling us that the British fire daily 950,000 tons [sic] of ammunition over to the German lines. My brother left France on April 20, the day before all leave was cancelled. He visited Ireland, spending about eight days there. He had an excellent time during his fourteen days. I am in hopes of getting my second leave to England shortly. We have both had eight days in Paris. I am surprised to hear that mines have been found near the East Coast. When in Paris, I saw one at the Hotel des Invalides. They look deadly articles to play about with.



3 Generations: Les and his father Walter, with Les' son Reg, at the tree planted for Gnr Reg Escott. The young Reg served with the RAN in WWII.

An ANZAC Alphabet

This is reprinted from the 10th Brigade News 31 January 1918. Published in Melbourne, this was aimed at returned and wounded men, families and no doubt also the troops with copies sent by ship to depots and base camps. The Melbourne publication was no accident as other than the 40th, a Tasmanian battalion, the rest 37th, 38th and 39th battalions were all Victorian. The News was as much about as for the men of the Brigade. This particular item was reprinted from a New Zealand army publication in France called 'Shells Shocks'. Thanks to John Trethewey for supplying the 10th Brigade News.

*A is for Anzac, a tough sort of joint, with whom the Hun doesn't argue the point.
B is for Birdwood, who thought of the name, and breathed into it with the breath of his fame.*

C is for "Cobbers" though some of them lie amongst rocks and lone plains where our footsteps went by.

D is for Dug-out; there's a shriek and a thud, and you say: "Well by jingo, that last was a dud."

E is for Egypt, a h--- of a land, consisting of donkeys, diseases and sand.

F's for a language we speak but can't spell, it consists of "No compree; merci boo-coo; Mamsell."

G is for "Gott", who lives chiefly "mits uns", he lives up in one of their sausage balloons.

H is for helmets - for shrapnel or gas, but our Anzac hat is a thing of some class.

J is for Jam of which there are some trench varieties - apricot, damson and plum.

K's for Kaiser and Kultur - also Komrade, - we've all got spiked helmets since last Friday's raid.

L's for the Lice which over us rove, reminding a bloke that he's only a cove.

M's for the Major of "A Company", who collects shell caps, cases - orderly room cases, too.

N is for Nothing -that's what's in our place, since the last "Minny" dropped down ion us - out of space.

O is for "Ossies" - the "scum of the earth" but the Saxons now know what the Prussians are worth.

P is for Parapet - if it's not there you don't a comb or brush for the hair.

Q's for an Anzac carnival queen, who looks for the mailman with envelopes green.

R is for Romans, and others who roam, we used to like roaming, but we wish we were home.

S is for Sandbags, blown into next week, and the swear words three men and a corporal speak.

T is for Trench, which is full up with rats, we like to get post-cards but they they'd send cats.

U is for "Uncle" who got on to me when I sold my "civvies" to get into khaki.

V is for Verdun, where our Siege Brigade H - and Tommy with Kron Prinz and Heinrich have played.

W's for the Wounded, who're wearing gold bars and have come back to look for more glorious scars.

X's for 'xactly, and s what we say when we've marched with full packs and equipment all day.

Y's for Year - if the fourth is as long as the first, the first five years of war must be always the worst.

Z's for a Zeppelin crossing the moon, o, dammit! It's our own observation balloon.

A E Palfreyman

Wonder who Audubon Eric Palfreyman was, besides the handsome devil who graces the home page and the map? His tree #494 was at the northern end of the Avenue where a car park now stands. The following obituary is taken from the *Industrial Australian and Mining Standard* July 4, 1918. The level of hyperbole is extreme even for the times, which is not to say he was not, like many of them, a remarkable young man. While habitual and almost required, this style of eulogy also reflects the incredible sense of loss. It is as if the sheer scale of death and destruction requires larger than life portraits of the men who died.

Death on Active Service of A Gallant Young Australian Business Man

Since the Great War commenced, no brighter or more promising life, no personality more lovable, has been sacrificed on the altar of his country than that of Capt Audubon Eric Palfreyman, of the Royal Flying Corps, who was killed last May in France while leading his squadron into action in the midst of the second stage of the German offensive.



Captain Palfreyman was the youngest son of the Rev J H Palfreyman, of Hobart, and a member of the well-known softgoods firm of Palfreyman and Palfreyman, of that city. He enlisted a private in the AIF in August 1916 but on arrival in England he was almost immediately transferred to the Royal Flying Corps, in which service he rose rapidly from the lowest grade until he attained the rank of Flight-Captain. He gained his final promotion o the field of battle, having greatly distinguished himself both as a fighter and a scout in many engagements with the flying forces of the enemy. On one occasion he brought down tow enemy aeroplanes in individual encounters in the same day; and shortly before his death, he was recommended by his CO for that coveted decoration, the Military Cross.

Captain Palfreyman embodied the best attributes of the typical Australian. Quick brained, resourceful, enterprising, and full of energy, he excelled at most athletic sports, and had already made his mark as a businessman of exceptional capacity before the age of 24. Against the wish of his friends, he deliberately selected the Flying service because, although the most dangerous, it offered the widest scope for his special faculties, the most popular member of a family liked and respected by every Tasmanian citizen, Captain Palfreyman's death has cast the hole island into mourning. By his closer friends, he will be remembered for the sweet and gentle disposition which endeared him to all privileged to know him intimately.

The Mercury as a matter of standard practice regularly published letters received from men overseas and also letters of condolence received by next of kin from unit commanders and fellow soldiers. The following appeared on 19 October 1918 p8.

Rev I H Palfreyman, of Hobart, has received the following letter from Major Douglas Hill, Officer Commanding 27th Squadron Royal Air Force - A note was dropped on our side of the lines telling us that your son, Captain A E Palfreyman, had been killed on the 23rd of May. Your son was leading a formation which was attacked by several German machines, and your son's machine was seen to have been hit, but, of course, we all hoped for the best, and quite thought he might be a prisoner. Alas! I am afraid that there is now no doubt he has gone. From the same source we learn that his observer is a prisoner, seriously wounded. I offer you, from us all, most sincere sympathy n your loss. All of us, without exception, knew your son to be the best, bravest, and most reliable fellow in the squadron. His record here has never been, and never will be equalled, and just before he was brought down he was being awarded a decoration. Personally I am heart broken he has gone, for, besides being my best officer, he was my friend and help - just everything, and I know that for certain that no

finer, truer fellow ever stepped. I am so proud to have known him and to have had him in my squadron, and I know how proud you must feel in your great sorrow to have possessed such a gallant and fine son. With all my sympathy to you and Mrs Palfreyman in your great loss.

The Avenue 1919



This photograph was provided by John Trethewey and was recently discovered among a set of glass negatives from W Fellowes, a photographer in Hobart during the Great War. The negatives were donated by Mrs Pearce of Sorell and include many shots of men at Claremont camp. This photograph was dated November 1919 and shows the southern part of the Avenue down near the house on Carriage Drive. Note that a row of guarded trees crosses the main avenue in the middle distance on a path dropping from the ridge (near a small cricket pitch) and passes down the slope towards the Zoo and Botanical Gardens.

Note also how stones have been piled around some tree sites to landscape around the site and tidy things up. This may also have helped preserve moisture around the tree. The vista is very open with only white gums present. Grazing was allowed on the Domain at this time.

A big thanks to Duncan Kerr's office for photocopying.

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