

**Annexure B: Fromelles Day Epilogue**  
**Jim Munro, President, Families and Friends of the First AIF**

Good morning Guests, ladies and gentlemen and children.

Firstly, I like to thank all those who have been involved in organising today's Commemoration, on this glorious day in Sydney at the recently extended Anzac Memorial. I would also like to thank those who have participated in our Order of Service for give our Commemoration meaning. I would also like to thank all of the Dignitaries, representatives of Ex-Service and Descendants' organisations and particularly descendants and their friends who have been able to participate in the Commemorative Procession and Commemoration.

Secondly, I would like to acknowledge the presence of our defence personnel and in particular would like to thank the senior defence officers who have joined us today as we remember the citizen soldiers who heard the call and took on responsibilities with consequences they did not fully understand and gave up their vocations to do what they saw as their duty. We thank those citizen soldiers and we thank the current professional soldiers both full-time and part-time for their preparedness for taking on the unforeseen risks and challenges in our technological and dynamic world.

I would also like to thank Patrick Lindsay and the Students of St Clare's College Waverley for the Commemorative Address and the other assistance they have brought to this Commemoration. We wish them well with their upcoming documentary project to highlight the courage of the fallen soldiers in the Battle of Fromelles as told through the eyes of the women left behind.

I am particularly pleased that Warrant Officer Class 2 Nathan Grumley has been able to join us today as part of the Australian Army National Flag Party and has been able to walk in the footsteps of his great grandfather Private William Grumley. It is possible that William Grumley was one of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division veterans in the 1966 parade from the Archibald Fountain to this Anzac Memorial on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle to ask the Trustees to always remember the service and sacrifice of their 5<sup>th</sup> Division comrades who died during the Great War and others who had died since then. The Trustees have honoured that request each year as we do today. And for Warrant Officer Grumley to be accompanied by three generations of family who have also walked in the footsteps of Private William Grumley makes this a very special occasion for them and for us.

It is also special for us that we have descendants of two of the seven soldiers who have had their identity returned and will have headstones bearing their names dedicated at the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery later today. We acknowledge the relatives of:

- Private Arthur George BATT 32nd Bn. A.I.F. age 32 of Hilton, South Australia.
- Private Edward James HOPE 54th Bn. A.I.F. age 28 of Penrith, New South Wales.

This brings to 166 the number of soldiers who have had their identity confirmed, largely through DNA matching with their descendants out of the 250 soldiers buried by the Germans following the disastrous Battle. Another 67 soldiers are known who were buried by German soldiers. The identities of the remaining 17 soldiers are amongst the list of the 1,100 Australian soldiers killed in the battle still with no known grave. This builds on the research undertaken by Lambis Englezos in 2006 that Patrick Lindsay referred to that revealed that there were a significant number of Australian soldiers killed in the battle but not accounted for in burials by Australian or British troops. The search for relatives with matching DNA continues and anyone with a relative killed in the battle of Fromelles who has not already

contributed DNA is encouraged to get in contact with the Fromelles Association or the Australian Army Unrecovered War Casualties Unit.

I would also like to mention another of those soldiers identified who will have his named headstone dedicated this evening:

- 1291 Private George HONEY 32nd Bn. A.I.F. age 31 of West Guildford, Western Australia

During the past few years, the Guildford Association has undertaken the Guildford Anzacs Project that records of the impact of WW1 on a whole town in Western Australia. The project identified surviving homes of these Anzacs and marked them with brass poppy plaques. Private Honey was a 30 year old member of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Bn in 8th Brigade when he was killed in the battle of Fromelles.

Another soldier who lived in Guildford was Leon Briand who was born in France and who joined the merchant Navy and later the French navy. In January 1907, Kingston, Jamaica, was hit by a devastating earthquake and the battle cruiser *Kleber* was ordered by the French Government to load with food, medicines and emergency supplies. After leaving supplies at Kingston and arriving back at Havana, Leon was reported missing and recorded as a deserter.

Somehow, he came to Australia and married in Perth. With the outbreak of war in 1914, Pte. Leon Jean Louis Briand enlisted in the AIF 16<sup>th</sup> Bn and fought at Gallipoli. He was promoted to the rank of Corporal before he was seriously injured, sustaining a gun-shot wound to the head from which he suffered for the rest of his days with blinding headaches and an intolerance of noise. He was awarded a Military Medal for bravery in this action.

Leon Briand returned to Australia in 1915 and spent a year recovering in Guildford, WA, before re-enlisting and re-joining his unit in France as Corporal in 1916. He left his wife and two small children with his sister in law who had recently lost her husband on active service. Before going to the Front in France, Cpl Briand visited his parents and was Court Martialled in 1917 for being AWL, resulting in his demotion to Private.

Private Leon Briand was seriously wounded in the Battle of the Hindenburg Line at Bullecourt. Léon was one of the 3,300 casualties receiving severe damage to his right leg and was taken prisoner. Due to his injuries, he was repatriated by the Germans to Holland, then England and returned to Australia in 1918.

He had a hard life in Australia and separated from his family and lost touch with them. He died in 1966, destitute and was buried in an unmarked grave in Geraldton.

As part of the Guildford ANZAC's project, his grave was located and in March this year a headstone acknowledging his war service was placed on his grave in the presence of his descendants. FFFAIF is currently facilitating the development of a national network of Headstone Projects seeking to have the war service of all soldiers who served in the AIF and who returned to Australia, recognised by an appropriate commemoration at their final resting place. The priority is to locate unmarked graves and have them appropriately recognised and the motto is "They Served – They Deserve to Be Remembered".

Cpl Leon Briand was one of the 160 French ANZAC's and his story was written up by our French Cobber, FFFAIF Member Yves Fohlen in our DIGGER Magazine.

In June 2008 the French community in Australia commemorated the contributions of Australian soldiers in France in World War I with the unveiling of a plaque at Memorial Park at Matraville, a suburb of Sydney. In addition, a plaque was presented to commemorate the service of 17 New Caledonians who joined the Australian Imperial Force and the sacrifice of 4 New Caledonians who died during World War I under the Australian flag.

A special gift of street plaques, in the style used in Paris, bearing the names of the streets with major battles in France of relevance to Australian soldiers was made by the French veterans then President, Mr Theo Arfaras. These plaques were erected at Matraville, the site of a soldier settlement after the Great War. <http://ffaif.org.au/?p=456>

In the spirit of Australian larrikinism, someone – possibly a descendant of one of those Australian veteran! – ‘souvenired’ one of the street plaques. Mr Theo Arfaras, as President of the French Veterans in NSW, through contacts he had in France, prevailed upon the *Conseil Général Nord Pas-de-Calais* (the equivalent of a state government) to provide a replacement, which was presented in August 2012. Theo dedicated the replacement street plaque to Private Léon Jean BRIAND. So on both the West Coast and East Coast, the service and sacrifice of Leon Briand has been recognised and is part of the bond between France and Australia during the Great War.

It falls to us, and to our children, and succeeding generations to remember the service and sacrifice of those citizen soldiers who heard the call and joined the Australian Imperial Force, and of the impacts upon their families, friends and communities.

Lest We Forget

Jim Munro  
President  
Families and Friends of the First AIF