



"Dedicated to Digger Heritage"

FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE FIRST AIF INC.

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DIGGER

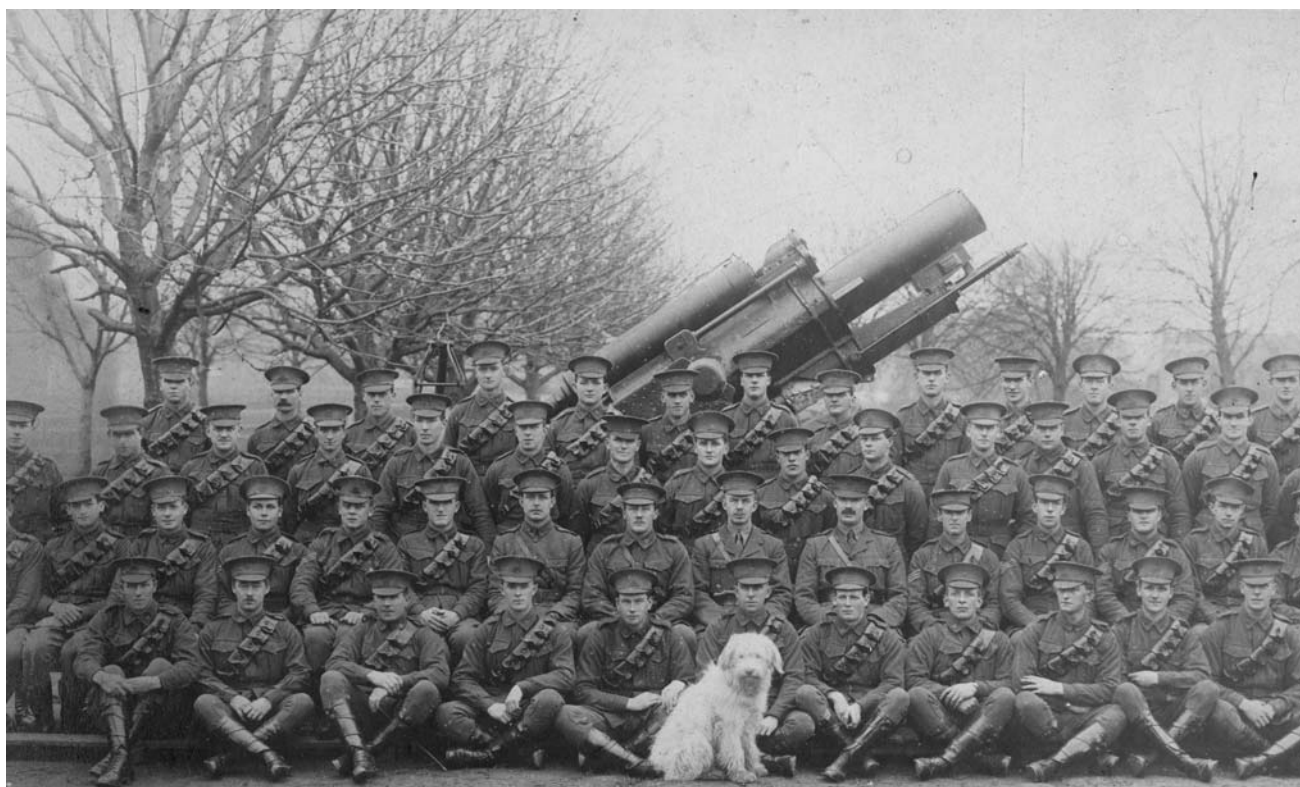


Photo: Part of the 55th Battery, 36th Heavy Artillery Group, with a 9.2 inch Howitzer and their mascot. The men of the Siege Brigades were allowed to wear the badge of the Royal Australian Artillery, instead of the AIF badge, as the majority of the original members of the 36th HAG were members of the Australian Permanent Forces. Sergeant Henry Robinson, fifth from the right in the second row (next to the officer), has a special place in Australian WWI military history. Find out more in this issue of *DIGGER*. Photo courtesy of Andrew Pittaway and the Army Museum of WA.

March 2009

No. 26

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Edited by Graeme Hosken

Answers to DIGGER Quiz No. 26

1. Harold Pope; then Eliazar Margolin; Edmund Alfred Drake-Brockman; Ross Harwood; Leslie Edward Tilney.
2. (a) Three (b) They were: 3970 Pte Martin O'Meara VC; 3399 L/Cpl Thomas Leslie Axford VC, MM; Lieut. Lawrence Dominic McCarthy VC, CdeG (French).
3. 303 inch Maxim Machine Gun.
4. Gun itself: 60lb plus tripod: 48lb, plus one ammunition box with filled belt: 21lb, for a total of 129lb.
5. The normal rate of fire was 450 rounds per minute (Mark VII .303 ammunition being 500 rounds per minute).
6. 1.5 pints of water (around 900ml).
7. Six soldiers were required. Their duties were: No.1 was the firer, cleaned and looked after the gun, and carried the tripod into action; No. 2 carried the gun into action, mounted the gun on its tripod, fed the ammunition to the gun and watched for signals; Nos. 3 and 4 were principally ammunition carriers; No. 3 also arranged the spare parts wallet at the gun position, while No. 4 took the ammunition from the limber to No. 3 when a further supply was required; No. 4 also supplied the condensor complete and half-filled with water; No. 3 was additionally responsible for ensuring the condensor reached the gun before the water boiled; the No.4 then placed his rifle and the rifles of other numbers in the limber; No. 5 acted as a scout; No. 6 was the range taker and spare man.
8. Forty five seconds.
- 9 (a). 12.5 seconds (b) Privates O'Brien, Hatcher and McLeod.
10. Like many other sections, the 16th Machine Gun Section was reorganised in 1916 and absorbed into the 4th Machine Gun Company which served with the four battalions of the 4th Brigade.
11. Three-quarters came from Western Australia, the remainder from South Australia.
12. "The Bluebirds" – after their uniform which was a dark blue shirt and jacket with pale blue piping and a dark blue hat.
13. They had to work their passage home as duty nurses, caring for the AIF wives and babies on ships. The same treatment was given nurses who married. Charles Laffin had to find the fare for his wife, Nellie Pike, to come home to Australia. The Bluebirds were also denied their War Gratuity by the Australian Government.
14. Lieutenant Harry Moffitt of the 53rd Battalion.
15. No; Lieut. Harry Moffitt was KIA during the battle of Fromelles on 19th July 1916 and is believed to be buried in Pheasant Wood.
16. The Florence Nightingale Medal. During the war, King was awarded the MM and twice mentioned in dispatches.
17. Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service.
18. These were transports pressed into service as hospital ships, despite not being equipped to handle medical cases.
19. No. 3 General Hospital on Lemnos Island, off the coast of the Dardanelles Peninsula. The hospital equipment did not arrive until three weeks after the hospital was established. The nurses were treating the soldiers on the ground because of the lack of suitable accommodation.
20. The 21st Battalion was the first AIF Battalion to commence active operation on the Western Front and was the last Battalion to withdraw from active operations on the Western front.

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