



Rededication of the Plaque ceremony

Major General Greg Garde AO RFD (retd)

In his capacity as a Judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria

City of Greater Bendigo, Victoria

Wednesday 15 November 2017

Councillor Margaret O'Rourke, Mayor of the City of Greater Bendigo, Councillors, Mr Tom Wolf, President of the Bendigo Law Association, other distinguished guests and importantly members of the Hyett, Mackay and Connelly families, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for the opportunity to attend this commemoration ceremony in honour of four fine lawyers who answered Australia's call a century ago and gave their lives on the battlefields of Anzac and France. The memorial was first unveiled by Lord Stradbroke, Governor of Victoria on 15 November 1921.

War is a carnage, always terrible, often futile, and always wasteful as the loss of these fine men demonstrates. Clive, Eric, Alan and Murdoch (as I shall describe these outstanding young officers) had immense talent and capacity. At any other time, they would have lived a productive, professional career and wonderful family life. They had the world in front of them, and would have been judges, barristers, partners of legal firms and community leaders in Victoria. The tragedy and distress of their loss to their families and the community of Bendigo cannot be under estimated. By accident of history, they belonged to a lost generation of young Australians who served in the Great War. It is hard for us to understand the impact on a nation of only 5 million to lose 60,000 dead and several times that number of maimed, wounded, or injured.

Many members of the legal profession have answered the call of military service when Australia is in need. Names like Major General Pompey Elliott, Sir Edmund Herring, Sir Victor Windeyer, Sir Ninian Stephen and very many others quickly come to mind. The Honour Roll in the entrance of the Supreme Court of Victoria at Melbourne stands witness to their service and loss. Clive, Eric,



Alan and Murdoch were of exceptional talent and intellect by any standard. Three of them had prior military service as volunteers with the Victorian Senior Cadets and in the militia battalions. As trained infantry officers, the need for their service in the 1st AIF was extremely high. They and others like them were expected to command and lead the Australian forces to be sent overseas. They answered the call as was their duty regardless of the very high risk to life and limb. Infantry leadership at the Captain and Lieutenant level in war brings with it the need for the highest level of individual bravery, and the highest level of personal exposure. Infantry leaders are under a duty to ensure that their soldiers achieve the objectives assigned to them. Their casualty rate is always higher than the troops they lead. Whenever identified, they are a high priority target for enemy troops.

Clive lost his life leading an attack during an important offensive. He was killed during the critically important attack on Hill 60. Having returned from injury only four days earlier, he led a renewed attack on Hill 60 on 28 August 1915. Hill 60 was ground of great tactical importance because it linked the Anzac beachhead with the landings by British Forces at Suvla Bay. In leading the third attack, Clive knew this. He also knew that two previous attacks on Hill 60 on 21 and 27 August 1915 had failed, that the Turks were fully alerted and reinforced, and that almost certainly he and his troops would be subject to great loss of life. Three quarters of Clive's attacking force were quickly casualties. He himself was shot three times leading the attack. His younger brother, Eric, was wounded on Gallipoli. Subsequently, he was twice mentioned in despatches and awarded the Distinguished Service Order. Despite his repeated bravery in action, he almost survived the war, sadly being killed by a bomb dropped on the Headquarters 3rd Australian Division, near Peronne in the valley of the River Somme only two months before the Armistice.

Alan also lost his life from artillery shell splinters when riding a bicycle between his unit and its divisional headquarters at the junction known as Hyde Park Corner. It was an important and



dangerous road junction and a high priority for enemy artillery. Today, there are numerous war cemeteries under the control of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in this area of Belgium.

Murdoch fought at Gallipoli and in the trenches in France. During the battle of Pozieres, he was rallying Australian soldiers for an attack on the German trenches when he was shot by machine gun fire. He was mentioned in despatches for his courage and actions. There were over 23,000 Australian casualties and 7,000 killed in the battle of Pozieres. Australian War Historian, Charles Bean, described Pozieres as 'more densely sown with Australian sacrifice than any other place on Earth'.

Clive, Eric, Alan and Murdoch lost their lives at the average age of 27 years. They are heroes of Bendigo, and it is fit that they should be recognised as heroes by the Bendigo community and all Australians. They are recognised by this plaque in their home city and not far from the historic court building in which they practiced law.

Today we honour and remember them and commemorate their lives and service to Australia. We also remember all who served Australia and all members of the armed services who have given their lives for Australia in war. We particularly remember the families, the immense shock of the loss of their sons, their grief and sorrow. We reflect on the sacrifice of the four young officers and honour their loss. It is with great humility that we rededicate the plaque to these four Bendigo and Australian heroes.