

APERAHAMA, Puri Tea (Edwin ABRAHAM)



Second XI. Hockey Team, 1913.

Back Row (left to right) - Students W.J. Saunders, R.E. Buckingham, F.N. McGowen, R.E. McArthur, R.H. Threlfall. Middle Row - Students S.G. Raymond, H.G. Belschner, A.J. Atkinson, Mr. F.B. Hinton, Student H.F. Best. Sitting - Student H.K.L. Hughes, R. Hollingworth, E.A. Abraham.

University Archives Ref: AI-45625 HAC Journal (Vol.11, No.1) January 1914 p.12

Puri Tea Aperahama, a Maori (he appears on all official documents as Edwin Abraham), was born at Taihape, New Zealand in about 1894.

Puri entered HAC in January 1913 to commence the Full Diploma Course. He was a member of the second hockey team in 1913, and both the first and second teams in 1914. The College Journal reported that Puri was 'a fast left wing, good hustler and good shot' (AI-45639 October 1914 p.150).

Puri was Recording Secretary of the Students' Christian Union in 1914, and is mentioned in the August 1915 Journal as also having been a Rugby player.

Puri gained the First Year Certificate, and finished 3rd in the class in Second Year Agriculture in 1914.

Puri enlisted in the 1st Veterinary Section on 28 October 1914, whilst a student of the College. He embarked as part of the 5th Mobile Veterinary Section, Australian Veterinary Corps, on 19 December 1914 from Sydney, New South Wales, on board Transport A31 *Ajana*.

In July 1915, Puri wrote to the College from Cairo, "we of the 1st Vet. Corps are all well. The 13th Light Horse and the 20th Infantry are here, ' Jerry' Pentland and F. Power are in the 12th Light Horse. A.C. Kershaw was here this morning and reported the ambulance boys all well. They are on the beach at Alexandria. Solid training keeps all the units busy, and everything is quiet and in earnest. R.F. Ellis sent a line from the Dardanelles three weeks ago" (AI-46360 HAC Journal Oct 1915 p.155).

After serving in the Middle East and France, a Medical Board recommended Puri should be discharged as permanently incapacitated, the result of stress from the campaign, and that he be repatriated to Australia.

Puri returned to Australia on 18 October 1917 suffering from dementia praecox. 'He was scheduled for discharge in NSW, but his condition had worsened on the voyage aboard HMAT Belltana to the extent that he was taken from the ship when it landed in Melbourne and was transferred to the Royal Park Mental Hospital. He was later moved to 5 AGH (Australian General Hospital) in St. Kilda Road, Melbourne... Compounding the tragedy and perhaps explaining his mental condition was the fact that both his mother and the sister named as next of kin had also died of tuberculosis while he was overseas'

(Auckland War Memorial Museum <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph/record/80516>).

Puri died on 18 January 1918, from 'tubercular peritonitis, pneumonia, and toxæmia exhaustion (First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers, 1914-1920 <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=3018352>), aged 21, and is buried at Coburg Pine Ridge Cemetery, Coburg, Victoria, Australia.