

ARNOLD, Ralph Irving



Ralph Irving Arnold

Queenslander Pictorial Supplement 20 March 1915 p22
<https://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/browse/person/74626>



London Cemetery and Extension, Longueval,
France.

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Looking northwest from the Australian Memorial at the Pozzières windmill site. At left can be seen Thiepval Memorial above the treeline. The low terracotta roof among the trees at right, is Mouquet Farm.

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Ralph Irving Arnold was born at St Leonards, NSW in 1888. He was the fourth of seven children born to Richard Aldous and Annie Emma Arnold. Richard was a clerk in the Legislative Assembly.

Ralph attended Sydney Grammar School and entered HAC, aged 16, in 1905. He completed the First Year Certificate of the Diploma in 1905. He played tennis in 1905, and competed in athletics and First XV Rugby in 1906.

In June 1906, Ralph left the College and during 1907 worked on sheep properties at Molong and Canowindra in the central west of NSW. He then headed north and continued working with sheep on Queensland's Darling Downs. Around 1910 he worked on a property for Alan T Paull's father while Alan was studying at Hawkesbury (both Alan T Paull, and his brother, Frank E Paull, studied at HAC, from 1909 and 1913 respectively. Both later enlisted and survived the war). In 1914, Ralph wrote to the College having just returned to Dalby, Queensland, from a droving trip, where they drove 7000 sheep through the Burnett district.

The October 1912 College Journal reported that Ralph was an overseer on Cecil Plains Station, Darling Downs, and hoping to secure a grazing farm or other suitable holding and start on his own.

On 12 December 1914 (while still working as a station overseer), he enlisted with the 2nd Light Horse Regiment, 3rd Reinforcement in Queensland, embarked from Brisbane aboard HMAT A53 Itria on 9 February 1915, and was sent to the Gallipoli Peninsula on 14 July 1915.

On 12 March 1916, Ralph gained a commission as a Second Lieutenant with the 15th Battalion, then embarked for France. On 8 August 1916, the battalion was attacking an enemy trench near Mouquet Farm in the closing stages of the Battle of Pozières, when Second Lieutenant Arnold was killed. He had turned 28 just five days earlier. Early in 1936, during exhumation works in North Pozières, Ralph's identity disc was found. It was then that he was formally buried at London Cemetery and Extension, Longueval, France. Fellow HAC student J Roy Felan is also buried there; he had been killed 12 days prior to Arnold, and like Arnold, Felan's remains had also been discovered in 1936.

Three Arnold brothers served during World War One. Aldous Campbell Arnold enlisted 15 October 1915, was a Captain in the Australian Army Medical Corps, and returned to Australia as a Major on 23 September 1919.

Geoffrey Penrose Arnold enlisted 9 October 1916, was a Captain in the Australian Army Medical Corps, was awarded a Military Cross at Villers-Bretonneux in April 1918 for '...conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. During a night counter attack this officer formed his regimental aid post in the open just in front of the jumping off line, and continued to dress wounded there for twenty four hours, under continuous fire. The medical officers of two other battalions both became casualties early in the attack, and he attended to the wounded of those battalions besides his own. His coolness and splendid work saved scores of lives.' Geoffrey returned to Australia 18 July 1919, and was later a medical practitioner in Windsor, NSW.