



Durrington
In The News
– from Australia

SALISBURY PLAIN MEMORIAL

TRIBUTE TO AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS

Thousands of Australian soldiers who put in their war training in the famous camps of Salisbury Plain – Larkhill, Tidworth, Codford, Bulford and others – will have the chords of memory stirred by the following article.

Many survivors of the Great War, safely back in their homes in Australia, will remember how, on leaving Larkhill to recuperate, they spent an enjoyable time in the institute managed by Miss Pigott, wife of Major Pigott, on the banks of the Avon, opposite the old grey church at Durrington.

Not far from the Avon is the cemetery, where 141 Australian soldiers lie buried, within sight of Larkhill. Here on Sunday, July 12, was unveiled a memorial to their memory, and to those of 122 other war victims – British, Canadian, American and foreign (writes a Melbourne “Herald” correspondent.)

The scene round the memorial was one not easily to be forgotten. There, facing the simple, but massive stone monument stood the Bishop of Salisbury (the Rt. Rev. St. Clair Donaldson) for so long the Bishop, and later Archbishop of Brisbane. Ranged round the memorial were generals, colonels and other officers. Beyond them was a guard of honor of about 230 ex-Service men, all wearing medals, a large number of the R.A.O.B. and other associations and troops from the districts around, including three companies of R.E., R.G.A., and R.A.F, from Larkhill, Netheravon and Bulford. Close by were the trumpeters to sound the Last Post and the Reveille.

Some of the names of those present will arouse memories. These included all the Australian Agents-General in London but not the High Commissioner, Sir Joseph Cook, who was represented by General T. H. Dodds, of the Imperial War Graves Commission and Staff Corps, Australia. The military men included Lieut-Col. E. Crawford (Larkhill), Col.-Comdt. W. Stirling (Larkhill), Col. Comdt. H. C. Stanley Clarke (Bulford), Major-General Sir W.G. Heneker, commanding 3rd Divn. and Salisbury Plain area; General Sir R. C. B. Haking and Major H. L. Pigott (Durrington).

THE UNVEILING

The sun was scorching down on the heads of the huge throng of spectators, when General Dodds asked General Sir Alexander Godley, Chief of the Southern Command, Salisbury to unveil the memorial.

General Dodds said that as the official representative of the Australian Army in England, he felt it a great honor to be present. Of the 215 men for whom that shrine had been erected, 141 were Australians. During the war 400,000 Australians answered the call and enlisted for service. Of these it was estimated that at least a quarter of a million passed through the training camps in that immediate

neighborhood, Larkhill, Tidworth, Perham Downs, Codford and other places, continued General Dodds, were ingrained in the memory of every Australian who had returned home.

He felt sure that there were thousands of them who occasionally turned their hearts back, and thought of a comrade they had left behind in a little cemetery at Durrington.

He would like to express the appreciation of Australian soldiers for the satisfactory way in which the War Graves Commission had performed the task which had devolved upon them.

He thought it was most fitting that General Godley should have been asked to unveil the memorial. General Godley was very closely associated with Australian troops during the war. In Gallipoli his Anzac Division included the 4th Australian Brigade, and later on, the Australian Light Horse Regiment. Later, in France, his division always contained one, and for a great part of the time, two Australian Divisions.

BISHOP DONALDSON

It was also most appropriate that the Lord Bishop of Salisbury had participated in the ceremony, seeing that he was the son of one whose name would go down in Australian history as the first Premier of New South Wales under responsible government. The bishop himself spent many years of his life in Australia as bishop and later as archbishop of Brisbane. During his residence in Queensland he visited all parts of his dioceses and brought his sympathy to lonely settlements in the bush. It was nearly twenty years ago since he last saw the bishop. At that time the bishop had ridden several hundreds of miles on horseback to the most out-back places in Queensland and then had several hundreds of miles to ride. He was sure that on such visits his lordship must have learned to admire the type of man whose memory that memorial stone commemorated.

General Godley then unveiled the memorial. After saying some words on the courageous conduct of the troops in general during the war, he paid special tribute to the Australian troops who had distinguished themselves so gallantly on so many occasions on some of the greatest battlefields.

The bishop pronounced the dedication and the service proceeded. The trumpeters sounded the Last Post and then from the other side of the monument the Reveille.

The words engraved on the memorial are:-

“To the honored memory of those sailors and soldiers who gave their lives for their country in the Great War 1914-1918 and who lie buried in this cemetery.”

“THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE.”

The four flagstaffs were erected at the corners of the raised ground on which the memorial stands, the Union Jack, the Australian flag, the Canadian, and the American, representing the nationalities of the soldiers buried at Durrington. The memorial is of Portland stone and was set up by Messrs. Turvey and Sons, sculptors of Bath from plans and designs furnished by the Imperial War Graves Commission.

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