Captain Aubrey REYNOLDS

582 – 6th, 2nd, & 12th Light Horse Regiments
1st Light Horse Double Regiment
4th & 17th Australian Camel Regiments

Aubrey Reynolds was born in Carlton, Victoria, in 1894 to Sylvanus Partridge and Susan Anne (nee Young) Reynolds. The couple had four children: Lionel (b1888), Sylvanus Roy (b 1890), Doris (B 1892), and Aubrey (b1894). Susan's father, John Young, appointed Sylvanus Reynolds to manage the sheep and cattle business at Burrawong, Cumnock, in 1895.

Aubrey "Togo" Reynolds would have attended school at The King's School in Sydney and had Cadet training. Aubrey enlisted in the AIF at Holdsworthy on 6 Dec 1914, aged 20yrs. Prior to enlisting he was a grazier at Burrawong, and was a member of the Cumnock Show Society. His father Sylvanus Reynolds, of Burrawong, was listed as his next of kin.

As part of the 6th Light Horse Regiment, Trooper Reynolds embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Suevic* A29, on 21 Dec 1914, and was part of the 2nd Australian convoy that left Albany, WA, on 31 Dec 1914 for Egypt.

The 6th Light Horse Regiment distinguished itself from all other Light Horse Regiments with the use of the wallaby fur puggaree around the felt hat. The 6th Light Horse Regiment volunteered to operate as infantry on Gallipoli and landed on 20 May 1915. They were mainly deployed on defensive activities on the far right of the front line. While in Gallipoli, Aubrey was appointed as a Lance Corporal on 9 Aug 1915, Sergeant on 13 Oct 1915, and as 2nd Lieutenant on 19 Nov 1915.

After returning to Alexandria on 25 Dec 1915, the 6th Light Horse Regiment became a foundation member of the ANZAC Mounted Division. On 1 Mar 1916, 2nd Lieut Reynolds was transferred to the 2nd Light Horse Reserve Regiment at Maadi, which was taking part in the defence of the Suez Canal. The work was hot and monotonous. On 1 Jul 1916 he was transferred as a Troop Officer of the 1st Light Horse Double Squadron (The Double Squadrons were dismounted units formed in June 1916 for the defence of the Suez Canal). A further promotion to Lieutenant was granted on 9 Jul 1916.

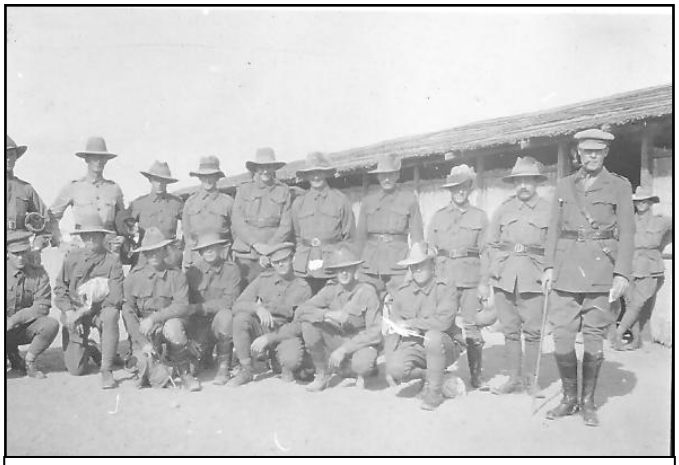


Photo of Aubrey Reynolds, the officer smoking a pipe, while in Egypt. The soldiers are likely to be those of the 6th LHR, as most are wearing slough hats with the wallaby fur puggarees.
Photo courtesy of Scott Reynolds.

At Zeitoum he attended an Instruction School and passed as a 1st Class Instructor for the Lewis machine guns on 27 Oct 1916 and became the Regiment Machine Gun Officer. On 2 Nov 1916, Lieut Reynolds was transferred to the 4th Australian Camel Regiment at Abbassia. Here he became Company Officer of 17th Company, Imperial Camel Corps (ICC) on 7 Feb 1917.

"The operations of the ICC in the Western Desert in 1916 were characterised by long patrols and brief skirmishes with the Senussi. British commanders in Egypt appreciated the fighting qualities of the ICC and in late 1916 the ICC was transferred to the Sinai desert to take part in operations against the Turkish army. Here the battalions of the ICC fought alongside Australian light horse units at Romani, Magdhaba and Rafa. The ICC was an integral part of the British and dominion force that advanced north through Palestine in 1917 and 1918."
(http://www.diggerhistory.info/pages-conflicts-periods/ww1/lt-horse/camel_regiments.htm)

Extracts from AIF unit war diaries, 1914-18 War, 4th ANZAC Battalion, Imperial Camel Corps, March 1918:
On 17 Mar the 4th ICC were marching to Hebron, a Palestinian city 30km south of Jerusalem. Rain was coming down in torrents and the roads were in a very bad state.

On 18 Mar they marched to Bethlehem with the majority of the Brigade having to walk and lead their camels through the mud during the morning.
On 23rd Mar the 4th ICC moved away for the Jordan.
On 24th Mar the 4th ICC moved along the Dead Sea at 0500, had breakfast on road and awaited their turn to cross over the Namoio Pontoon Bridge.
On 27thMar moved for Kasr. The going was over good country but intensely boggy in parts. Encountered enemy opposition on way but were able to work round to our destination which was reached at 1600. We proceeded with demolition blowing up the line for nearly four miles and two cutouts. Moved back towards Amman at 1730 but on the way were asked by NZMR Brigade to join in an attack on Amman. Turned in for rest at 0100 on 28th.
On 28th moved out 0500 on foot to take up position on right flank between NZMR Brigade & the railway. Ordered to proceed with demolition at 1100. Encountered heavy fire all day. 13th Company were attacked, but counter attacked with success. The casualties amounted to 5 killed and 21 wounded. Demolition completed at 1730, all companies withdrawn about 2000.
(https://www.awm.gov.au/images/collection/bundled/RCDIG1016570.pdf)

On 28 Mar 1918, Lieut Reynolds was wounded in action with gunshot wounds to his legs, and evacuated to hospital. On 8 Apr he was admitted to the 14th Australian General Hospital at Port Said and on 6 May was transferred to the Desert Mounted Corps rest camp at Port Said. He resumed duty on 30 May 1918.

The *Molong Express & Western District Advertiser* – 20 Apr 1918, p10, reported that *"Lieut. Aubrey Reynolds, son of Mr SP Reynolds, of Burrawong, has been reported as wounded."*

On the 14 June 1918, Lieut Aubrey Reynolds was Mentioned in Dispatches in the London Gazette, by General Sir EHH Allenby, General Officer, Commander-in-Chief, Egyptian Expeditionary Force:
"I have the honour to submit Lieutenant A Reynolds, who has served under my command, whose distinguished and gallant services and devotion to duty I consider deserving of special mention."
The dispatch was promulgated in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, No. 72, dated 2 Sep 1920.

Following the disbandment of most of the Imperial Camel Corp in June 1918, Lieut Reynolds was promoted to Captain on 1 Jul 1918, and transferred to the 15th Light Horse Regiment. The 15th LHR was formed as part of the 5th Australian LHB attached to the Australian Mounted Division. Cpt Reynolds was sent to Calvary School from 25 Aug – 26 Sep 1918, and then rejoined the 15th LHR.

"In a move that converted the Light Horse into full cavalry, the Australian Mounted Division was issued with swords during August and early September 1918. On 19 September 1918 the Battle of Megiddo began. The infantry over ran the Turkish defensive trenches allowing the cavalry to debouch into the Turkish hinterland. The 15th Light Horse Regiment participated in the breakthrough which moved rapidly through the north of Palestine. At the end of the first week, it was obvious that the way to Damascus was open and so a second push occurred on the heels of the first assault. On 1 October 1918, Damascus was taken.

After a rest in Damascus, the 15th Light Horse Regiment moved towards Homs when the Turks surrendered on 30 October 1918. After the conclusion of hostilities, the 15th Light Horse Regiment was marked to return to Australia. Prior to that action, one of the saddest actions occurred for the Australian Light horsemen, they had to farewell their best friends, the horses. All the Light Horse unit horses' health was ascertained with the fit horses being transferred to the Indian Cavalry while those in poor condition were destroyed by the Veterinary units. On 13 March 1919 the 15th Light Horse Regiment was deployed to assist in suppressing the Egyptian Uprising."
(http://alh-research.tripod.com/Light_Horse/index.blog?topic_id=1110072)

Captain Reynolds returned to Australia on the *Wiltshire* on 26 Dec 1918. On the 26 Mar 1919, along with four other Cumnock soldiers, He was welcomed home to Cumnock along with Privates Daniel Murphy, William Barnett, Walter Murray and James Nugent at Leary's Hall on 25 Feb 1919. They were each presented with inscribed gold medals.

The Molong Argus- 8 Mar 1919, p1:
"Captain Reynolds very ably responded on behalf of the returned lads. He spoke of some of their doings 'over there', but, said the Captain, 'as regards our hardships I am convinced since my return that the greatest hardships were fought on the home fronts by those nearest and dearest to us.

What we went through was done in a state of hot blood and excitement, whilst those at home suffered in silence.' The captain spoke of the men of various nationalities he had come in contact with, both amongst the Allied armies and those of the foe, and he considered the Britisher stood out alone. He also mentioned the names of several boys from the Cumnock district whom he had met (and who were well) just prior to his leaving for Australia. He paid a very high tribute to the late Sergeant Major Johnston, whom, said the Captain, 'he would always feel it an honor to remember as a friend. You could not find a better man than the late Sergeant Johnston – for a better man had never been born."

[Sgt Major Johnston, 629 – 6th Light Horse Regiment, of Baldry, near Cumnock, died at Cairo on 18 Aug 1916 as a result of wounds received in action at Bir et Maler, near Romani, Egypt.]

Cumnock held a military sports day and ball to commemorate Anzac Day in 1920. *The Molong Argus* – 30 Apr 1920, p5 reports:

"The function was run under the auspices of the Cumnock Sub-Branch of the Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League and the Parents' and Citizens' Association, and it must be admitted that they did things well, and were well supported by the residents of the town and district...
The proceedings started with a very creditable procession, which was formed down near the Public School, and marched up the street headed by the band. At the Shire Hall corner the salute was taken by Captain Reynolds and Hudson and President Bowhay. The procession then proceeded to the showground. The order of procession was: The Band, Returned Soldiers in uniform, school children, motorcars, vehicles and horsemen..."

Aubrey Reynolds married Marguerite Mills at Sydney on 1 Apr 1922, the sister of one his commanding officers. They had three children - William Bowd, Max and Marcia Reynolds. After WW1 Aubrey bought 1659 acres of the Burrawong property from Fred Young. He renamed the property "Geneffe" in memory of a place along the Suez Canal where he was stationed. His father, Sylvanus Partridge Reynolds died at Woollahra, Sydney, on 28 Feb 1924.

In 1928 Aubrey purchased another Burrawong block of 656 acres and established a Dorset Horn stud. He also produced Williams' pears from 150 acres under fruit trees.

The Molong Express & Western District Advertiser – 7 Dec 1929, p18, mentions that at the dedication of St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Cumnock on 28 November 1929, "*The infant daughter of Mr and Mrs Aubrey Reynolds was the first to be christened in the new church. To mark this interesting event Mr Reynolds has kindly promised to give a new font when the baptistry is built and the west end of the church completed."*

Aubrey became well known for the quality of his sheep and wool and did well in local and Sydney Show events. He participated in many Cumnock community organisations including being Secretary of the Farmers and Settlers Association and Captain of the Cumnock Bush Fire Brigade from 1940-1941. He was appointed as a Justice of the Peace in December 1937; was a member of the Cumnock branch of the Country Party; Patron of the Cumnock Pastoral and Agriculture Society; and in 1947, was a member of the local Repatriation Committee which assisted in helping ex-servicemen post WW2.

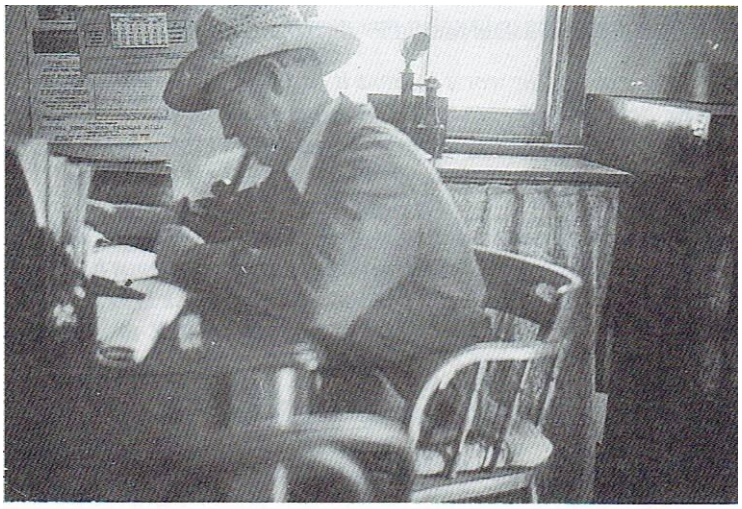
His two sons both served in the Royal Australian Air Force during World War 2:

Pilot Officer William Bowd Reynolds – 422704 No. 80 Squadron
KIA 8 Mar 1945, Celebes, Netherlands East Indies. Aged 22yrs.

Flying Officer Max Sylvanus Reynolds – 433224 No.104 Squadron, RAF Bomber Command
Enlisted 23 Feb 1943, aged 18yrs 9 mths.

Marguerite and Aubrey donated the Cumnock War Memorial Gates in 1954 in memory of their son William Reynolds, and a plaque commemorating him can be seen on one of the cement gates either side of the Gates.

Marguerite Reynolds died at Cumnock on 28 June 1970 and Aubrey Reynolds died at Molong Hospital on 21 April 1978, aged 84 years.



Aubrey Reynolds in his office at Geneffe
'The Crossroads' by Joan Marriott, 1993, p15.
Photo courtesy Max Reynolds