Dr Ivie Aird & his wife Ella, c1912. State Records NSW: NRS 9873, Doctors Photographs 1888-1927, R3202, Photo of Ivie Aird (No date).

CAPTAIN IVIE AIRD
AUSTRALIAN ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

Ivie Aird was born on 6 Jun 1875 at Longmore Farm, Cumnock, Ayrshire, Scotland, the son of Ivie and Elizabeth (nee Young) Aird. His father was a farmer and Ivie was the youngest of six children. Over the next thirty years the family moved from Ayrshire to different farms in the Scottish counties of Kirkcudbrightshire and Dumfriesshire.

Ivie attended Medical School in Edinburgh where he graduated with a Bachelor of Medicine and a Bachelor of Surgery (M.B, Ch.B) on 31 Jul 1899. After graduation he worked at the Liverpool Dispensary and other Friendly Society Clinics. (1)

He moved to Bangor, County Down, Ireland to work as a physician in the early 1900s. At the age of 30, Ivie married Ella Margaret Armstrong at Belfast in 1905. They had two children: Elizabeth born in 1907, and Kenneth born in 1909.

Ivie Aird (senior) died at 'Bereflat', Lochmaben, Dumfries and Galloway, on 1 Dec 1910, and Elizabeth Aird died at Lockmaben, on 30 Jan 1912. They left a substantial inheritance to their four surviving children – Mrs Paterson, Matthew, James and Ivie. (2)

Ivie, Ella, Elizabeth, Kenneth and employee, Miss Isabella Hawthorne (3), left Liverpool on 19 Sep 1912 on the *SS Persic* and arrived in Sydney on 9 Nov 1912. Dr Aird applied for the post of Doctor for Cumnock, NSW, in December 1912, and was selected by the Cumnock and District Committee from a number of applicants.
The Molong Argus, 3 Jan 1913, p2 states of Dr Aird's arrival:

> *"Dr Aird arrived here on New Year's Day, and intends starting practice at once. He is at present residing at the cottage lately occupied by Mrs J. Bruce."*

Mrs Aird, their two children, and Isabella Hawthorne arrived in Cumnock from Sydney to reside at 'Fife', owned by the Young family, on 9 Jan 1913. The family were made welcome by the community and *The Molong Express & Western District Advertiser* – 1 Feb 1913, has the following report on p8:

> *"The new medico at Cumnock, Dr Aird, expressed himself highly satisfied with the treatment meted out to him by the people, and looks forward to having a prosperous and happy time in their midst. In this his good lady joins, she having remarked that the first weeks in the district were the happiest she had spent for a long time."*

In the same paper (p7) it was also reported that work had commenced by the contractor, Mr T March & Son, to build an eleven-roomed brick and stone residence to accommodate Dr Aird. The house was owned by Mr James Fleming, who had lived at 'Rockvale', Dilga, but sold his house and property and moved to Cumnock to live in 1912. The architect was Mr Walter Merceron Hudson, who at the time was also the Amaroo Shire clerk. He designed the dwelling to provide three bedrooms, sitting room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, laundry, surgery and waiting room, with a verandah extending 37 feet on the east side and 48 feet on the north side. The cost was expected to be about £800.

The house built for Dr Aird at 22 Obley Street, Cumnock, has been renovated since being built in 1913. Photo by Val McKenzie, 2015.

Soon after arriving, Dr Aird bought a new car in Sydney which *The Molong Express & Western District Advertiser* - 3 Feb 1913, P18, reported:

"Dr Aird, of Cumnock, who recently purchased a Metz 22 horse power motor car, took delivery of it on Saturday morning last, and made a start over the mountains for his residence. The little Metz behaved in a most remarkable manner.

The Doctor's actual running or driving time worked out at exactly eight hours, which means an average of twenty-five miles per hour, the distance of two hundred miles being accomplished in the day. The petrol consumption for the entire journey worked out at thirty-six miles to the gallon. This performance speaks very well for a car of this type, being a single seated run about."

A restored 1912 Metz Roadster.

Dr Aird's services to the people of Cumnock and district were well recorded in the local papers and he was kept busy attending ill patients, accident victims and inquests. The papers also recorded many 'Return Thanks' to Dr Aird for his skilful treatment. He was the Government Medical Officer and also the Meat Inspector for Cumnock and District.

In July1913, the Aird family moved into their newly built house. A private hospital was established with Nurse May Gilmore in charge. May Gilmore had known the Airds when they lived at Bangor, Ireland, and arrived in Sydney on the *SS Ceramic* on 2 Feb 1914.

Dr Aird commenced First Aid Classes in July to about 40 Cumnock residents under the auspices of the St John's Ambulance Association. In August 1913 an outbreak of Smallpox kept Dr Aird busy vaccinating the locals against the disease. His First Aid Class was examined for certificates in October, and all but two candidates passed.

Dr Aird continued to be busy throughout 1914 with the added burden of a Diphtheria epidemic in Cumnock and district. His first aid pupils were often mentioned in local papers as having efficiently treated casualties when he wasn't about. After Britain declared war on Germany in August 1914, Dr Aird carried out Medical Examinations on men enlisting in the AIF from Cumnock. In November 1914, the Amaroo Shire Council wrote to the Department of Justice asking that Dr Aird be made a Justice of the Peace, and he was subsequently gazetted a Justice of the Peace in March 1915. A third child, Ivan Alexander Aird, was born on 11 Apr 1915, at Orange.

Life wasn't all work for Dr Aird, and he and his family participated in many community events and sporting activities. He was a member of the following organisations: the Cumnock tennis club; the Royal Hotel billiard club; the Masonic Lodge; and the Cumnock Pastoral, Agricultural and Horticultural Association.

Elizabeth and Kenneth Aird attended the Cumnock School, and a book about the School has a class photo taken in 1916, with Kenneth Aird listed as one of the pupils in the photo. (4)

In August 1916, Dr Aird sold his household possessions by auction, and his family left Cumnock and moved to Sydney. Dr Aird continued working in Cumnock until September and was replaced by Dr Daley. *The Molong Express & Western District Advertiser* – 16 Sep 1916, P7, reported that Nurse Gilmore was to leave the Cumnock Private Hospital to undertake service as a Red Cross Nurse during WW1. Nurse Ackland took over care of the hospital.

On 18 Oct 1916 Dr Aird applied for a Commission in the AIF, stating his address was 'Una', High Street, Randwick. In his application he states that he spent four or five years as a volunteer in the 2 RVB Royal Scots, and had an Honorary Commission in the Australian Army Medical Corps (Reserve). He was accepted as a Captain in the Australian Army Medical Corps on 1 Nov 1916.

The Molong Argus – 3 Nov 1916, P5 has this report of Cumnock's farewell to Dr Aird:

> *"Captain Aird, of the A.M.C., left for headquarters on Monday. Prior to his departure he was entertained at a farewell evening by his friends, in the School of Arts, and made the recipient of a presentation from the gathering. On Monday the local Hibernian Lodge made him a presentation of a case of pipes."*

Aged 41yrs, Captain Aird embarked from Melbourne on 23 Dec 1916 on *HMAS Orontes* and disembarked at Plymouth on 17 Feb 1917. His youngest son, Ivan, died of diphtheria at Sydney on 29 Dec 1916, while he was en route to England. He then spent two months at the 3rd Australian General Hospital (AGH) at Brighton from 24 Feb - 11 Apr 1917, when he proceeded to France.

Dr Aird served with the 3rd AGH at Abbeville, in the Somme area of the French region, Picardie. The hospital operated from tents and huts. For most of the 3AGH's time in France (May 1917-May 1918) it admitted gassed patients and treated them briefly before sending them to other places.

Panorama of 3AGH, Abbeville, WW1. Three hospitals formed the medical base at Abbeville – No. 3 AGH, the South African General Hospital and No. 2 British Stationary Hospital. www.flickr.com/photos/thrutheselines

Casualties were first treated by stretcher-bearers and field ambulance workers, who would often have to carry the wounded on foot through mud, gunfire and shelling to Casualty Clearing Stations. Casualty Clearing Stations were small hospitals, usually located at a railhead or similar transport centres close to the front lines. They provided emergency treatment and then moved casualties onto stationary and general hospitals.

Stationary Hospitals were smaller hospitals, generally based in forward areas. General Hospitals were larger base hospitals with 250 to 1000 beds, and usually administered a number of Auxiliary Hospitals. Australian hospitals consisted of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 10th and 14th units. Casualties were either treated in the hospitals or transferred to England for more specialised treatment. The soldiers who were returning to the front after treatment were often then sent to Convalescent and Command Depots until they were considered fit enough to return to their units.

As well as the horrendous wounds caused by gunfire and shelling, the soldiers were exposed to chemical warfare. Three main gases – chlorine, phosgene and mustard – were used. All had terrible effects such as lung irritation and breathlessness, eye and nose irritation, paralysis, and deep chemical burns to the skin. Mustard gas also had long-term effects that worsened over time.

There were many diseases treated as well during WW1 - some being types treated in everyday life, but others due to more specific wartime conditions. These included influenza, trench feet, trench fever, lice, sexually transmitted diseases, typhus, malaria, dysentery, jaundice, measles, smallpox and mumps. Psychological trauma labelled as 'shell shock' caused widespread long-term effects on soldiers, and was poorly understood and treated.

On 27 May 1918, Cpt Aird was detached to Fressenneville, a small town which was part of the of district of Abbeville. He was the Temporary Medical Officer in Charge at Fressenneville during September 1918. He had leave in Paris from 29 Oct – 7 Nov 1918. On 9 Nov he was posted to the 5th Australian Division, 14 Field Ambulance and for a brief period of nine days, was the Resident Medical Officer of the combined 56/54 Battalions.

Cpt Aird caught influenza with resulting bronchitis and emphysema on 18 Nov 1918, and was transferred to 3AGH in Abbeville on 25 November. He was evacuated from France on 6 December and admitted to the 3rd London General Hospital. Following his discharge on 4 Feb 1919, he was posted to 1AGH at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire. He was granted a paid study leave from 24 Mar - 15 Jun 1919, and completed a Diploma in Public Health (D.P.H.) at Queen's University, Belfast.

He returned to Australia per *Hospital Transport Benalla* as the ship's Medical Officer on 17 Oct 1919. He was discharged from the AIF on 15 Jan 1920, as 2nd Medical Disability. Cpt Aird received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. He may also have been awarded the French Medaille des Epidemies, but this has not been confirmed in official records. (1)

After his return to Sydney, Dr Aird lived and set up practice at 20 Beach Street, Coogee. (5) The Aird family kept in touch with their Cumnock friends and the local papers report weekends they spent in Cumnock, often staying with Mr George Black and his family.

20 Beach Street, Coogee. The house was later demolished and converted into 3 luxury townhouses.

He employed a young woman from Cumnock as a maid, and *The Molong Express and Western District Advertiser* - 30 July 1921, p9, has the following report:

> *"Word was received in Cumnock on Wednesday of the death of Miss Maude Kearney under very sad circumstances. She had lately been employed by Dr Aird of Clovelly (late of Cumnock) and about 7 o'clock on Tuesday night a fisherman heard a yell for help near the surf sheds at Clovelly. He informed the police and a search was made with the result that the body was found washed upon the rocks. An inquest will be held."*

Maude Kearney's parents were Edward & Helen (nee Lyons) Kearney of Cumnock. Further newspaper reports state that the police reported that Maude "*had been depressed for some days owing to a love affair*". The Coroner's verdict was that Maude Kearney's cause of death was "*Asphyxia from drowning wilfully caused by casting herself into the water*."

Elizabeth Aird married Havelock York Miller in 1930. They had one son, Douglas Havelock Miller. Elizabeth Miller died on 8 Sep 1982 in Canberra, aged 76 yrs. (6)

Kenneth Aird is listed as living at 20 Beach Street, Coogee, with the occupation as an 'Agent' from 1932-1936. He married Marcia Whiting in 1935 and they had one son, Ian Alexander Aird. Kenneth enlisted in WW2 on 6 Jan 1941 in Sydney, as Sgt 403415, 150 Squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force and was stationed at RAF Snaith, Yorkshire, England. Sgt Kenneth Aird was killed, along with five other airmen, in a plane crash on 30 May 1942 in a field at Faldingworth, Lincolnshire, while returning to base from an air operation over Germany. He was 33 yrs old.

Ella and Ivie Aird are listed in the NSW Electoral Rolls as living at 20 Beach Street, Coogee until the 1943 Electoral Roll, when they had moved to 43 Denning Street, Coogee. They were again listed as living at 43 Denning Street in 1954 and1958. Dr Ivie Aird died on 5 Nov 1958, aged 83 yrs. His wife Ella died on 17 Feb 1961, aged 80 yrs. They were both privately cremated.(7)

Endnotes:

1. Australian Doctors on the Western Front by Robert Likeman CSM, Rosenberg Publishing, 2014.
2. Scotlands People – Wills of Ivie Aird 13/2/1911 & Elizabeth Aird 14/3/1912.
3. Isabella Hawthorne was born in Strabane, Northern Ireland in 1893. She worked for the Aird family until 1917, when she married Walter Stanley Eggleston. The couple lived at 'Clearview' Cumnock and had 3 children: Iva, Patty & Ross. (Eggleston family records & Cumnock Progress Review, 26 Oct 1960).
4. 'Seeds of Wisdom' – Cumnock Public School 1879-1979, by Joan Marriott 1979, P40.
5. Some records have Beach Street in Coogee, others Clovelly. The street runs into both suburbs.
6. Information from Ancestry.com.uk and reports from *The Sydney Morning Herald.*
7. Death details from the Ryersonindex.net and reports from *The Sydney Morning Herald.*