



Unit colour
patch



Private James NUGENT 733 — 2 Australian General Hospital 9th Light Horse Regiment

Born: 4 Aug 1893, Goulburn, NSW.

Next of Kin: Nil recorded

Occupation: Station hand

District Connection: Cumnock, Forbes

Enlistment Date: 6 or 10 Oct 1914, Paddington, Sydney.

Enlistment Age: 21 yrs

Embarkation: 28 Nov 1914 - Sydney HMAT A55 *Kyarra*

Served: Gallipoli

Fate: RTA 23 Dec 1919

Honour Boards: Cumnock Memorial Gates

Biography:

No information of James Nugent's parents or family has been ascertained. His WW2 records state that he was born in Goulburn on 4 Aug 1893.

It is a little confusing ascertaining correct local news items about Pte James Nugent as there was also a James Nugent, Blacksmith of Cumnock and his son James, born 1905 and died 1921. The earliest news report found about Pte James Nugent, was in the *Wellington Times* - 20 Sep 1906, p5:

"Martini's buckjumping show drew a large crowd on Saturday night... A lad named James Nugent, from Loombah, obtained first prize for riding the bucking ponies. He afterwards essayed to ride 'Bullswool,' but was thrown heavily and dislocated his wrist."

James, working at "Loombah" owned by Sage Bruce, appeared to be accident prone as local news reports have him:

- 1908 - Playing with cartridges and throwing one in a fire resulting his eyes being burnt, but fortunately his eye sight was not affected. (James would have been 15 years old)
- 1912 - While riding on top of a load of wood being carted by a dray, the horse bolted and James was thrown out and broke a leg.

James played cricket for Avondale in 1914 before enlisting in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) on 6 Oct 1914. He was medically examined at the Victoria Barracks, Sydney, on 10 Oct 1914. His height was 5 feet 6½ inches tall, he had a florid complexion, brown eyes and dark brown hair. He was of the Church of England religion and gave no next of kin.

The Molong Express & Western District Advertiser - 21 Nov 1914, p12, reported:

"Mr Jas. Nugent left Cumnock on Wednesday per Quinn's motor en route to Sydney, to join the expeditionary forces. He expects to leave with the next contingent at an early date. May he have a good trip and a safe return."

As a member of the 2nd Australian General Hospital, Pte James Nugent embarked from Sydney on 28 Nov 1914 on board the HMAT *Kyarra* A55. The *Kyarra* was set to transport 5 fully equipped medically units to Egypt on this voyage. It was decided that the ship would sail without a military convoy under the Geneva Red Cross flag but when it reached Melbourne, it was discovered that it was carrying 'stores of war'; coal, wool, hides and tallow. The ship was delayed for a week while the banned stores were unloaded. The ship finally left port on the 5 December.

Photo: HMAT *Kyarra*, Melbourne 4 Dec 1914.



The *Kyarra* arrived in Alexandria on 13 Jan 1915. On 11 Feb, Pte Nugent was admitted to 2 General Hospital with Influenza and discharged on 13 Feb 1915.

He proceeded to Gallipoli on 5 Aug 1915 as part of the 2nd Australian General Hospital and returned to Alexandria on 27 Dec 1915.

The *Molong Argus* - 12 Nov 1915, p5, reported a letter from Gallipoli:

“Writing to a friend, Private J Nugent, late of Loombah, stated that he had been nine weeks in the firing line, and although he had some narrow escapes, was still going strong. He says two things the boys are short of are reinforcements and writing paper. He said he could not get a sheet of notepaper, and wrote his letters on two old envelopes, posting in a third...”

Pte Nugent reported sick to hospital at Heliopolis, a suburb outside of Cairo on 4 Feb 1916. On 27 Feb 1916 he joined the 9th Light Horse Regiment (LHR) at Serapeum. The 9th LHR was part of the 3rd LH Brigade which in 1916, had joined the forces defending the Suez Canal from a Turkish drive across the Sinai Desert. The Turks were turned at Romani. Although it didn't take part in the actual battle, the 9th LHR was involved in the advance that followed the Turks' retreat back across the desert. By December 1916, this advance had reached the Palestine frontier and the 9th was involved in the fighting to secure the Turkish outposts of Maghdaba on 23 December.

Pte Nugent accidentally sprained an ankle on 23 Dec 1916 and was transferred to a hospital in Cairo. He was discharged to Moascar on 15 January and returned to the 9th LHR on 18 Feb 1917, which was then stationed at Masaid.

The next Turkish stronghold to be encountered by the 9th LHR was Gaza. The 3rd Light Horse Brigade, now part of the Imperial Mounted Division (later re-named the Australian Mounted Division), was involved in the two abortive battles to capture Gaza directly on 27 March and 19 April 1917.

On 18 May 1917, Pte Nugent was admitted to hospital with Asthma, transferring from Kantara on 29 May to 14 Australian General Hospital, Cairo. He took rejoined the 9th LH at Abasan al-Kabira in the southern Gaza strip, Palestine on 4 July. The Regiment were then undertaking a reconnaissance of the country and the defences contained in the Shellal, Beersheba and Asluj areas. The Unit Commander's diaries stated that at the end of July the 9th LH regiment consisted of 26 Officers and 496 Other Ranks, plus 612 horses (which included 17 mules).

Pte Nugent spent time in different hospitals being treated for skin ulcers in November and recovering in December 1917 and then spent some months with the 3rd Light Horse Training Regiment (LHTR). He returned to the 9th LHR in June 1918 but the following month was ill again with a colic condition. He spent time being treated in Jerusalem, Ludd, Gaza, Kantana, Port Said and Moascar.

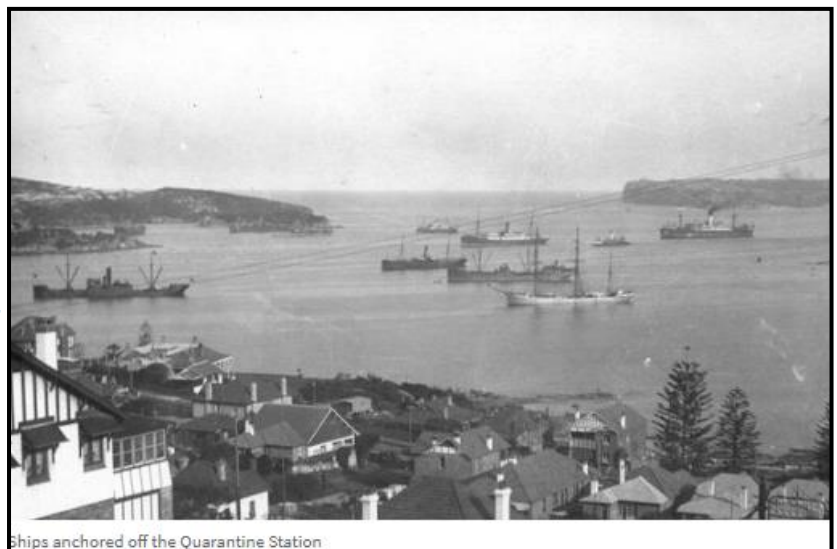
On 23 Dec 1918, Pte Nugent embarked at Suez on *HT Argyllshire* for return to Australia, arriving at Sydney on 6 Feb 1919, after a long and arduous trip amidst the Spanish Influenza epidemic.

The Daily Telegraph reported on the trip:

“The ship arrived at Albany in Western Australia in the middle of a strike by coal-loaders, so the soldiers had to coal their own ship. Their return to Sydney was further delayed by a stopover in Melbourne to satisfy local merchants awaiting the delivery of goods from the ship.

In Melbourne, the Argyllshire also took on board soldiers who had returned to Australia aboard the Nestor and the Marmari, bringing the total aboard the Argyllshire to about 1150 men.

The men were kept aboard the ship for four days during the unloading but the act of berthing in Melbourne had inadvertently broken Australia's quarantine regulations, so when the ship finally sailed into Sydney on February 6, 1919, it was put into quarantine for four days and anchored off Chowder Bay.



But on the promised release date from the Argyllshire – February 9 – a suspected case of the ‘flu was found aboard the ship and the soldiers were told a further period of quarantine was necessary.

The soldiers were so angered by the cavalier treatment they were receiving that about 50 of them stole some lifeboats and escaped and, while all were eventually caught, two of them made it as far as Newcastle.

In a bid to appease the soldiers, the authorities told them they could go to the Quarantine Station at North Head, where a camp had been prepared but all the soldiers found at North Head was bush that had to be cleared, ditches to be dug and tents to be pitched. To make matters worse, food was scarce, water was distant and cooking and sanitation facilities were non-existent. The final indignity was finding the camp site was infested by poisonous snakes – the soldiers claimed they killed 60 during the first night.

So the soldiers mutinied – on the morning of February 11, about 900 men marched out of the Quarantine Station – but did so with discipline. Alerted to the men’s action, the authorities had the Manly ferry ‘Bellubera’ sent to the cargo wharf at Manly to collect the men and take them to Fort Macquarie where they later marched to camp at the Sydney Cricket Ground. They were guaranteed of their release after three days if no further infections were detected.

Fortunately, three days passed without incident, so on February 14 – nine days after arriving in Sydney – the soldiers from the Argyllshire were finally demobilised – as ungraceful and undignified a demobilisation as could be imagined for men who had laid their lives on the line.”

The Wellington Times - 20 Feb 1919, p5, reported:

“Capt. A Reynolds, Private D Murphy, and Private J Nugent are to be entertained at a public welcome home on Wednesday next at the local hall, when they will be presented with a gold medal each from the district. Private Nugent arrived home on Saturday last after having been in quarantine from the Argyllshire. He states that eight snakes were killed in his tent the first night of their quarantine...”

Private James Nugent was discharged from the AIF on the 10 May 1919, and received the 1914/1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

James Nugent was granted a Returned Soldier Settlement Loan and obtained PB Cleary’s ‘Wyangla’ at Wirrinya from start date 11 Aug 1919 and end date 18 Feb 1922. James married Ivy Jane Amor at Forbes on 10 Jun 1922. They had two children, William James and Phyllis Louisa. Electoral Roll records list Ivy Nugent as living at Wirrinya and James at ‘Glenhurst,’ Warangla, Forbes from 1930 to 1954.

James Nugent also served in the Australian Army in WW2. He enlisted on 29 Jul 1940, serving as Private N77457 at 22 Garrison Battalion until discharge on 4 Dec 1943. His son, William, also served in the Australian Army NX118957 as a Lance Bombardier from 1 Sep 1942 - 3 Aug 1945.

James Nugent died at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, on 19 Nov 1956, aged 64 years. Ivy Nugent died on 8 Feb 1980, aged 73 years. Both are buried at the Forbes Cemetery.

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