



## CAMPBELL STEWART

Death of Brig-General J. C. Stewart

Brigadier-General J. C. Stewart, who was the original adjutant of the [5th Victorian Battalion, 1st AIP](#), and well known as chief marshal of many Anzac Day

marches, died yesterday at his home, Queen's rd, Melbourne.

Born at Port Fairy in 1884, Brigadier-General Stewart was educated at Terang High School. His instinct for soldiering asserted itself early, and he served for seven years with the Volunteers before being appointed to a commission in the Victorian Scottish Regiment in 1909.

He landed with the 5th Battalion on Gallipoli. For his services in the 1914-18 war he was awarded the CMG, the DSO and bar, and was mentioned several times in

des- patches.

He was rejected for active service in the last war on medical and age grounds.

He took an active part with the Volunteer Defence Corps, of which he was once commander.

He will be given a military funeral and Masonic service tomorrow

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James Campbell Stewart (1884-1947), soldier and public servant, was born on 19 January 1884 at Belfast (Port Fairy), Victoria, son of James Stewart, bank manager, and his wife Elizabeth, née Grant, both Victorian born. After attending Terang High School he became a bank officer, but his great love was soldiering. Having moved to Melbourne, in 1901 he joined the Victorian Scottish Regiment, a volunteer unit, was promoted sergeant in 1905 and commissioned in 1909. With the reorganization of Australia's defence forces, the Victorian Scottish emerged as the 52nd (Hobson's Bay) Infantry; in 1912 Captain Stewart became its adjutant.

For a 'king and country' man with a passion for soldiering, there was only one possible response to the outbreak of World War I: Cam Stewart enlisted on 17 August 1914 and was appointed adjutant of the 5th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force. The Gallipoli landing proved a stern test. Amid the chaos and carnage of 25 April 1915 Stewart was soon acting battalion commander, and early that afternoon led the battalion reserve forward 'under the hail of shell fire' to the fighting on 400 Plateau. About 3 p.m. he was hit by shrapnel and later evacuated to Egypt. He returned to Gallipoli on 2 June and remained with the 5th Battalion until the evacuation.

In February 1916 the A.I.F. was enlarged and Stewart was appointed to command the 57th

Battalion in the newly created 15th Brigade; he was a lieutenant-colonel from 12 March. His exacting brigadier, H. E. Elliott, considered that the three other battalion commanders allotted him were obviously unsuitable, but had no qualms about Stewart: he 'is far and away the best man for the job'. On the Western Front Elliott continued to praise Stewart's work, including his stints as acting brigadier when Elliott was on leave. Stewart was of average height and build; his oval face, moustache, probing eyes and expansive forehead lent a certain refinement to his appearance that could be deceptive, for he drove his men hard when necessary. Charles Bean described him as 'a cool, experienced and trusted officer'.

At the disastrous battle of Fromelles, Stewart was fortunate when a postponement meant that his 57th was placed in reserve instead of being one of the assault battalions that were slaughtered. He performed capably as commander of 'Stewart's Force' in the harassment of the German retreat in March 1917. In September the 15th Brigade's major operation at Polygon Wood was jeopardized when a British unit alongside was forced to retreat. After Elliott sent the 57th forward to rectify the situation, Stewart 'personally reconnoitred the position, in advance of his battalion, under an intense enemy barrage'. In the inferno his battalion filled the gap in the line, enabling the operation to proceed successfully. He was 'simply wonderful', enthused Elliott, 'his own men think the world of Cam Stewart'.

Promoted colonel commanding the 14th Brigade in March 1918, Stewart left the 57th Battalion on the day the Germans launched their great March offensive. He regarded the ensuing months until the Armistice as the pinnacle of his career. In both defence and attack his leadership during the battles of 1918 was characteristically cool and reliable, although he was criticized by Sir John Monash for 'lack of driving power' at Péronne. Stewart was

awarded the Distinguished Service Order and Bar, appointed C.M.G. and mentioned five times in dispatches.

Back in Melbourne in November 1919, Stewart was employed in various positions by the Department of Lands, including chairman of the Farmers' Relief Board and member of the Closer Settlement Board. On Christmas eve 1925 he married a divorcee Annie Edith Pinsent, née Miller (d.1936), at the Sydney registry office. Living at Elwood, Melbourne, he was a Freemason who enjoyed fishing, gardening and golf. Yet his chief interest continued to be soldiering. In the Australian Military Forces he commanded the 14th Brigade (1920-21), the 10th Brigade (1921-26) and the 15th Brigade (1930-34); he was a well-known figure as chief marshal of Melbourne's Anzac Day march for over two decades. During World War II he was rejected for A.I.F. enlistment on age and medical grounds, but commanded Melbourne Metropolitan Group, Volunteer Defence Corps, in 1942-45. On 12 August 1946 he married Mary Imelda Polan with Catholic rites. Survived by his wife, he died of hypertensive cerebrovascular disease on 2 June 1947 in South Melbourne and was cremated. He had no children.

#### Select Bibliography

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F. W. Speed, *Esprit de Corps* (Syd, 1988) Military service: Related Entries in NCB Sites

Monash, John (commanding officer) go to ADB entry go to Obituaries Australia entry

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James Campbell Stewart (1884-1947), by unknown photographer, c1915

James Campbell Stewart (1884-1947), by unknown photographer, c1915

Australian War Memorial, P01193.001

## LYLA STEWART

WW1

Rank:

Staff Nurse; promoted to Sister 1.10.1918

Military units:

Australian Army Nursing Service

(2 Australian General Hospital)

(British General Hospitals in Egypt and France)

Military casualty:

Measles 1917

Date of death:

1972

Death Heidelberg

, Australia

37° 45' 25.7148" S, 145° 3' 38.7108" E

Decorations and medallions:

1914-15 Star

Decorations and medallions:

British War Medal

Decorations and medallions:

Victory Medal

Decorations and medallions:

? Mentioned in Despatches 1916

Biographical notes:

Lyla Ferguson Stewart was the 10th of 12 children born to Scottish-born parents John Stewart (1836-1912) and Elizabeth (nee Crawford) (1848-1922). She was registered at birth as 'Eliza'. John had come to Victoria as a young man in the early 1850s, and Elizabeth as a small child with her parents. They married in Terang in 1865. (This and much of the following information about the Stewart family comes from the two Terang and District Pioneer Registers Pre 1900 and The Next Generation Pre 1925).

The Stewart's children were brought up in the small settlement of Keilambete East near Terang in south western Victoria. (Alice Searl was another East Melbourne linked Great War nurse brought up in Terang, see [emhs.org.au/person/searl/alice](http://emhs.org.au/person/searl/alice).) One died as a child no doubt succumbing to one of the then common deadly illnesses such as measles or scarlet fever.

The Terang Pioneer Register Pre 1900 gave no occupation for John Stewart (he was a farmer), but described Elizabeth as 'Teacher, Business Woman, Gardener'. Elizabeth Stewart had both borne her husband twelve children by the time she was 41, and established her career as a schoolteacher. She began teaching in her own home in 1870 and then studied privately to qualify as a state registered teacher (Camperdown Chronicle, 11.12.1894). She became headteacher of the East Keilambete School in 1873, 'ceasing only because of the 1894 decision not to employ married women' (Terang Register Pre 1900; see also Camperdown Chronicle, 11.12.1894). She drafted family members to assist her in

varying capacities at the school. One of her children was sent to put up a notice at the school which read "Baby coming - will be back tomorrow".

The family were deeply immersed in the local community - in the Presbyterian Church and its sabbath school, the Band of Hope, the Mechanics Institute and the Terang Football Club. Elizabeth and John had eight daughters. John's obituary noted his 'four unmarried daughters are trained nurses and conduct a private hospital in Terang' (Camperdown Chronicle, 9.3.1912).

Lyla trained as a nurse for three years at the Warrnambool Hospital, where she acquitted herself with distinction. She was subsequently sister in charge there and then at the Hamilton Hospital (Lyla Ferguson Stewart, Service Record; Warrnambool Standard, 22.9.1916).

In mid 1915 she applied to serve in the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) overseas. She was 29 years old (but gave her age as 26). She was the first in the family to enlist. Her younger brother Campbell enlisted the following year.

#### War Service

Lyla Stewart spent almost four years overseas on active service in Egypt (1915-16) and France (1916-1919), working in both Australian and British General Hospitals.

Her service record (naa.gov.au) provides only sketchy details about her activities and movements. The information is confused by material which relates to another L Stewart, in fact Lily Stewart of Ararat and later of Maryborough, which pertain to Lily's Royal Red Cross decoration and Oak Leaf (for Mentioned in Despatches).

The bare bones of Lyla's active service as recorded in her service record and the embarkation roll are these.

Her application for the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) was dated 16 July 1915.

She gave her address on enrolment in the AANS as East Melbourne, presumably referring to one of the nurses depots there.

Lyla sailed from Melbourne a few weeks later on 21 August, on board HMAT 'Kyarra' with Victorian and South Australian nurses who were reinforcements for No 2 Australian General Hospital in Egypt and around 250 Light Horse officers and men.

She suffered a mild attack of measles in April/May 1917 while serving in Wimereux near Boulogne, which hospitalised her in 14 Stationary Hospital and prompted authorities to notify her next of kin.

Lyla was promoted from staff nurse to the rank of sister on 1 October 1918.

She returned to Australia on HT 'Wandilla', disembarking in Melbourne on 18 May 1919, and was discharged from the AANS on 25 July 1919.

Lyla was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

L Stewart was awarded two decorations, the Royal Red Cross and oak leaf for Mentioned in Despatches - this was in fact not Lyla but Lily Stewart as the difference in signatures and addresses indicate.

Lyla applied for assistance from the Repatriation Department in 1948.

On her death in 1972, Lyla's husband William George Thompson provided her details to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, presumably to allow the Rising Sun emblem on her commemorative plaque.

Fortunately some of Lyla's experiences and thoughts on the war have survived. They



appeared in the Terang Express and other local papers, in the form of extracts from her letters and updates of her whereabouts provided by her mother and sisters.

Lyla cabled her mother to say she had arrived safely in Cairo in early October, and that she had been posted to 2 AGH. Like its sister 1 AGH, 2 AGH was located in facilities never intended to be a hospital, in its case the Ghezirah Palace Hotel, situated on an island in the Nile. Nonetheless, these hospitals treated thousands of sick and wounded from the Gallipoli campaign. A letter to her mother written in November or December gave her location as the Mena House, the first site of 2 AGH.

In the letter (Terang Express, 7.1.1916), Lyla described the hospital - hundreds of patients in 45 wards. As well as wounded Australian soldiers, some of whom were 'almost cut to pieces', there were 'crowds of medical cases', mainly British troops with dysentery, jaundice and typhoid. The patients in her ward were looked after by 2 orderlies, 2 Arabs, 2 nurses and one or two convalescent patients.

Lyla was almost overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task at hand:

One feels as if one can't do enough for these soldiers. When one thinks of what they are doing for us, and how they are being cut up and shot, nothing is a trouble to you ... I could get home on a transport almost any time, but I have no wish to yet.

There were lighter notes in the letter however: the daily street scenes with camels and donkeys were just like familiar bible pictures. And having to rush for a tram (from sight-seeing?) so as not to be late on duty.

In early 1916 as the war and Australians moved to the Western Front, medical units followed

them. 2 AGH packed up all its equipment and arrived in Marseilles in April. Its main role there was as an infectious diseases hospital, for patients with diphtheria, typhoid and smallpox. Lyla nursed a smallpox patient in quarantine for some time (Warrnambool Standard, 22.9.1916). 2 AGH then moved to Wimereux near Boulogne, though it appears from Lyla's letters to her family that she worked in one or more British General Hospitals in the Boulogne area. There were a number of British hospitals there, staffed by Australian nurses and British doctors.

All hospitals in the area were often overwhelmed by the volume of casualties from battles in the area, and then by the notorious 'Somme winter' of 1916-17. Nurses were often transferred between the hospitals, Australian and British, when the need arose; Stewart was probably among them - her service record is silent on this.

The official war diary of 2 AGH in late 1916 and 1917 indicated that in the midst of an 'exceptionally heavy workload', patients (and therefore medical staff) were in tents that were subject to the vagaries of the appalling weather, that water pipes froze and later burst, that at least one nurse was severely affected by the cold, and that in September 1917 the hospital had to put in place a 'super crisis expansion' to 1710 beds instead of the usual establishment of 1290.

Lyla Stewart spent a brief time in hospital in late April 1917 with measles, described as mild but sufficiently severe for authorities to notify her mother. A patient herself, she was beside herself with anxiety about the fate of her younger brother Campbell Nelson Stewart who was fighting in France with several young men from Terang. She had seen them around Christmas time, and she and her brother were in almost daily contact by letter (Terang Express, 3.7.1917). On 11 April 1917, he was reported missing, and a few weeks later dead. Writing from her bed in the

14th Stationary Hospital, Lyla was heartbroken: 'They say people get over these things, but I never shall.' She hoped when she returned on duty at AGH 'the matron can put me in the busiest ward in the place. I won't mind.' In fact, her brother had been wounded and captured, and was in a prisoner of war camp in Germany, a fact she discovered a few weeks later. He returned, still ill, to Terang to a hero's welcome in 1919 (Camperdown Chronicle, 12.6.1919).

Stewart was anxious to return to 2 AGH. The hospital experienced an influx of casualties in October and November 1917. Work was lighter in the following months but the struggle was against the bitter cold which forced the closure of tented wards. The hospital war diary recorded an influx of troops with machine gun bullets as fighting increased around Arras in March 1918, while in the following May came the first indications of what was to become a very serious health issue in the ensuing months - influenza. The threat of air raids prompted extensive sandbagging and trench digging in the summer of 1918. When the raids eventuated, the matron reported that 'the nurses behaved with perfect calmness, and carried out their duties without flurry or excitement' (War Diary, August 1918).

In late August 1918, the Allied push on the Somme generated another rush of casualties. 2 AGH took only stretcher cases. There was heavy pressure on its beds, and a high rate of evacuations was necessary to keep beds clear for another onslaught of admissions. That month, medical officers and nurses treated bullet and shell wounds, gas poisoning, spinal and head injuries, and dealt with another short-lived influenza outbreak.

Influenza loomed again in October, when the hospital commanding officer reported its management and control were his 'greatest anxiety'. The matron reported patients were helpless, 'utterly prostrated by the disease'. The nursing staff wore gowns and masks and

insisted on ward ventilation, and most managed to remain free of the illness.

The extent of the influenza problem, combined with the arrival of winter, virtually overshadowed news of the Armistice on 11 November. 'News of Armistice being agreed received,' the CO wrote, 'Very wet and cold. Extra blankets issued' (War Diary, entry for 11.11.1918). Hostilities might have ceased but the work remained very heavy.

By December 1918, the number of patients was dropping and the influenza epidemic abating. The medical officers undertook refresher courses at other hospitals. Nursing work became easier in some ways but more difficult in others. Ambulant patients confined indoors by winter weather made it harder to keep wards clean and tidy, reported the matron, while her nurses needed 'much tact and wisdom' to deal with restless patients impatient to be repatriated home (War Diary, December 1918).

No new patients were admitted from 11 February, and the hospital emptied as existing patients were evacuated. The nursing staff began transferring to England from mid February. Many took leave in Paris or the south of France, and then returned to Australia.

#### After the War

Lyla left for Australia in March 1919, one of the nursing staff on HT Wandilla. She arrived in Melbourne after a six week voyage, on 18 May 1919, and was discharged from the AANS on 25 July 1919. She had been on active service for almost four years, and does not appear to have returned to Australia the entire time.

Among the returning troops on board HT Wandilla was William (Bill) George Thompson, an English-born Australian. Lyla's descendants have surmised that a romance was kindled or re-kindled on the ship. They had both served in France, and may have met when Bill was attached to 8 Field Hospital (<http://trees.ancestry.com.au>).

Lyla and Bill married in Terang on 6 June 1921. Lyla gave her address as Terang and Bill gave his as 257 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne, a place he rented in whole or part from Henry Maddison. His occupation was labourer and hers home duties. According to the Australian Electoral Rolls, by 1934 the couple had moved to Point Neapean Rd, Brighton where they were still living when Lyla died in 1972. Her age was given as 78; she was in fact 86 according to her birth registration in 1886.

Lyla applied for assistance from the Repatriation Department in 1958. She died in Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital. Lyla was cremated at Springvale, Melbourne after her death. William provided details to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, presumably requesting permission for the appropriate emblems on her commemorative plaque.

#### References:

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Lyla Ferguson Stewart

Lyla Ferguson Stewart

Lyla Ferguson Stewart and family Terang 1907

Keilambete East School 1894 (Lyla Ferguson Stewart front row third from left)

2 Australian General Hospital Gezirah Palace 1915 AWM AO2725



2 Australian General Hospital Gezirah Palace 1915 AWM AO2725

View across Nile from Gezirah AWM ART02821

View across Nile from Gezirah AWM ART02821

Hospital ward at 2 AGH Wimereux, 1918 (AWM PO1630)



Hospital ward at 2 AGH Wimereux, 1918 (AWM PO1630)

Lyla Stewart with brother Campbell and Charles Clifford, France, Christmas 1916



Lyla Stewart with brother Campbell and Charles Clifford, France, Christmas 1916







Lyla Ferguson Stewart and family Terang 1907



Keilambete East School 1894 (Lyla Ferguson Stewart front row third from left)

Studio portrait, France, Christmas 1916, Lyla and Campbell Stewart (r)

Studio portrait, France, Christmas 1916, Lyla and Campbell Stewart (r)

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John Montgomery Templeton (1840-1908), actuary, was born on 20 May 1840 at Kilmaurs, Ayrshire, Scotland, eldest son of Hugh Templeton, schoolmaster, and his wife Margaret, née Harvie. He arrived with his parents at Melbourne in December 1852, qualified under the National Board of Education and became a schoolteacher at Fitzroy in 1857. His interest in mathematics developed and in 1868 he became an accountant with the newly formed National Insurance Co. of Australasia. He suggested radical improvements to the existing system of insurance and persuaded his directors to found the National Mutual Life Association of Australasia in 1869, which became the first Australian company to include the non-forfeiture principle in its policies. Templeton became its actuary and in 1872 its secretary. That year he qualified as a fellow of the Institute of Actuaries.

An able administrator, considerate yet strict, Templeton retained the style of the schoolmaster; he aroused ill feelings by his frequent and sometimes bitter disputations in English and Australian insurance journals, especially over the origin of the non-forfeiture concept. He was nominated by the government in 1874 to certify the insurance tables of friendly societies and in 1878 was appointed actuary under the Friendly Societies Act of 1877. In 1881 he was appointed to the royal commission on education, and as chairman in the absence of J. W. Rogers organized the final majority report which Rogers refused to sign.

In 1883 Templeton accepted J. Service's offer to become first chairman of the Public Service Board, and in February next year he resigned from the National Mutual. The board's abolition of political patronage and introduction of new salary scales earned him much resentment, and his attempts to achieve greater independence for the board by direct approach to the governor put him at odds with the ministry. When in 1888 he accepted a seat on the board of the National Mutual, his political enemies attacked him. Rather than relinquish his outside work, he resigned from the Public Service Board in February 1889.

Templeton was appointed on 9 December to investigate the Premier Permanent Building, Land, and Investment Association, one of the first casualties of the collapse of the land boom. In February 1890 he was made official liquidator for the firm and despite political opposition forced the prosecution of its directors, including J. Mirams. In 1891 he became official liquidator for the Anglo-Australian Bank and was also chairman of liquidators for the Mercantile Finance, Trustees, and Agency Co. Ltd. Templeton became chairman of the board of the National Mutual in 1895 and its managing director in 1897-1908. In October 1893 he had won the Legislative Assembly seat of Benalla and Yarrawonga, but the result was contested and in a new election he was defeated. In the 1903 Federal elections he stood unsuccessfully for the Senate.

Templeton took a great interest in citizen defence. At 19 he joined the volunteers as a private in

the Collingwood Rifles and became a first-rate rifle shot. Lieutenant in 1864 and captain and battalion adjutant in 1867, he became major in the Second Metropolitan Victorian Battalion in 1873 and in 1883 was promoted to lieutenant-colonel in the reorganized defence forces. In 1895 he became a full colonel. In 1883-97 he was a member of the Victorian Council of Defence and was honorary aide-de-camp to the governor in 1885 and 1895. He captained the successful Victorian team that went to Bisley, England, in 1897 and in London he rode in the leading section of the colonial procession at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. On his return he was transferred to the Reserve Officers Militia, but in 1898 was appointed to the Local Defence Committee. He was treasurer of the Victorian Naval and Military Club in 1889-97. Vice-president from 1888 and chairman in 1899 of the Victorian Rifle Association, in 1900-02 he was officer commanding rifle clubs. He did much to promote rifle shooting in Victoria; his lecture at the Town Hall, Melbourne, on 29 July 1900 to commemorate the movement, was the basis for his *Consolidation of the British Empire, the Growth of Citizen Soldiership, and the Establishment of the Australian Commonwealth* (Melbourne, 1901). He published several other pamphlets on aspects of insurance and defence. He was created C.M.G. in 1897.

Of 'medium height, sturdily built, square-shouldered, with fine massive head and set, inscrutable face, walking always quickly with short, light step', he was indefatigable and honest, although his pugnacious self-confidence involved him in many conflicts. He had married Mary Lush of Melbourne on 20 April 1866; on 19 August 1905 at Sydney he married Carrie Taylor, 38-year-old secretary of Melbourne. He died on 10 June 1908 of pleurisy and heart failure at Kilmaurs, East Melbourne, and was buried in the Melbourne general cemetery. Childless, he was survived by his second wife and left an estate valued for probate at £22,321.

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Location map: