

**THE OFFICIAL HISTORY OF
AUSTRALIA IN THE WAR
OF 1914-1918**

**VOLUME V
THE A.I.F. IN FRANCE:
DECEMBER 1917-MAY 1918**

THE
AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE
IN FRANCE

DURING THE MAIN GERMAN OFFENSIVE, 1918

BY
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With 279 illustrations and maps

Eighth Edition

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PREFACE

THIS volume narrates the part played by the Australian Corps in the barring of the German advance upon Amiens in 1918, and the similar part of the 1st Australian Division in the saving of Hazebrouck. It also endeavours to explain the change of outlook which enhanced the spirit and performance of Australian soldiers throughout the last year of the war. Appendices describe the participation of Australians in the Mesopotamian and North-West Persian campaigns (including the rôle of the Dunsterforce during the retreat of the Assyrians from Urmia, one of the most terrible though little known incidents of the war); and the episode in which the great airman, Richthofen, met his death.

The main subject necessarily involves a more than incidental reference to the performance of the British Army in the greatest battle ever waged; and, in his endeavour to paint a true picture not only of those operations but of the motives behind the conduct of them, the writer is most deeply indebted to the British Official Historian, Sir James Edmonds, who with outstanding generosity placed the results of his own researches at the service of his Australian colleague, heedless of whether they would first be given to the public in his own volumes or—as some of them inevitably are—in this. Needless to say, the first volume of the British Official History dealing with 1918 was by far the most helpful of the published works consulted.

Next, the author desires to express his thanks to Captain G. D. Mitchell for permission to use an original record that richly deserves—and, in the interests of the A.I.F., should some day be given—publication in book form. A debt is also due to the admirable French Official History; to the French Ministry of War for the relevant extracts from the French records; to the *Reichsarchiv* for information from German official sources; to the Australian agents charged with the distribution of the Right Honourable A. Duff Cooper's *Haig* for advance copies of *Volume II* of that important work;

to the Consul-General for the United States in Sydney and the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions (U.S.A.) for help in identifying Americans mentioned in Appendix 5; to *Reveille*, the *Sun*, *Smith's Weekly*, and the *West Australian* for courteously broadcasting requests for information or photographs; and to very many ex-members of the British and Australian forces who, from the late Sir John Monash downwards, freely gave their assistance whenever required.

C. E. W. B.

SYDNEY,

8th June, 1936.

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CHRONOLOGY FROM 1st DECEMBER, 1917, TO 7th MAY, 1918

(*Italic type indicates events dealt with in this volume.*)

1917.

- Dec. 1—*Allied Supreme War Council inaugurated. German East Africa cleared of enemy.*
 „ 9—Jerusalem taken.
 „ 12—Roumania agrees to armistice.
 „ 15—Russians sign armistice terms at Brest-Litovsk.
 „ 20—Australia rejects conscription (second referendum).

1918.

- Jan. 8—President Wilson lays down his "Fourteen Points."
 „ 20—Naval action outside the Dardanelles
 „ 27—*Dunsterforce leaves Baghdad for North-West Persia.*
 Feb. 19—*Sir Henry Wilson appointed Chief of the Imperial General Staff (in place of Sir William Robertson).*
 „ 21—Jericho taken.
 March 3—Peace treaty signed by Russia and Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk.
 „ 5—Preliminary peace treaty signed between Roumania and Central Powers.
 „ 13—Odessa occupied by German forces.
 „ 21—*German offensive begins on the Somme (ends on April 5).*
 Mar. 21-Apr. 2—Raid to Es Salt and Amman (Palestine).
 March 26—*General Foch appointed to co-ordinate efforts of British and French Armies. Hébuterne occupied by 4th Aust. Brigade.*
 „ 27—*Montdidier taken by Germans. 3rd and 4th Aust. Divisions go into line in front of Amiens.*
 „ 28—*Germans attack at Arras. First action of Dernancourt.*
 „ 30—*Germans attack at Morlancourt.*
 April 1—R.F.C. and R.N.A.S. amalgamated and established as a separate service, the R.A.F.
 „ 4-5—*Battle of the Avre. Second action of Dernancourt. First action of Villers-Bretonneux.*
 „ 9-29—*German offensive on the Lys.*
 „ 10—Third Military Service Act passed in Great Britain.
 „ 12-15—*Battle of Hazebrouck.*

1918.

- April 15—Germans capture Bailleul
„ 17-19—*First Battle of Kemmel Ridge.*
„ 23—British naval raid on Ostend and Zeebrugge.
„ 24-25—*Second Battle of Villers-Bretomeux.*
„ 25-26—Second Battle of Kemmel Ridge.
- April 30-May 4—Second action of Es Salt.
- May 1—Sebastopol taken by Germans.
„ 7—Final treaty of peace signed between Roumania and Central Powers