CHAPTER III
THE "A.I.F."

The scheme for the Australian Imperial Force was completed by General Bridges and Major White on August 8th. The force was to be drawn, as far as possible, from men who had undergone some training: half of them were to be men then serving in the citizen army of Australia—mainly youngsters in their twentieth year and upwards; the other half were to be men not then in the forces, but who had once been in the militia or had served in the South African or other wars. The units were to be connected with the different States in Australia; they were to be definitely local and territorial. This principle, laid down from the first, was of necessity afterwards abandoned in the case of special arms, such as the artillery, the army medical corps, and the engineers, but the infantry battalions and light horse regiments continued to be recruited from their own States throughout the war.

The two most populous States of Australia were New South Wales and Victoria. Each of these covered less than the huge average area of an Australian State, but if the population of Australia had been divided by three, New South Wales would have had rather more than a third and Victoria rather less; the four other States would have made up the remaining third between them. An infantry division (the smallest infantry force which is complete with guns, ambulances, transport, etc.) consisted of three infantry brigades together with all the attendant arms. It was accordingly decided that New South Wales should furnish the 1st Infantry Brigade (consisting of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Australian Battalions, each 1,023 strong); Victoria the 2nd Infantry Brigade (consisting of the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Battalions); and the remaining four States the 3rd Brigade.

The four less populous States—Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania—were commonly looked upon as the "rural" States of the Commonwealth. In Victoria and New South Wales nearly half the population lived in two disproportionately large cities, Melbourne and Sydney. Of the other four States only South Australia possessed a large city
population. In Queensland, of which half lay in the tropical north, the people were largely engaged in cattle-raising on the huge “stations” or runs which covered most of its vast territory. In Western Australia, the largest and youngest of the States, a large proportion of the inhabitants consisted of goldminers working in the half-desert, of farmers in newly-opened coastal districts, and of timber-getters from the great eucalyptus (jarrah and karri) forests in the south. In Tasmania, the small island-State, lying about a hundred and fifty miles south of Victoria, the population comprised mainly sheep-farmers, fruitgrowers, and miners, who, in that colder climate, had kept many of their British characteristics—square frames, bright complexions, and a more deliberate manner of action. These four States differed widely in the number of their inhabitants. Queensland (with 660,158 people) furnished a large proportion of light horse, the folk of the cattle-stations being peculiarly suitable for this arm. Tasmania, the smallest (201,675), was naturally unable to provide many completely Tasmanian units. The 3rd Infantry Brigade (sometimes known as the All-Australian Brigade) was accordingly composed as follows:

9th Battalion—Queensland.
10th Battalion—South Australia.
11th Battalion—Western Australia.
12th Battalion—Half Tasmanian; the other half Western Australian and South Australian.

The same composition was retained in almost every Australian infantry division which was raised throughout the war. The 2nd, 3rd, and 5th Australian Divisions, when formed at a later stage, each contained one brigade from New South Wales, one Victorian brigade, and one brigade from the other four States.\footnote{In the 3rd Division the Tasmanian battalion was in the Victorian brigade.} Indeed this system would probably have been rigidly preserved, if it had been realised from the first that further divisions would be sent. But during the days when the 1st Division was being organised it did not suggest itself that so large a unit as a division would again be required. From the rush of men who volunteered—too many for the 1st Division—another brigade of infantry was offered to Great Britain on 3rd September, 1914. This brigade was numbered
the Fourth, and was organised as a separate contingent. It was consequently composed on a small scale, as the first division was on a large one, of units from all the Australian States, that is to say,

13th Battalion—New South Wales.
14th Battalion—Victoria.
15th Battalion—Queensland and Tasmania.
16th Battalion—South and Western Australia.

One of the later brigades, the Eighth, was offered singly in the same manner, and these thus formed two exceptions to the general system on which the divisions of the A.I.F. were composed.

In the 1st Australian Division the artillery, engineers, ambulances—even the clerks, grooms, and batmen comprising the Divisional Headquarters—were each drawn from their special State. As with the infantry, so with the artillery, the composition was—

1st Field Artillery Brigade:
1st, 2nd and 3rd Batteries (each of 4 field guns)—New South Wales.

2nd Field Artillery Brigade:
4th, 5th and 6th Batteries—Victoria.

3rd Field Artillery Brigade ("All-Australian"): 7th Battery—Queensland.
8th Battery—Western Australia.
9th Battery—Tasmania.
(The ammunition column of this Brigade was in part drawn from South Australia).

Other arms were composed as follows

Engineers:
1st Field Company—New South Wales.
2nd Field Company—Victoria.
3rd Field Company—Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania.

Army Medical Corps:
1st Field Ambulance—New South Wales.
2nd Field Ambulance—Victoria.
3rd Field Ambulance—Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania.
The expeditions which Great Britain had been accustomed to despatch against insurgent tribesmen had usually been organised as brigades, and there had been a tendency to think of each brigade as a self-contained little army, consisting of its four infantry battalions with their field ambulance, company of engineers, and brigade of artillery, all under the command of the Brigadier-General. In 1914 the British were breaking away from this system. The Staff was thinking in larger units—"divisions"; the field ambulances, the engineers, and the artillery were made divisional and not brigade troops. During the war the first Australian Brigade of Infantry never, unless by an accident, had the 1st Australian Brigade of Artillery attached to it. But in practice this did constantly happen with the field ambulances and the engineers. It is true that they were often attached to other troops, and wore the badge of the division and not the colour of the brigade. But, to take an example, the 1st Field Ambulance and the 1st Field Company were—except on Gallipoli—almost invariably attached to the 1st Infantry Brigade. In the 1st Australian Division, as it was originally composed, these troops came from the same States as the respective brigades with which they usually served, and the bond was thus closer.

The light horse were allotted to the States as follows.

The 1st Light Horse Brigade came from all Australian States except Victoria and Western Australia:
1st Australian Light Horse Regiment—New South Wales.
2nd Australian Light Horse Regiment—Queensland.
3rd Australian Light Horse Regiment—South Australia and Tasmania.

A further regiment of light horse went with the infantry division as its "divisional" cavalry. This (the 4th Australian Light Horse Regiment) was raised in Victoria.

The rush of Australians to enter the light horse being very great, an additional light horse brigade was offered on September 3rd, at the same time as the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade mentioned above. This 2nd Light Horse Brigade was raised entirely in the northern and eastern portion

2 Throughout these volumes the 1st Military District is spoken of, for clearness, as Queensland, but it also includes portion of New South Wales. The same is true of the South Australian (4th) Military District. See also Note 3, Chap. II, p. 22.
of Australia (Queensland and New South Wales), as follows—

2nd Australian Light Horse Brigade:

5th Regiment—Queensland.
6th Regiment—New South Wales.
7th Regiment—New South Wales.

Before the end of September it was found in the other States that many country-bred men fit for mounted work were enlisting in the infantry—the artillery, transport, and other mounted corps being full. Accordingly, yet another light horse brigade was offered on October and was accepted. This, the 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade, was raised in the southern and western portions of Australia, as follows:

3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade:

8th Regiment—Victoria.
9th Regiment—South Australia and Victoria.
10th Regiment—Western Australia.

The three light horse brigades had their attached signal troops, light horse field ambulances, and brigade trains (numbered 1st, 2nd, and 3rd respectively), but neither horse artillery nor field troops of engineers.

Such were the fighting units which had within a month to be filled with men and officers, equipped, and at least partially trained. In order to render the territorial spirit as strong as possible, the men and officers of units were to be recruited, not merely from the particular States to which their brigades belonged, but from particular areas in those States. This was the instruction given by General Bridges to the commandants of the respective “Districts,” and it was partly carried out. The 2nd Battalion, for example, was allotted by its brigadier the 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th training areas, all of which were in the northern portions of New South Wales, from the northern side of Sydney Harbour to the borders of the 1st Military District. The men were largely drawn from the Maitland and Newcastle coalfield; the first two commanding officers of the battalion also came from that district. The 3rd Battalion largely came from the west of New South Wales and its “South Coast.” The 1st and 4th Battalions were given the west and east of Sydney respectively. The 7th Battalion was to a great extent
recruited from the town and district of Bendigo, in Victoria, and the 8th from Ballarat; the 5th and 6th were from Melbourne. As there was only a month between the Proclamation of August 10th (which opened recruiting for the Australian Imperial Force) and the proposed date of embarkation, September 12th, there was little opportunity for General Bridges to ensure that such minor principles in the scheme should be perfectly understood.

The great driving force of Bridges created all this new army within a month, mainly upon the lines of the scheme which White had drawn before the war. He chose his brigadiers before recruiting opened, and had them attached to the commandants in their respective States to assist in organising and training their brigades. He left it to the brigadiers to nominate their regimental commanders, and to the regimental commanders to choose and secure the officers of their own units. He advised that the pay for privates in the new force, when abroad, should be higher by one-quarter than the pay—4s. a day—of the citizen force in Australia. It was eventually fixed at 5s. a day "active" pay and 1s. a day "deferred" (that is, to be paid to them on discharge). The pay of Australian soldiers and sailors in peace-time was calculated to yield them the same return, when their rations and lodging were taken into consideration, as the average Australian worker obtained in the shape of wages; six shillings a day, although generous, was not high by that standard. It was, however, the highest pay given to a private in any army. The New Zealander received five shillings. The American private received the equivalent of 4s. 7d. The British infantry private at the beginning of the war was getting one shilling a day (at the end of the war, to induce him to remain in the army of occupation, his pay was raised to three shillings). On the other hand, to Australian soldiers who were married there was at first given no separation allowance for their families, such as is paid to married officers and men in the British Army. Instead, they were obliged to sign a declaration agreeing to allot not less than two-fifths of their active pay to their family. In 1915 a separation allowance was instituted, but it was paid only in the case of soldiers receiving less than eight (later ten) shillings a day. Of the officers in the
Australian Imperial Force, the pay was not particularly high. While the lieutenant (with £1 1s. a day while abroad) and the captain (with £1 6s.) received more than the corresponding officers in the British Army at the beginning of the war, Australian brigadier-generals (£2 12s. 6d.) received less than those in the British Army, and in higher ranks this difference increased.

The first fine rush to enlistment brought to the 1st Australian Division a class of men not quite the same as that which answered to any later call. All the adventurous roving natures that could not stay away, whatever their duties and their ties; all those who plunged heads down into war, reckless of anything else, because it was a game to be played and they were players by nature; all those who had been brought up on tales of old British adventure, and who, seeing the mother country of their romance in peril, could not remain still for a moment until they were in the thick of things; all those who could not refrain from taking life in strong draughts, both the good and the bad of it; all those whose tender upbringing had bred in them the exalted British standard of service which is to be constantly found, in a degree which some would deem quixotic, in good Australian homes; old soldiers of the British regular army to a man, many of them having been called up as reservists to their old regiments; hundreds of those newly-arrived younger men who knew the old country as the land of their childhood, English and Scottish immigrants to whom their “home” was calling; Irishmen with a generous semi-religious hatred of the German horrors in Belgium; all the romantic, quixotic, adventurous flotsam that eddied on the surface of the Australian people concentrated itself within those first weeks upon the recruiting offices of the A.I.F. The men who would not wait for commissions as officers, which were to be had almost for the asking by any educated Australian if he chose to go to Great Britain; the men who would not risk their chance of getting to the front by holding out for enlistment in some mounted corps—light horse, artillery, or transport—which most Australians naturally preferred; the men whose greatest fear was that they would not be “in” whatever was going, and
that the war might be over before they reached the fighting—
these were the material with which the ranks of the twelve
infant battalions of the 1st Australian Division rapidly swelled.

In only two or three cases do the records preserve details
of these early enlistments. The newspapers stated that by
April, 1915, there had been enrolled 12,000 shearers and
station hands, members of the Australian Workers' Union,
and 1,000 bank clerks. In New South Wales alone 164
students of the State Agricultural College and 140 policemen
had joined. More than one clergyman, not accepted as
chaplain, enlisted in the ranks. One was a well-known priest
of the Church of England, Diggès La Touche, a fiery North
of Ireland man, educated at Trinity College, Dublin. La
Touche had only been in Australia for two years, but had
become known as a diocesan missionary and a controversial
debater upon rationalism. He joined the infantry as a private,
and told the Dean of Sydney that he desired to rise from the
ranks entirely by his own exertions. He was discharged for
medical reasons, but rejoined, and left Australia as a sergeant.
A fellow-sergeant in a New South Wales battalion was one
of the members of the State Parliament, E. R. Larkin.

Many men, rejected in the Capital of one State, made the
long journey to another to enlist. One youngster, four times
refused in Melbourne, was accepted in Sydney. Another man
rode 460 miles, and travelled still further by railway, in order
to join the Light Horse in Adelaide. Finding the ranks full,
he sailed to Hobart, and was finally enlisted in Sydney. Many,
being refused in Australia, took passage to Great Britain and
enlisted in British Regiments. Other Australians returned from
every part of the world to enlist in their own country. In 1914
Stefansson's expedition was exploring for the Canadian
Government in the Arctic Circle. With it was a young Aus-
trian, George Wilkins. Not until the second year of the war
did a schooner bring them definite news of the struggle. They
returned. Wilkins hastened from Canada to England and

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3 Lieut. E. Diggès La Touche, 2nd Bn.; killed at Lone Pine, 6 Aug., 1915 (see
Vol II, pp. 517, 532n).

Explorer; of Adelaide; b. Mount Bryan East, S. Aust., 31 Aug., 1888.
thence to Australia, where he joined the Flying Corps. Within a few days he left for the front, having made an almost continuous journey from the northern ice.

Those who during the first few days crowded the recruiting offices came mostly from the great cities. But within the first year many farming districts had been deserted by almost all their young men. It has been claimed for King Island, between Tasmania and the mainland, that it sent to the front a greater proportion of its inhabitants than any other district. But similar claims are made in other quarters, and their truth can never now be determined. The recruiting offices were in the cities. In the great pastoral districts inland, and in some newly settled farming areas, especially in Western Australia, news of the war arrived late and irregularly. When Liège fell and it became clear that the struggle would not be over in a few months, the younger men began flocking to the Capitals to enlist, and often there remained no record to connect them with the district from which they came. In some cases they locked their houses and left their paddocks untended during the war.

Some who had been officers in the militia entered the force as privates. Many a youngster, who could have had a commission, enlisted in the ranks and remained there in order to serve beside a friend. There were in the Australian force no special corps in which University or "public school" men enlisted apart from others. One light horse regiment indeed there was, the 10th, to which the sons of almost every well-known pastoralist or farmer in Western Australia came bringing their own horses and their own saddles. Just a year later half of that regiment was wiped out within a few seconds in one of the bravest charges ever made. Similarly the great public schools of Victoria formed a company in the 5th Battalion. But for the most part the wealthy, the educated, the rough and the case-hardened, poor Australians, rich Australians, went into the ranks together unconscious of any distinction. When they came into an atmosphere of class difference later in the war, they stoutly and rebelliously resented it.

It might seem that in the creation of a new army—half from men trained as militia and the rest from men completely untrained—the instruction of the rank and file in the technique
of modern fighting would prove the heaviest task. Such, indeed, was the expectation of many commanding officers in this new force.

It turned out differently. The training of the men was never the main difficulty in the Australian Imperial Force. The bush still sets the standard of personal efficiency even in the Australian cities. The bushman is the hero of the Australian boy; the arts of the bush life are his ambition; his most cherished holidays are those spent with country relatives or in camping out. He learns something of half the arts of a soldier by the time he is ten years old—to sleep comfortably in any shelter, to cook meat or bake flour, to catch a horse, to find his way across country by day or night, to ride, or, at the worst, to “stick on.”

The Australian of the bush is frequently called upon to fight bush-fires; and fighting bush-fires, more than any other human experience, resembles the fighting of a pitched battle. The greatest strain upon soldiers on active service is generally the want of sleep. In war men are required to work for sixty or seventy hours without closing their eyes, toiling with all their strength until they often drop from weariness. In most countries a man lives his life without ever having to work continuously through a day and a night. But in the Australian bush that effort may become necessary at any moment during the long summer months. In 1913 a bush-fire, no more serious than usual, started at a point on the east coast of Tasmania and was driven inland by the wind towards the newly-settled farms near Campania. As tidings came of its approach, the men of the four or five farms on the edge of the bush were organised by one of the younger settlers into the usual teams for fire-fighting. On Sunday night the blaze was still apparently at a safe distance. Early on Monday morning came news that a change of the wind had brought it swiftly through the forest. At five o’clock in the morning the young farmer who organised the teams was roused, and an hour later, with his younger brother and thirty-eight men, he was in the thick of the fire-fight. From 6 a.m. on Monday until 4 a.m. on Friday the elder brother was working incessantly without sleep. The rest fought for 36 hours at a shift. Two were employed in bringing food to the fighters; the rest
were burning firebreaks ahead of the fire and then dashing into and beating down any flames which burst out across the breaks. After 94 hours the fire was sufficiently held to allow of some respite. The young farmer, who till then had led them continuously, was able to sleep for four hours, and he then worked for another twelve until all danger was past. Three years later the younger brother, who had helped him, was recommended for a Victoria Cross after sixty hours' fighting at Mouquet Farm.

During the last year of the war the cadets of the Military College at Duntroon were sent out to fight a fire in the hill country near the College. The work was organised as an operation in a military campaign. Fires, floods, and even the concentration of sheep for shearing, or the long journeys in droving bullocks down the great stock routes across the "back country," offer many conditions similar to those of a military expedition. The Australian was half a soldier before the war; indeed throughout the war, in the hottest fights on Gallipoli and in the bitterest trials of France or Palestine, the Australian soldier differed very little from the Australian who at home rides the station boundaries every week-day and sits of a Sunday round the stockyard fence. The one military accomplishment in which the majority of Australians had never practised themselves was that of marching long distances. Except for the old race of "sundowners," almost extinct, any Australian who, before the war, walked a mile when there was a horse at hand which could be ridden was looked upon as wanting in intelligence.

In practice it was found that the rank and file of the Australian Imperial Force could be trained in a few months, provided that the officers knew their work and were men capable of handling men. But the man who commanded them must needs be a man in every sense of the word. Most Australian soldiers had never in their lives known what it was to be given a direct order undisguised by "you might" or "would you mind?" Since the discipline of the much-harassed bush school-teacher, they had never known any restraint that was not self-imposed. In this fact lay potentialities both for good and for evil not to be found in the men of those nations
which bring up their young in leading-strings. If an Australian soldier wanted to do a thing, he possessed the capacity for acting on his own initiative. He seldom hesitated on the brink of action. To paint him as a being of lamb-like nature and the gentle virtues would be entirely to miss his character. "Colourless" is the last adjective that could be applied to him. He was full of colour, entirely positive, constantly surprising those who knew him by some fresh display of qualities which even his own officers (who in most cases had been his mates) had never suspected.

If the Australian soldier were ever in need of a plea, it would be upon his positive qualities, not upon the negative quality of docility, that his advocate must rely. The British "Tommies" among whom he afterwards mixed, best-natured of men, extraordinarily guileless, humble-minded to a degree, never boastful, and seldom the cause of any serious trouble, instinctively looked up to the Australian private as a leader. If he was a good Australian he led them into good things, and if he was a bad Australian he led them into evil, but he always led. He was more a child of nature even than the New Zealanders. When the Americans forgathered with him at the end of the war, he led them also.

Such men could not easily be controlled by the traditional methods of the British Army. The fact that a man had received a good education, dressed well, spoke English faultlessly and belonged to the "officer" class, would merely incline them, at first sight, to laugh at him, or at least to suspect that he was guilty of affectation—in their own language, "putting on dog." But they were seriously intent upon learning, and were readily controlled by anyone really competent to teach them. They were hero-worshippers to the backbone. There was a difficulty in reconciling them to any sort of irksome rule; the putting of any precinct "out of bounds" they regarded as an attempt to treat them as children. At first there undoubtedly existed among them a sort of suppressed resentfulness, never very serious, but yet noticeable, of the whole system of "officers."

How the Australian officer won his footing will be told in its place. Early in the history of the A.I.F. it became clear that the right selection and training of officers was the problem
vital beyond any other in the creation of the Australian Army. Given officers and non-commissioned officers of the right type and of sufficient training, the rank and file of an Australian force could be trained in a few months. The "Staff" for the 1st Australian Division was chosen by General Bridges from among the small permanent staff which administered and trained the Australian Army, and from among certain British officers who had been previously lent by the British Government, or who were in Australia on exchange for Australian officers sent overseas. He had no difficulty in selecting a staff which would have been a brilliant one for any division. He "picked the eyes" of the Australian forces for the purpose. But it was not to the "Staff Officers," but to the regimental officers, that the handling of the Australian soldier fell. The Staff was responsible for plans of operations and organisation in general, and the officers whom General Bridges chose for it will be described later.

For his brigadiers and regimental officers Bridges had scarcely any regular officers available. He was thus forced to depend upon the officers of the Australian militia. To them were joined, when they could be obtained, any past or present officers of the British regular army who happened to be in Australia. These were always among the earliest to volunteer. Bridges added the cadets of the senior year of the Royal Military College at Duntroon, of which he himself had recently been the first commandant.

As brigadiers of his New South Wales (1st) and Victorian (2nd) infantry brigades the General chose two outstanding citizen-officers from those States. For his composite (3rd) brigade he picked an experienced British regular officer and trusted friend, who had been Director of Drill under him at the Military College. This was Lieutenant-Colonel E. G. Sinclair-MacLagan. Colonel MacLagan had twice served in Australia in recent years; first, immediately after the South African War, and now, while assisting Bridges in the moulding of the Royal Military College. Besides a complete knowledge of his profession, he possessed a most attractive way with men
and a fine sense of humour. In the handling of a brigade consisting largely of miners from the “fields” and bush workers from the back-blocks these qualities were likely to be invaluable.

For the Victorian brigadier Bridges selected Colonel James Whiteside M'Cay,6 one of a family of brilliant brothers well-known in Australian journalism. M'Cay himself was a lawyer, but since his early years he had been a keen militiaman. He had sat in the Federal Parliament, and was Minister for Defence in the Reid Ministry of 1904 and 1905. At the outbreak of war he was made censor, but gave up that post to command his brigade. For the brigadier from New South Wales Bridges made the experiment of selecting, on an estimate of his character, a very young and comparatively untried officer, a Sydney barrister, H. N. MacLaurin.7 MacLaurin was the son of one of the most respected public men in New South Wales, Sir Normand MacLaurin, a Scotsman, once a leading Sydney medical man and for years Chancellor of the University of Sydney. Young MacLaurin had been in the militia since his university days, and had recently been promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the 26th Infantry of the citizen forces. For the 1st Light Horse Brigade there was chosen a senior officer of the Australian permanent forces, Colonel Harry Chauvel,8 then in England as Australian representative on the Imperial General Staff. He was instructed by telegraph to join the brigade on its arrival overseas.

To the commanders of these original brigades were assigned regular officers, either British or Australian, who formed their small staffs. On a brigade staff in the infantry the “brigade-major” generally constituted the operations branch, and the “staff-captain” (at that time known as “orderly officer”) the administrative branch (supplies, transport, and routine). In

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7 Colonel (temp. Brig-General) H. N. MacLaurin Commanded 1st Inf. Bde., 1914/15. b. Sydney, N.S.W., 31 Oct., 1875; killed in action, 27 Apr., 1915. Several weeks after MacLaurin’s death an order was promulgated promoting a number of AIF colonels (including MacLaurin) to the temporary rank of Brigadier-General. He was therefore known to the AIF as a colonel and is so referred to in this History.

8 General Sir Harry G. Chauvel, GCMG, KCB Commanded Desert Mounted Corps, 1917/19 and GOC, AIF troops in Egypt, 1916/19. GCS, Aust Military Forces, 1915/16. 2nd Clarence R. Dist., N.S.W.; b Tabulam, Clarence River, 16 Apr., 1865. (For further biographical details see Vol VII, the story of Sinai and Palestine.)
the 1st Brigade two British officers then on service in Australia were allotted for these positions, Captain F. D. Irvine, R.E., and Lieutenant D. M. King, Liverpool Regiment. To the 2nd Brigade were assigned Major W. E. H. Cass, an ex-schoolmaster and an officer of the Australian permanent forces who had lately been on exchange to India, and Captain H. J. F. Wallis, Wiltshire Regiment, lately A.D.C. to the Governor of New South Wales. To the 3rd Brigade were allotted an officer of the Australian staff, Major C. H. Brand, and Captain A. M. Ross, a British officer employed at the Royal Military College as instructor in tactics. The 1st Light Horse Brigade had two permanent Australian officers upon its staff, Captain E. M. Williams and Lieutenant W. P. Farr.

The manner in which the regimental officers for the original 1st Division were selected may be illustrated by the case of the 1st Australian Infantry Brigade, whose records for this period are, for some reason, much more complete than those of the other troops. The brigadier, MacLaurin, was a man of lofty ideals, direct, determined, with a certain inherited Scottish dourness rather unusual in a young Australian, but an educated man of action of the finest type that the Australian Universities produce. He felt that he was very young for the position, but he was ready to take any responsibility if it became his duty. The notice of his appointment required him to nominate the commanders of the four battalions of infantry composing his brigade. He went straight to the man

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who knew more about the personnel of the forces in New South Wales than any other, a devoted servant of his country, Captain W. J. Sherbon, chief clerk of the "District." "Look here, Sherbon," he said, "can I undertake this? I am asked to choose the colonels of my infantry battalions. Who are the men for it?" Captain Sherbon, after a moment's thought, mentioned the three names which his experience had left on the surface of his mind: "I would take Colonel Braund of the 13th Infantry," he said, "Onslow Thompson, and Owen."

Onslow Thompson was a member of one of the oldest families of pastoral settlers in New South Wales. He was a country man and had been manager of the original Camden Park Estate (once belonging to Captain John Macarthur, who introduced the merino sheep into Australia), and it was with the light horse that he had so far served. He had been in the old New South Wales Mounted Rifles since 1892, and now, at 49 years of age, was on the unattached list of officers. MacLaurin pointed out that he was a light horseman; but Sherbon knew his man. Onslow Thompson conspicuously possessed the energy and dash which would fit him for hard fighting, and the fine principles which would make him a sure leader of men. "He is the sort for you," was the chief clerk's advice, and MacLaurin followed it. Colonel Owen was a British officer, an Australian by birth, who had served in the 2nd Battalion, South Lancashire Regiment. He had recently retired. He was a man whose age might possibly be held a disadvantage for strenuous active service, but Captain Sherbon realised that, besides his experience, which would be invaluable at this stage, he possessed qualities which fitted him for a leader. Braund was a member of the Parliament of New South Wales for the Armidale seat. He had lately been appointed to command his regiment. He was possessed of strong ideas, a total abstainer, and a man of vigorous action. MacLaurin asked Captain Sherbon how he could obtain him. "Send a card into Parliament House and ask him to meet you,"

37 Lieut.-Colonel G. F. Braund, V.D. Commanded 2nd Bn., 1914/15; member for Armidale in the N.S.W. Legislative Assembly; b. Bideford, Devon, Eng., 13 July, 1866; killed in action 4 May, 1915.
was the answer. MacLaurin did so, and Braund was appointed. It was in this manner that the 4th, 3rd, and 2nd Battalions of the 1st Infantry Brigade obtained their respective commanders. Each man of them was a fighter. Two of them fell within the first few days at Anzac, and all three have their place in Australian history. For the 1st Battalion there had already been chosen an officer who had commanded a militia battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel L. Dobbin.20

These four commanders had now the responsibility of selecting their own regimental officers. Colonel Onslow Thompson chose for his second-in-command Major C. M. Macnaghten,21 a man who had made a name by his remarkable training of the senior cadets in one of the half-slum areas of Sydney—the unpromising district of Woolloomooloo. Macnaghten was the son of a former Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department of the London Police, Sir M. L. Macnaghten. He was an Englishman by birth, a solicitor by profession, and had been an officer in the New South Wales Scottish Rifles, to which his brigadier, Colonel MacLaurin, also belonged. Macnaghten was distinguished by a vigorous impetuosity, and, on becoming an “area-officer” under the Kitchener scheme for the Australian defences, he took over that district of Sydney in which the bane of area-officers, the larrikin, was probably strongest. He called in the keenest young Australians amongst his legal and other friends to help as subalterns, and quickly made the Woolloomooloo cadets the finest in any district of the city. Macnaghten proved that, with good leading, the Australian youngster, even of the awkward age between 16 and 18—when he is least controllable—could be so led that the enforcement of discipline might be left to the boys themselves. If there were any covert indiscipline in that battalion, the youngsters who were non-commissioned officers would wait for the offender on his way home and deal with him in their own fashion.

Colonel MacLaurin and Major Macnaghten were fellow-enthusiasts in this work, and probably they, working together,

20 Colonel L. Dobbin. V D Commanded 1st Bn, 1914/15, solicitor, of Sydney, N S W.; b. Dublin, Ireland, 29 April, 1868
21 Lieut.-Colonel C. M. Macnaghten. C M G Commanded 4th Bn, 1915/16, solicitor and area officer; of Sydney, N S W.; b. Rhutenpore, Nuddhura District, Bengal, India, 18 Nov, 1879 Died 6 Feb, 1931
largely influenced the choice of officers throughout this brigade. Indeed the notion began to spread that the selections were being made by a coterie of the Australian Club in Sydney. Accordingly, while the officers of the first contingent were selected on the responsibility of General Bridges, the duty was afterwards transferred to selection boards consisting of the District Commandant and three senior citizen-officers. It had been complained that some of the earlier commissions had been allotted to youngsters too immature to command Australians. Fixed rules were therefore laid down by which commissions were henceforth to be given only to men of twenty-three or over. This system often noticeably failed to obtain the right type of fighting officer. Fortunately, by the time it was in operation, the Australian battalions were already fighting, and officers were obtained by selecting those men who had shown themselves leaders in actual battle, or who appeared to possess the necessary qualities. Some of the later battalions to arrive in Gallipoli were almost immediately re-staffed by the latter process. From that time forth promotion of selected men from the ranks was the system by which the A.I.F. obtained nearly all its officers.

But in the original 1st Australian Division the great majority were selected from those who were officers already. Only 24 officers out of 631 had never served before; 68 were, or had been, officers of the Australian permanent forces, including 23 Duntroon graduates; 16 were officers of the British regular army! 15 were British officers who had retired; 99 were thus professional soldiers. On the other hand 402 were officers of the old Australian militia forces, including many temporary “area-officers,” and another 58 were young officers under the newly-instituted compulsory service scheme. Of the remainder, 33 were retired officers of the Australian militia, and 9 of British, colonial, or foreign territorials. Of the whole 631 there were 104 who had seen service in the South African or other wars.

One class of officers must be specially mentioned—the cadets of the Australian Military College at Duntroon. General Bridges, who had founded the college less than four years before, decided to take with him the whole of the first year’s cadets. The Australian Military College had been
established on the advice of Lord Kitchener, and upon it really hinged the whole of the Kitchener scheme for Australia's army. The efficiency of his system, which split the Commonwealth into 224 training areas, depended entirely upon the permanent officer who was to be in charge of each area. In order to ensure that the "area-officer" should be of the best quality obtainable, Lord Kitchener had advised the Commonwealth Government to establish a training college somewhat upon the lines of the United States Military Academy at West Point. He recommended that cadets should be secured from the whole range of the Australian people, irrespective of wealth or class; and that after a four year's course they should be sent abroad for experience with a British or Dominion army, so that all future officers of the Australian staff corps should be (to use Lord Kitchener's own words) "equal, if not superior, in military education, to the officers of any army in the world." He advised that for the future no officer should be appointed to the Australian permanent staff from any other source than the military college.

The Australian Government assented to this advice and rigidly adhered to it. The College was founded far inland, the fine old homestead of Duntroon in the beautiful rolling country near the unbuilt capital of Australia having been chosen for the site. Round it, in a series of neat wooden barracks grouped like a village on the hillside, the staff of military and civil instructors under General Bridges had trained the cadets of the first four years. These were chosen from every grade of the population; no one troubled as to their parentage.

The Commonwealth Government went beyond Lord Kitchener's recommendations in this respect. Provided a boy was medically fit and passed a competitive examination—which was held in all the States—Australia took charge of him from that time onward and granted him an allowance to cover all expenses. In the first eight years of the life of this school 17 cadets had been the sons of school-teachers, 5 the sons of stationmasters, and 11 the sons of other railway employees; 11 were the sons of other public servants, 9 the sons of farmers, 7 the sons of doctors, and 6 the sons of clergymen; there were sons of pastoralists, drapers, chemists, carpenters, labourers,
ironmongers, army officers, blacksmiths, builders; every trade in the directory was represented. About 30 Australian cadets were entered each year. By a flash of rare statesmanship, the college was thrown open to New Zealanders,22 should the New Zealand Government care to train its staff there also. This offer was accepted, and an average of eight New Zealand cadets entered yearly. Hundreds of lives and the fate of battles might depend upon an Australian staff and a New Zealand staff possessing an intimate understanding of each other.

At this date the cadets who first entered the college had not yet finished the last year of their training, and the question had already arisen of sending them abroad for the year's experience which Lord Kitchener had recommended. Regimental experience with a fighting unit in war would more than make up for the loss of this, and General Bridges advised that the cadets concerned should be split up amongst the units of his force. This was done. The First Year of Duntroon cadets sailed as officers in the first contingent, and the Second Year cadets came a few weeks later with the 4th Infantry Brigade and the light horse of the second contingent. They went as regimental officers with the infantry, light horse, artillery and engineers, usually as specialists, but not as staff officers. They were an unknown factor at the outset; the training of Duntroon had not been tested; how its quality was proved will be told later. It may be said here that every cadet who passed through the college in time served at the front; 181 fought in the A.I.F.; 42 died; 58 were wounded.*

It is necessary that in any battalion or regiment there should be one or two members who understand the routine of an army in respect of training and discipline, and also in the drawing of supplies and equipment. A new unit can "worry through" in these matters of organisation, provided that it has an experienced regimental sergeant-major and a good quartermaster-sergeant. In the infancy of many of the newly-raised British battalions the regimental sergeant-major (universally known as the "R.S.M.") was more important than the colonel. The discipline of the unit depended upon him, and the privates

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22 This had the best results in creating between the Australian and New Zealand Forces a sympathy which was invaluable in the war. The Royal Australian Naval College at Jervis Bay, on the other hand, was not opened to New Zealand Cadets.

* See p xxiii
were in considerable awe of his personality. In an Australian battalion the sergeant-major never exercised quite the same influence. But in order that these two positions should be filled from the first by experienced men, General Bridges laid it down that every regimental sergeant-major and every regimental quartermaster-sergeant (as also the sergeant of the regiment’s machine-gun section and the sergeant of its signallers) should be drawn from among the 568 permanent warrant-officers and non-commissioned officers of the Australian forces.

During the first part of the war machine-guns were treated as a weapon of the infantry or light horse. Men were not specially raised for them, and the machine-gun officer of the regiment and the sergeant of its machine-gun section were those specialists who trained certain of the men in the use of the regimental guns. Artillery, engineers, and army medical corps, on the other hand, were corps which drew upon specialists in the general population, so far as these could be found.

To fight with an untrained artillery firing over its head is nervous work for infantry. The value of militia artillery was doubted before the war. But the Australian home army depended for its field artillery upon militia batteries, with three permanent batteries (the Royal Australian Field Artillery) as a model for instruction. In war these regular batteries were to be attached to the light horse. The Australian Field Artillery (militia) spent only seventeen days in camp each year, and were naturally for the most part imperfectly trained. They were armed with the latest gun, the 18-pounder quick-firing field-gun of the British pattern. The Australian artillery had at this date only four guns to a battery, whereas the British artillery had six. The reason was a theory, then current, that the invention of the quick-firing field-gun had enabled four guns to do more work than six of the older pattern. It was also held that four guns were as many as one officer could conveniently control. This belief was held in Great Britain, where, however, the change from 6-gun to 4-gun batteries had not yet been made.

For this reason, although the 1st Australian Division sailed with the full number of field-gun batteries—that is to say, with three field artillery brigades of three batteries each—these totalled only 36 guns in all as against 54 in a British division.
The only howitzers in Australia were of the obsolete 5-inch pattern and not the new 4.5 inch weapon; consequently the three howitzer batteries which were included in the artillery of a British division were not included in the 1st Australian Division. Nor was a battery of "heavy" (or long-range) guns sent with it. The artillery of the 1st Australian Division thus consisted of 36 field-guns, as against the 72 field-guns and field howitzers and four heavy guns of a British division.

At the same time, to provide this artillery, the Commonwealth sent oversea nearly one-third of all the 18-pounder guns which it possessed. There were only 116 of these guns then in the country, and within less than a year it was to send away a further 40 in addition to its four old-pattern 5-inch howitzers.

No. 1 Permanent Battery of the Royal Australian Field Artillery was taken with the 1st Australian Division "to serve as a model for the militia" (to use General Bridges' words). This became the 1st Battery of the artillery of the A.I.F. Certain of the Australian militia batteries volunteered almost to a man, and, with their numbers changed, became batteries of the A.I.F. For instance, when the 37th Battery of Field Artillery in Western Australia was asked by its commander, Major A. J. Bessell-Browne, for volunteers, the whole parade stepped forward. Seventy-eight per cent. of the men of this battery were young compulsory "trainees." The youngest of them were afterwards rejected, and their places filled by a certain number of men from the bush, or by others who had been previously trained. Otherwise the 37th Battery went as it stood, officers and men, and became the 8th Battery in the Australian Imperial Force. In the same way the 9th Battery, A.I.F., represented an existing Tasmanian battery. Swarms of recruits offered for the artillery because it was a mounted service, and up to the end of the war there was never any difficulty in getting men of any grade of education for its ranks.

The engineers were raised from the crowds of tradesmen who offered. In a British division there would have been only two field companies of engineers. General Bridges, however,
knew that British military thought now favoured the provision of one for each brigade. Accordingly three were raised. The result proved him to be entirely in the right.

The officers of the medical corps in the A.I.F. were taken mainly from those of the same corps in the citizen army. This corps had been organised by Surgeon-General W. D. C. Williams since the South African War. There were no regular medical officers in Australia except the Director-General of Medical Services (Surgeon-General Williams) himself. As in the case of the artillery, the men who joined the army medical corps included a large proportion who were of good education—artists, students, and others.

Such were the officers and men of the "first contingent." At first the only enlisting places were in the capital towns, in some cases a thousand miles from the districts whence the furthest recruits had to come. They threw up their work—not a few wound up their businesses—and came to the city. Often they were medically rejected and had to make their way home again. The medical inspection was exceedingly severe. "Many of them," wrote one medical officer, "have thrown up good jobs, and have travelled hundreds of miles. They have been feted as heroes before leaving, and would rather die than go back rejected. Some I have to refuse, and they plead with me and almost break down—in fact some do go away, poor chaps, gulping down their feelings and with tears of disappointment in their eyes."

At this stage men were rejected for defective or false teeth, who, a year later, were gladly accepted. An officer of the 58th Battalion, Lieutenant R. H. Hooper, one of the biggest and most sturdily-built Australians in his brigade, had been rejected at the first enlistment, yet the same man, after serving through France, was selected to go on the wild adventure of the "Dunsterforce" through Persia. The minimum standard of height was fixed at 5 ft. 6 in., and that of chest measurement at 34 inches, although men of lighter build were allowed to enlist as drivers in the artillery.

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24 Surgeon-General Sir W. D. C. Williams, K.C.M.G., C.B.; b. Sydney, N.S.W., 30 July, 1856; died of illness, 10 May, 1919.
25 Major J. W. B. Bean. Medical Officer, 3rd Bn., 1914/15; b. Bathurst, N.S.W., 7 Jan., 1881.
General Bridges and Major White had intended that about half the force should be drawn from the youngsters of 19 years and upwards who were then in the citizen forces, but in the hurry with which the force was raised this arrangement was not carried out. Over a third of the men in the infantry and a quarter of those in the light horse were civilians, who had never in their lives been connected with any military force. The 1st Division contained 2,263 young trainee soldiers, 1,555 older militiamen, and 2,460 who had at one time served in the Australian militia; there were also 1,308 old British regulars and 1,009 old British territorials in its ranks. But 6,098 men had never served before.

The age for enlistment ran from 19 to 38. Only senior officers and some of the warrant and non-commissioned officers were older. The rank and file of the force was of an ideal fighting age—two-fifths of it over 25; nearly the same number between 21 and 25; one-fifth under 21. Nearly 90 per cent were single men, although of the officers a quarter were married, a proportion which rose to one-third in the case of light horse officers, who came mainly from country districts, where Australians marry earlier than in the towns.

The uniform of the Australian Imperial Force sometimes struck the world as drab. It was designed for one object only—that of being serviceable for war. To make it as simple as possible, General Bridges ruled out the bright bands round their felt hats by which the several arms of the Australian citizen forces had been distinguished. The uniform was “khaki” only, and as the cloth available at first was of a peasoup shade, with a soft felted surface, that became the distinguishing colour of the Australian uniform throughout the war. Bright buttons were dispensed with, inasmuch as the South African War had taught that the sun glinting from them might betray the presence of the troops at a distance. The brass buttons, embossed with the outline of the Australian continent, were oxidised to a dull black. Every Australian wore on his collar an oxidised badge with the rising sun, and on each shoulder-strap the single word “Australia.” The tunic was of the “Australian pattern,” which had been devised for the Commonwealth Forces in peace time—a Norfolk jacket, pleated, caught in at the waist with a belt of the
same cloth, and with a simple oxidised buckle; loose sleeves, very full under the arms and buttoned at the wrists; a high loose "roll" collar, and four useful roomy pockets. Australian infantry wore knee-breeches somewhat similar to those of mounted men; but whereas the infantry had puttees, Australian mounted men had leather leggings.

After arrival in Egypt men of all arms were given a small peaked cap with a flat circular crown rendered stiff by a wire hoop (of which more will be heard later); but from the first they largely wore the felt hat, with its wide brim looped up on the left side, which was already traditional with Australian soldiers. This hat, with its badge of the rising sun on the looped side, came to be the mark of the Australian throughout the world. Several other armies possessed a wide-brimmed felt hat; the New Zealanders wore theirs with a shorter brim, turned down, and with the bright colour of their arm of the service streaked through the puggaree; the hat of the Americans was softer, with its brim unlooped after the fashion of the Puritans; the Canadian cavalry had a brim stiff and straight as a board.

The only non-Australian soldier who regularly wore the typical Australian hat was the little Gurkha from the Himalayan Highlands. The Australian uniform, like everything else connected with the force, was designed entirely for work. At first, to those accustomed to the tight-fitting, bright-buttoned jackets familiar to most "smart" soldiers, the loose-limbed men in their easy, loose-fitting tunics appeared somewhat slovenly. The officers for the most part drew their uniforms from the same official stores or factories as the men.

The army which was being raised for foreign service, being separate in every way from the Australian citizen force, required to be newly equipped with every item of a soldier's kit and armoury. Clothing had to be made for it within a few weeks; the Quartermaster-General's branch, working night and day, had to draw up for each and every sort of unit a list of stores and equipment, from machine-guns down to claw-hammers, from overcoats to screwdrivers, from Maltese carts to electric cells and meat choppers. All equipment of the existing citizen forces (except those regiments which were actually mobilised and guarding bridges or wireless stations)
was immediately called in—so hurriedly indeed that commanding officers, in the belief that the authorities desired haste above all things, shovelled together their regimental stores, often without lists, and poured them in upon the ordnance officers, who were already struggling with the overpowering task of fitting out the A.I.F. within a month.

From this equipment, and from stock in their stores, the ordnance officials had to supply what they could. Many requisite articles did not exist in any Australian military store—clothes for a northern winter, waggons and harness for an expeditionary force. These they had either to purchase from the stocks held by Australian merchants, or else to draw from the four Government factories which had within the last three years been established for the Defence Department. The Australian Government had in this, as in other ways, taken its new system of defence seriously, and had set up a factory for making British army rifles at Lithgow, in New South Wales; and in Victoria a harness factory at Clifton Hill; a cordite factory at Maribyrnong, and a clothing factory near the headquarters of the Defence Department in Melbourne. A factory of woollen cloth was in course of construction at Geelong, in Victoria. The Lithgow Small Arms Factory, which was installed for the Government by an American firm, was designed to produce 15,000 rifles a year, but it had not yet begun to approach its full output.

There were, however, in Australia 87,240 of the latest British short-barrelled rifles. These, when returned by the citizen forces, were issued to the troops going abroad, the stock in Australia being eventually more than made up by the "Lithgow" rifles. Twenty-five per cent. of the rifles which Australian troops took with them oversea during the war were of Lithgow make. Small arms ammunition was obtained from the Commonwealth Cordite Factory, from the Colonial Ammunition Company, and from England, American ammunition having been found unsatisfactory. Rifle ammunition was indeed so plentiful that 10,000,000 rounds were supplied to South Africa before the first Australian contingent sailed, and further consignments were sent there constantly during the war. The working hours at the Commonwealth Clothing
Factory were so far increased at the outbreak of the war that the whole staff was in full swing from eight in the morning till ten at night, but though the machines were kept going during the meal hours at the request of the workers themselves, the factory could not contrive to meet the press of work.

As the force for service in Europe would need new and warm clothing, the Contracts Branch of the Defence Department went into the Australian market and bought heavy khaki cloth, blankets, woollen underclothing, socks and shirts, of the best that could be obtained. All the woollen factories in Australia were called upon. Manufacturers were set to making boots, carts, wagons. Within the first four weeks of war 60,000 pairs of boots had been obtained, and one manufacturer alone had supplied 800 wagons. During the previous three years the Government had laid in large quantities of army stores against the chance of a sudden mobilisation. These also were now drawn upon. The Quartermaster-General's branch of the Defence Department rose so well to the task suddenly thrown upon it that the 1st Australian Division became, to the British officers who saw it in Egypt, a classic example of a well-provided unit. The 1st Light Horse Brigade was furnished with equal thoroughness. It was commonly said that no troops ever went to the front more generously equipped than this first Australian contingent. The cloth of their jackets was strong; their clothing was woollen all through; the packs, pouches, and belts of the infantry were of the splendid green canvas known as "web equipment," which proved twenty times better than leather; their boots were as pliable as civilian boots, and far stouter. In France countless favours were obtained in exchange for Australian boots.