

32 Lance Corporal Harry Linklater



Harry was born on the small Orkney island of Graemsay on 20th January 1890, registered at birth as Henry. His parents, George Linklater and Mary Linklater (née Thomson), farmed 36 acres at Fillets and employed a farm servant and dairymaid. Harry had an older sister, Alice, and younger sister, Catherine, also three older brothers, James, John and Joseph.

Harry's mother had been a dressmaker before she married, which probably influenced him to train as a draper in George Thompson's shop in Stromness. Harry also served four years in the 4th (Stromness) Company of the Orkney Royal Garrison Artillery (Territorial Force). When aged 22, Harry followed his brother Joseph and travelled out to Sydney, Australia. Harry sailed from London on 20th December 1912, as a passenger on board the 7,421 ton steamship *Orvieto* of the Orient Line. Harry was employed as a salesman in Sydney's largest and most diverse department store, Anthony Hordern and Sons' New Palace Emporium. In 1905 the company replaced a store destroyed by fire in 1901 with a building that occupied an entire city block and employed about 3,000 people.

Harry enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 27th February 1915, joining 18th Battalion, 5th Brigade forming at Liverpool, New South Wales on 1st March. When 18th Battalion left Sydney on HMAT A40 *Ceramic* on 28th June, Harry held the rank of Lance Corporal and had trained as a signaller. He spent only a short time in Egypt, embarked for Gallipoli on 16th August. 18th and 19th Battalions came ashore at Anzac Cove on the night of the 19th, as the first two units of Australian 2nd Division, and spent a day near the foot of the Sphinx.

The last offensive to drive the Turks off the Sari Bair heights had already failed in the face of fierce resistance and overwhelming counter-attacks, when 5th Brigade concentrated below Walker's Ridge. Anzac troops were still on the offensive, to connect the north of their beachhead to a new British landing site at Suvla. After fierce fighting on 21st August, Anzac and British troops had gained only a couple of footholds on Hill 60, at heavy cost.

18th Battalion was ordered forward that night, to attack and complete the capture of Hill 60 the next day. The attack of inexperienced troops, without any reconnaissance, on a fortified enemy position was unlikely to succeed. It did capture most of a newly-dug trench on the NW slope of Hill 60, but lost it to determined Turkish bombing attacks later that day. 18th Battalion on 22nd August lost 383 casualties out of 750 engaged, including almost 200 killed.

Harry was posted missing on 22nd August. A court of enquiry, held at Tel el Kebir in Egypt after the Gallipoli evacuation, found it reasonable to suppose Harry Linklater was killed in action on 22nd August 1915. A signaller friend, Arthur Hall, reported that during the charge on Hill 60 he passed Harry lying on the ground. Harry seemed to have been hit on the left side of the head and appeared dead. Harry is commemorated on Panel 60 of the Lone Pine Memorial in Gallipoli, but he is probably one of the 712 unidentified burials in Hill 60 Cemetery (in photo above). Harry Linklater's photo at the top of this page is taken from a montage Honour Board that commemorates 46 of the 48 employees of the Sydney department store Anthony Hordern and Sons Ltd who died serving in the Great War.

