

Private Lindsay Nicholas Brown

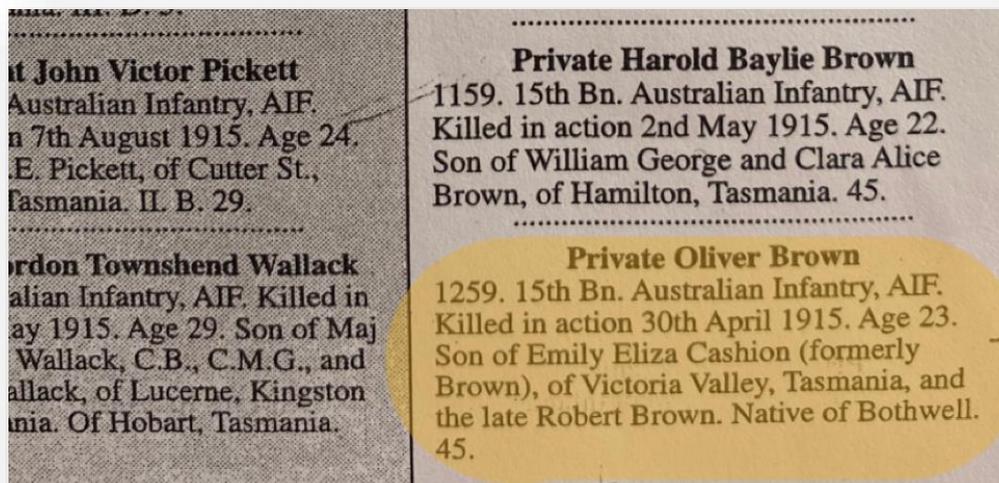
It was an honour to be a part of the 2019-2021 Frank MacDonald Group and research my Great-Great-Uncle, Lindsay Brown. Lindsay was a proud veteran who gave service in the First and Second World War.

Born on 6 July 1898, as the 14th child of Robert and Emily Brown and grandson of Robert and Mary Brown. There were to be 15 children in the large family who lived at Shannon. In 1905 they later moved to St Patrick's Plains with his parents where he attended school at Cider Grove, Cider Marsh.

Lindsay's upbringing saw numerous struggles including his father, Robert Brown's death in 1909. The alteration in family situation saw Lindsay forced to move to his brothers Charles and Charles' wife Gertrude property at Triangle Marsh near Victoria Valley. During that time, as stated in H. Wise and Company Limited's Post Office Directory of 1913 and 1914, Lindsay Brown is noted as being a rabbit trapper at Victoria Valley.

Despite hardships and an unusual upbringing Lindsay was a kind, genuine man with a love for his beloved family. His adventurous personality saw a love for riding horses, caring for family dogs, fishing, playing cricket, football and going to dances in the shearing sheds. He remembered the Waltz, Quadrilles, Lancers and Alberts as being popular dances. Lindsay was an approachable friendly man in his community.

Later, Lindsay joined other siblings to work on the Hydro Power Station at Waddamana for 8/6d a day. Lindsay had his first experience with a camera there, as he assisted the official photographer at the turning of the first turbine at Waddamana in 1916. Lindsay wound the crank of the old movie camera as photos were taken while the then Governor General, Sir Ronald Craufurd Monro Ferguson, made his opening speech.



Private Oliver Brown's death register

Diary entries of Lindsay Brown:

In effort to keep Lindsay's story alive I have pieced together fictional diary entries based on factual information that has contributed to enhancing my understanding of the everyday life and hardships that Lindsay lived through. It has highlighted to me his strong value through the process of his decision making shown in the situation and his thoughts.

Diary Entry – 15 May 1915

Today, I was moving sheep down near the river on our family farm when I heard my mother cry out. I looked up at the house and I could see my mother and father with the local priest from a church in Bothwell.

I ran up to the house and one of my brothers told me that the priest had received a pink telegram with information that our brother Oliver had been killed in action at Gallipoli on 30 April 1915.

I grabbed the pink telegram from the priest and it read as follows:

*COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA Form No 144
Postmaster-General's Department, New South Wales
URGENT TELEGRAM
This Message has been received subject to the Post and Telegraph Act and Regulations.
All Complaints to be addressed in writing to the Deputy Postmaster-General*

To: Bothwell Catholic Church. Tasmania

*Officially reported that Number Private Brown, number 1259, 15th Battalion killed in action 30 April 1915. Please inform Mother (Mrs K Brown, Pittwater Rd Manly) and convey deep regret and sympathy of their Majesties the King and Queen and the Commonwealth Government in loss that she and Army have sustained by death soldier
reply paid*

Col Luscombe 1 5H

Date stamp and received 15 May 1915

I cannot believe that our beloved brother Oliver will not be coming home. I am determined to make sure that he did not die in vain. I have decided to enlist as soon as I turn 18.

Diary Entry – 13 July 1916

I travelled into Claremont today by train and enlisted in the 40th Battalion AIF . I will be 18 next week. I will be known as Private Lindsay Brown, number 2040, of the 40th Battalion AIF (Australian Imperial Force). I was worried I wouldn't pass the physical examination. I know

my parents are not going to be as excited as I am but I know they understand that I have to do this for Oliver

There has been news for the last month or so that the government wants to expand the expansion of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) after what happened at Gallipoli and how many Australian soldiers lost their lives.

I am ready to go to war and protect everything that we love about this country. I know ultimately that my family will be very proud of me, I just worry if anything happened to me what it would do to mother.

Diary Entry – 23 September 1916

We have now been in Melbourne for some time, having sailed from Hobart in late July. Before I left we have had a family lunch and there were over 50 people there. I'll never forget the day I left Bothwell, it was cold but the sky was as clear as could be. A perfect winters day.

The day has come. We are to set sail for Europe today on the troopship called the *Seang Choon*. I am nervous but feeling excited at the same time.

All of us in the 40th Battalion are Tasmanians and I have already made some great mates during my training at Claremont and here in Melbourne. We have a good Commander called Colonel Lord, also a Tasmanian.



Embarked from Melbourne, Victoria, on board
HMAT A49 Seang Choon on 23 September 1916

Diary Entry – 6 November 1916

We have arrived in England. The trip has been long but we are all excited to have arrived and are ready to do what we can to help the war effort. Everything seems so different over here, the food, the people and the language. I think of my family every day and miss them terribly. I hope we can help win the war quickly so we can go back to our homes.

We have been told that we have to undergo a fair amount of training at a place called Larkhill in Wiltshire before we are sent into the battlefields.

Diary Entry – 4 December 1916

We have been told that tomorrow we are to set sail for France. The weather is so cold and everyone is saying it is the coldest winter they can remember. I've also today received my first letter from home, written by my mother. It is warm over there and everyone is busy working on the farm, something that I now dream about doing on a daily basis.

But I am ready for battle, as is everybody else. We've been playing a lot of cricket in our spare time and are now looking forward to doing what we came over here for. Referred by that the conditions in France in the trenches are pretty bad.

Diary Entry – 17 February 1917

We have spent the last couple of months occupying waterlogged trenches around Armentieres in northern France. Occasionally there is shell-fire, and we have conducted raids on German lines.

Our normal day after we wake is as follows:

- morning stand-to;
- inspection;
- breakfast;
- chores such as ranging from cleaning latrines (also known as trench toilets)
- filling sandbags; and
- repairing duckboards.

We have to do all of this work below ground and away from the German snipers' view so it can be pretty awkward at times. After growing up on the farm though, this work doesn't seem so hard.

Diary Entry – 8 June 1916

Last month the 40th Battalion and I were moved north to Belgium. Yesterday, we took captured high ground in the town Ypres, a very old and historic Belgium town. There British and New Zealand's troops fighting with us. The Brits call the town "Wipers", I assume because it is a difficult name to pronounce.

The battle was terrible. Word is that thousands of troops were killed. I saw dozens of men being killed, this would have to be the worst day for me since leaving home. Memories flooded back of Oliver and how he would have felt on the beaches of Gallipoli.

Diary Entry – 5 October 1917

We were engaged in a bloody fight at Broodseinde yesterday. We and the Kiwis advanced across no man's land despite the German's bombarding us heavy artillery and machine-gun fire.

One of our men, a fellow called Sergeant Lewis McGee did one of the most courageous things I have seen. He only had a revolver but ran about 50 metres with no protection, under intense German machine gun fire and killed their machine gunner. I don't know what would have happened if that didn't happen. We own him our lives.

Diary Entry –11 October 1917

Still in the frontline trenches. Tomorrow the plan is to attack the German lines. It has been raining for 4 days straight. The mud is making movement difficult and our gear is soaking wet.

Diary Entry –13 October 1917

Yesterday, at dawn, in the pouring rain and deep mud, we attacked the village of Passchendaele atop the main ridge at dawn after a pretty ineffective artillery barrage on the German positions. McGee was killed in the attack. Many of my close mates have also been killed. We are all exhausted.

Lindsay, returned to Australia for demobilisation and discharge on 9 December 1918.

On his return to Tasmania, he trained in electrical wiring and fitting, after which he joined the Hydro and worked at the first Hydro sub-station in Launceston. Later he joined the Post Master General's Department (PMG) as a telephone mechanic. He had a long and successful career in this area, working for many years in Zeehan.

During that time he was captain of the Zeehan Cricket and Football clubs. He was also a professional sprinter. Lindsay was transferred back to Hobart in 1935 and continued to work until the late 1950s, when he retired.

One of his proudest achievements was his beloved family, his wife, Ruth, and two young sons, Reginald and Gavin.

During World War Two, Lindsay again served his country, working in telecommunications in Hobart.

Lindsay was always proud of his past sacrifice and marched in the annual Hobart ANZAC Day parade with his old comrades.

Lindsay passed away in November 1992, the last surviving child of Robert and Emily Brown.

As one of Lindsay's great, great nephews I am very proud of the service and sacrifice that both he and his brother Oliver made to Australia. Investigating his story has taught and showed me importance of family and brotherhood. It has displayed his honour of mateship and dedication, despite hardships. It is everyone's duty to keep stories like Lindsay's alive and real.



Adelaide River War Cemetery, Myself sharing the story of Lindsay Brown

Lindsay Brown was a great man that I'm proud to call my great, great uncle and be able to honour his life through the Frank MacDonald Memorial Prize.

Will Zeeman