



Regimental Sergeant-Major B. G. (George) Wuchatsch of the 9th Light Horse.

Westgarthtown's ANZACs

BY ROB WUCHATSCH

For most Australians today, the nearest we will get to war is watching television in our centrally heated and air conditioned homes. One hundred years ago, however, every Australian was about to be touched by what soon became known as The Great War, or War to End all Wars. We now know it as the First World War.

Westgarthtown, despite its German origins, contributed its fair share of soldiers to the First World War. While only two — Fred and Arnold Graff — were born at Westgarthtown, others had parents or grandparents who were born or lived at Westgarthtown. In this ANZAC commemorative issue, we focus on six Australian soldiers with Westgarthtown connections who served at Gallipoli, thus earning the right to be called ANZACs.

Three — Ewen Ewert, Fred Graff and Joe Wuchatsch — were at the epic landing on Sunday 25 April 1915 and three others — Adolph Schmutzsch and George and Ray Wuchatsch — arrived over the next few months.

Biographies of other soldiers with connections to Westgarthtown who served in the First World War will be included in future issues. Some were previously profiled in *Friends of Westgarthtown News* April 2009 Vol. 13, No. 1.

Ewen Charles Ewert (1890-1915)

Private Ewen Charles Ewert, No. 1160, 12th Battalion, 3rd Infantry Brigade was among the first ANZACs to be killed at the Gallipoli landing on 25 April 1915. Indeed, it is not known whether he even landed at Gallipoli alive. He was 24.

Carl Ewert, an early resident of Janefield (1856-62); Westgarthtown, where he rented Maltzahn's Farmhouse and farm from 1861/62-66; and Wollert (1866-96) was Ewen's grandfather. Carl had arrived aboard the *Electric* in 1856 and married Maria Rosel of Westgarthtown in 1859. Carl and Maria Ewert and several of their children are buried at Westgarthtown. In 1858, Carl's brother Friedrich and his parents followed him to Australia on the *Dorothea*, living first at Westgarthtown, then Epping and finally Tamlugh near Violet Town. Several of Friedrich's grandsons also fought and died during the First World War.

Ewen, born at Riggs Creek near Euroa on 11 July 1890, was the son of John Charles Henry and Christina (née Robertson) Ewert. His father was born at Westgarthtown and mother at Breadalbane Homestead, Eden Park near Whittlesea, owned by her father Ewen

Robertson. In 1899, Ewen Ewert's family moved to Western Australia, where his father first farmed at Balingup, then ran a butcher shop at Greenbushes. When Ewen enlisted the Ewert family was farming at Torbay Junction.

Ewen enlisted at Albany on 28 August 1914 but only completed his attestation papers at Helena Vale on 16 October 1914. He gave his occupation as farmer and trade as butcher. After training in Western Australia and Broadmeadows in Victoria, he left Melbourne for Egypt aboard the *HMAT Themistocles* on 22 December 1914. After further training he embarked at Alexandria for Lemnos Island on the *TS Devanha* on 2 March 1915, where his 3rd Brigade practised landings at Mudros Harbour, sleeping in their ships.

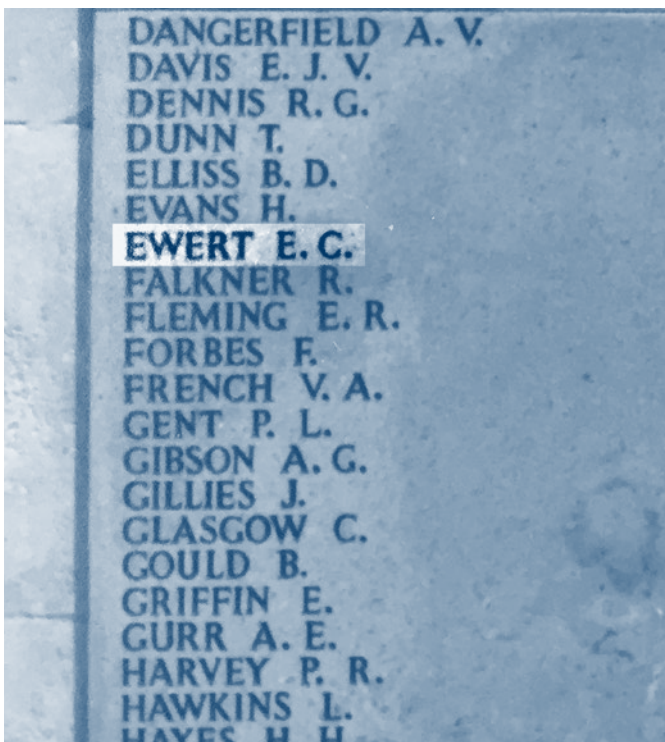
The 3rd Brigade was chosen to land first at Gallipoli and act as covering force for the remaining Australian and New Zealand troops as they came ashore. At 4.30 am on 25 April 1915 the first troops landed at what became known as Anzac Cove. Not officially reported missing until 2 May 1915, an army Court of Inquiry, held on 5 June 1916, concluded Ewen had been killed in action between 25-28 April 1915. His date of death was later amended to 25 April 1915.

Over six years later, Ewen's father was still trying to discover the circumstances of his son's death. On 27 July 1921, he wrote to the army stating:

...my son was reported missing at the landing. J. Smith who was wounded in the boat when being towed ashore told me that he saw my son last in the ship when they were preparing to land. My impression is that my son was in one of the boats which broke away when being towed ashore and possibly got shot and fell overboard. He may have got killed inland as I understand that they got several miles beyond the line the first day.

The army was unable to say how Ewen died and we will never know.

Ewen Ewert is commemorated on the Lone Pine Memorial at Gallipoli; on panel 65 at the Australian War Memorial; on the War Memorial at Mount Eliza, Perth; and at Mt. Clarence, Albany.



Lone Pine Memorial at Gallipoli.

Carl Frederick Graff (1894-1916)

Private Carl Frederick (Fred) Graff, No. 1124, 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry Brigade, was born at Westgarthtown on 7 August 1894, the son of Charles and Catherine (née Storey) Graff. Fred was the great-grandson of Johann and Johanna Graff who settled at Westgarthtown in 1850.

Fred attended Thomastown State School from 1900–1907, then helped on the family farm, before training as a blacksmith with neighbour Andrew Kreitling. Sometime before the start of the First World War, Fred's father Charles moved the family to Queenstown in Tasmania, where he found work at the Comstock Mine. It is not known whether Fred ever lived in Tasmania, but the family was still there when he enlisted in Sydney with the 3rd Infantry Battalion on 26 August 1914. He was then aged 20 and had three months prior training as a cadet.

After training at Randwick, Fred embarked at Sydney aboard the *HMAT Euripides* for Albany in Western Australia, where twenty-eight transport ships from Australia and ten from New Zealand assembled to steam in convoy to Egypt. They were escorted by cruisers to protect them from German raiders. The convoy, which departed Albany on 1 November 1914, reached Egypt safely early in December.



After several months of further training, the 3rd Battalion embarked at Alexandria on 5 April 1915, on their way to the landing at Gallipoli. Fred landed at Anzac Cove between 9.00 am and noon on 25 April 1915. He remained at Gallipoli until September when he was evacuated to Imbros with diarrhoea; then Lemnos and Malta with lumbago; and finally England, where he was admitted to hospital at Bristol. He rejoined the 3rd Battalion in Egypt in March 1916, just in time to leave for France.

Fred was killed in action at Pozieres on the Somme between 22-27 July 1916, possibly on 24 July 1916, during an intense German artillery bombardment. He is said to have been acting as a stretcher bearer when he and Alfred Clark, the soldier he was carrying, were killed. Fred was buried close to the road from



Above: Private C. F. Graff, 3rd Battalion. **Left:** A wooden cross that was erected to commemorate members of D company killed at Pozieres and included Fred's name.

Contalmaison to Pozieres, just south-east of Pozieres, 3¼ miles north-east of Albert. However, as with many of his fallen colleagues from D Company, the location of his grave is no longer known.

Fred's name is commemorated on the memorial at the Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery; panel 36 at the Australian War Memorial; and the Honour Roll of the Thomastown Methodist Church. His name was also included on the now destroyed Honour Roll at Thomastown State School.

Fred Graff is believed to be the only Thomastown-born soldier at the Gallipoli landing on 25 April 1915. His brother, Arnold Graff (1896-1973), who was working as a miner at Waiuta, served as a Sapper with the New Zealand Tunnelling Company from 1915-1919.

The Wuchatsch brothers

Three of August and Sarah Wuchatsch's sons served in the First World War — Joe, Ray and George. Eldest son Charles would have enlisted but had tuberculosis and two others — Jack and Harry — were rejected as medically unfit as a result of horse riding injuries. Son-in-law, Jack Holder, married to daughter Emma Wuchatsch, also joined the AIF and served at Gallipoli and in France.

August, son of Johann and Magdalene Wuchatsch, was born at Westgarthtown in 1853. He married Sarah Gründel of Greensborough in 1876 and two years later selected 200 acres of bushland at Nyora, in South Gippsland. Two children were born at Westgarthtown before the family moved to Nyora in 1879.

August and Sarah raised ten children, with a further two dying in infancy from diphtheria. After earlier farming at Nyora, North Poowong and Whitelaw, the Wuchatsch family had been living at Bena for ten years when the First World War began. Joe enlisted in September 1914; George in October 1914; and Ray in March 1915. All three served at Gallipoli, before Joe and Ray were transferred to the Western Front and George, a lighthorseman, to the Middle East.

Despite gunshot wounds, injuries and illness, the three brothers survived the war. However, by the time Joe arrived back in Australia in November 1918 and Ray and George in mid 1919, their father August and brother Charles were dead. George, promoted to Temporary Regimental Sergeant-Major and decorated in war for bravery with a Military Medal and Mentioned-in-Dispatches, did not survive the peace. A victim of war neurosis, he took his own life less than a year after his return.

Francis Joseph Wuchatsch (1883–1962)

Private Francis Joseph (Joe) Wuchatsch, No. 1174, 8th Battalion, 2nd Infantry Brigade was born at Nyora, the fifth son of August and Sarah Wuchatsch. He attended school at Little Lang Lang East and North Poowong then assisted his father on the farm. Later he worked as a timber cutter and also travelled to Lightning Ridge in New South Wales to try opal mining. Unsuccessful, he returned to Victoria and earned his living as a teamster and fencer. At the outbreak of war in 1914, he was living at Nyora.

Joe enlisted on 21 September 1914 and after training at Broadmeadows, embarked for Egypt with the 1st Reinforcements, 7th Infantry Battalion per *HMAT Themistocles* on 22 December 1914. He arrived in January 1915 and was taken on strength of the 8th Battalion on 9 February. Allotted to D Company, his army number was changed from 1208 to 1174.

Joe left Alexandria for Gallipoli aboard the *HMAT Clan MacGillivray* on 5 April. When the 8th Battalion

landed at Gallipoli between 5.30–7.00 am on 25 April 1915, he received a bullet wound to his forearm, so was evacuated and hospitalised in Malta. On 8 June 1915 he left for Egypt aboard *HT Achaia* and on 14 June embarked again for Gallipoli per *HMT Southland*. He rejoined the 8th Battalion on 20 June and remained at Gallipoli until evacuation on 18 December 1915. He arrived back at Alexandria on 7 January 1916 and the 8th Battalion then spent two-and-a-half months in Egypt, before it sailed for Marseilles on *HMT Megantic* on 26 March 1916.

Over the next year the 8th Battalion saw action on the Somme in northern France and at Flanders, in Belgium. On 7 September 1917, Joe was hospitalised at Camier and then Etaples with jaundice. He rejoined the 8th Battalion in Flanders on 12 November 1917 and remained in Belgium and France until just before the war ended, when the AIF's 1st Division was granted home leave. On 24 September 1918, he embarked at Taranto, Italy for Egypt then boarded the *HT Devon* at Suez on 13 October, arriving at Melbourne on 23 November 1918. He was discharged on 22 January 1919 and



From left to right: Private Joe Wuchatsch; Regimental Sergeant-Major George Wuchatsch; and Driver Ray Wuchatsch.

his name appears on the Honour Rolls of the Nyora, Poowong and Bena Halls.

Joe, who did not marry, died on 10 March 1962 aged 78. He had carried a small piece of shrapnel in his chest for almost 50 years. He was buried with his brother George in the Korumburra Cemetery (Methodist 128), but sadly, the double grave with these two ANZACs remains unmarked.

Benjamin George Wuchatsch (1892–1920)

Regimental Sergeant-Major B. G. (George) Wuchatsch MM, No. 504, 9th Light Horse Regiment, 3rd Light Horse Brigade was one of August and Sarah Wuchatsch's youngest sons. He was my father's cousin and as a child I knew of him from an old First World War photo we had. When I asked about him, my father just said 'he died'. At first I thought he must have been killed at the war, but later I learnt otherwise.

George, born at North Poowong on 9 August 1892, attended the North Poowong, Bena and Kilcunda Road State Schools. He worked on his parents' dairy farm in Kilcunda Road, Bena until he enlisted in the 9th Light Horse Regiment at Drouin on 6 October 1914. Allotted No. 504 and the rank of Trooper, C Squadron, he then commenced training at Broadmeadows.

My father told me that as a 12-year-old boy, he watched proudly as the 9th L. H. Regiment rode through our old farm at Thomastown (now Lalor) on

manoeuvres and George called in to say hello. Many years later, old-timers recalled that the lighthorsemen left their empty bully beef cans strewn along German Lane (now Gardenia Road) and the infantrymen hid empty .303 shells in dry stone walls.

On 11 February 1915 George embarked aboard the *HMAT Karroo* and arrived at Alexandria on 15 March. The 9th L. H. Regiment camped at Mena, beside the Pyramids. On 10 April, George sent a postcard of the camp to his mother, marking his tent with a cross.

A few days after the landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, the lighthorsemen volunteered to fight as infantry. By 19 May George's ship was anchored off Cape Helles and on 21 May he transferred to the destroyer *Scorpion* and landed under shell and shrapnel fire. His first stay at Gallipoli was short, however, as he was evacuated sick from Walker's Ridge on 26 May and admitted to hospital at Mudros with balanitis.

On 5 June George was discharged and transferred to Egypt where he was admitted to hospital with venereal disease. He was discharged on 16 June and returned to Gallipoli. On 28 August, however, he was landed at Malta from the hospital ship *Franconia* suffering renal colic. It was 6 October before he was fit enough to leave for Egypt where on 19 October he was admitted to the Convalescent Depot at Mustapha with gonorrhoea. On 2 November, he was transferred to hospital at Abbassia and after treatment, discharged on 16 November 1915.

The 9th L. H. Regiment evacuated Gallipoli on 19 December and returned to their horses in Egypt. By

ANZACS — 100 YEARS

February 1916, they were preparing to confront the Turks again, this time in the desert.

In August 1916, the 9th L. H. Regiment was engaged on the right flank during the Romani fighting in the Sinai Desert. On 23 August, George was promoted to Lance Corporal. On 23 December 1916, he received a bullet wound to his right arm at Maghdaba, where after a 25 mile night march over unknown country, the Light Horse brigades surprised and defeated the strongly placed Turks. By the time he was admitted to hospital at Kantara, on 3 January 1917, George's wound was severely septic.

George rejoined the 9th L. H. Regiment at Moascar on 12 February. On 11 April 1917, he was promoted to temporary Corporal, then on 20 April, he received two field promotions, first to Corporal then Sergeant. These promotions followed serious casualties sustained by his Regiment in an unsuccessful attack on Atawineh Redoubt, during the Second Battle of Gaza. On 31 October 1917, the 9th L. H. Regiment fought in the Battle of Beersheba, where the 4th and 12th L. H. Regiments made their daring sunset charge. This now legendary charge resulted in the capture of Beersheba, a strategic town previously considered by the enemy to be impregnable.

From the 22 January 1918 to 25 April 1918, George served with the 3rd L. H. Training Regiment. On his return to the 9th L. H. Regiment he saw immediate action and on 15 May was recommended for the Military Medal. During the move on Es Salt, the 9th L. H. Regiment was detailed as advanced guard, with instructions to picquet the heights as the Brigade moved along the narrow mountain track. George's citation for the Military Medal reads:

About three miles west of Es Salt on April 30 1918 whilst advancing on Es Salt Sergt Wuchatsch acting under instructions from Lieut Stevens whose troop was picqueting the heights on the N side of the road leading to Es Salt



A postcard from Egypt — X marks the location of George's tent.

he with a party of 4 men under heavy rifle fire occupied an important tactical feature which gave complete observation and held this point against the enemy till the whole Bde had passed and rejoined the rearguard without any casualties and later in the afternoon he with great boldness dislodged a party of snipers who were harassing the left flank of the 9th Regiment.

On 6 September 1918, not yet awarded his Military Medal, George was recommended for the award of Mentioned-in-Dispatches, as follows:

For conspicuous good work and devotion to duty during operations from April to August 1918. On 30 April 1918 before the attack on Es Salt developed, he occupied with his patrol by dash and initiative, a strong tactical feature of great value to the enemy and which they were attempting to occupy. His subsequent work in the Jordan Valley as patrol leader has always been most commendable.

On 28 August 1918, cavalry swords were issued and on 29 August, George was promoted to temporary Squadron Sergeant-Major. On 2 October 1918, following the fall of Damascus, the 9th L. H. Regiment charged the retreating enemy with drawn swords and captured 91 officers, 318 cavalry, 1,064 infantry, eight German machine gunners and large numbers of guns and ammunition. Also included was the only enemy Regimental Flag captured in action by the Australians during the entire desert campaign. For his part in this action, George was recommended on 29 December 1918 for the Distinguished Conduct Medal. That citation read:

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in the field at Khan Ayash on 2 October 1918. He showed great dash and determination in a charge against Turkish mounted troops and although his horse fell and he was almost overcome with fatigue and malaria, he continued in the pursuit, and rendered valuable service until the whole of the enemy had surrendered and been taken prisoner.

George was finally awarded the Military Medal on 22 October 1918 and mentioned in General Allenby's dispatch of 23 October 1918, but he was not awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Khan Ayash was the last Light Horse action of the war as hostilities in the desert ceased on 31 October 1918. On 2 January 1919, George was promoted to Squadron Sergeant-Major then on 5 March further promoted to temporary Regimental Sergeant-Major.

From March, the 9th L. H. Regiment was engaged in peace keeping activities during the Egyptian Uprising,

but on 10 July 1919 the Regiment boarded *HMT Oxfordshire* at Port Said. George arrived back in Melbourne on 13 August and was discharged from duty on 12 October 1919, shortly after being welcomed home at the Bena Hall.

In September 1919, George applied for a Soldier Settlement block of 100–200 acres. His future looked bright, but within a year he was dead, a victim of the war he had earlier survived and in which he had seemingly thrived. The *Korumburra Times* reported:

A sad fatality occurred at Bena on Thursday evening, by which one of Australia's heroes met his end in tragic circumstances. George Wuchatsch, a young man universally liked in the district, was the victim. The deceased...returned to Australia some nine months ago, as a Quartermaster Sergeant and a Military Medallist. After his furlough he went into a military college to qualify for promotion, and passed all his examinations with full honours, as a result of which he was offered promotion and a position in West Australia, which, however, he declined. But though he went through college brilliantly, it proved to be at the cost of his health, which has been steadily failing since his return home.

George, aged 27, had been a victim of war neurosis, a condition much better understood today than in 1920. George had taken his own life, almost five years to the day since he had first seen action at Gallipoli.

At the inquest, Ray Wuchatsch testified that George had returned to Australia in good health, but felt run down on his return from three months study at the Military College, Liverpool. After a rest, he:

Improved for two or three weeks. About a fortnight ago he went to Wangaratta to inspect some land and returned on Monday last. I saw a great change and he then complained of loss of memory. He seemed to get worse every day and suffered from delusions. He fancied the house was gassed and thought that Crawford, a man working on the farm was a spy...

The inquest found George's death on 20 May 1920 was the result of 'suicide by drowning whilst of an unsound mind'.

George, who was unmarried, was buried in Grave No 128 in the Methodist section of the Korumburra Cemetery. His medals - the Military Medal, 1914/15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal with Oak Leaf for Mentioned-in-Dispatches and Anzac Star were all issued posthumously and his name appears on the Honour Rolls of the Nyora, Poowong and Bena Halls and the Bena and Kilcunda Road State Schools.

George's death was a devastating blow to his family and friends. A tragic waste of life. I now understand why my father just said 'he died'.

Raymond Royal Wuchatsch (1890–1963)

Driver Ray Wuchatsch, No. 39, 24th Battalion, Transport Section, 6th Infantry Brigade was born at Nyora on 16 November 1890. After attending the North Poowong, Thomastown (from September-December 1899 while staying with his uncle John Seeber), Bena and Kilcunda Road State Schools, Ray left home at 14 to go timber cutting with his elder brothers Jack and Joe. Later he travelled to King Island where he was employed for about three years in roadmaking.

Ray's first enlistment form is dated 2 February 1915, but as his papers were lost, he signed a second form on 22 March and a third attestation form on 4 June. He embarked for Egypt on 9 July and his 24th Battalion reached Gallipoli on 5 September 1915. However, on 14 November 1915, Ray was admitted to the Ghezireh Red Cross Hospital at Cairo with a septic knee and remained there until 29 February 1916. He rejoined the 24th Battalion at Moascar on 8 March and sailed from Alexandria for Marseilles on 20 March.

As a driver in France, Ray normally drove horse-drawn supply wagons, but he is also known to have driven horse-drawn ambulances in the field. On 25 December 1916, at Pommenes Redoubt Camp, he received a serious accidental cut to his right knee. On 29 December he embarked at Rouen on *HS Andrew* for England and was admitted to hospital at Cheltenham on 31 December.

On 23 February 1917 Ray was discharged from hospital and on 23 March transferred to the 65th Battalion at Wareham, where he remained until 15 November, when he returned to France and rejoined the 24th Battalion on 22 November 1917. He remained on the Somme until the war ended. On 24 January 1919 he left France for England, then embarked for Australia on 8 April, aboard *HT Trastos Montes*. He arrived back in Melbourne on 22 May and was discharged on 22 July 1919. Ray's name appears on the Honour Rolls of the Nyora, Poowong and Bena Halls and the Bena and Kilcunda Road State Schools.

On 26 November 1920, Ray was granted a Crown Lease on a 103 acre Soldier Settlement block in

Heinrich Adolph Schmutsch (1881–1951)

Heinrich Adolph (Dolph) Schmutsch, a great-grandson of Christian and Sophia Ziebell, served in both the Boer War and First World War. He apparently later ‘screamed blue murder at being refused re-enlistment’ for the Second World War, although two sons — Arthur and Ronald Schmutsch — did serve and were both taken prisoner in Crete.

Dolph was the son of Adolph Schmutsch, a ship’s captain from Schleswig-Holstein and Ernestine Karsten, daughter of Heinrich and Marie Karsten (née Ziebell) of Westgarthtown. Ernestine, born at Westgarthtown in 1859, apparently met Adolph when his ship visited Melbourne and they married in 1879, after which they lived in Germany. They had four children there before Adolph’s early death, although two died in infancy. Ernestine, Dolph and his brother Frederick travelled to Australia aboard the *Habsburg* in 1887, where in 1888 she married Fritz Riebling, another German seafarer.

Dolph attended Thomastown State School from 1887–1890, when his family left Westgarthtown, eventually settling in Western Australia. Early in 1901 Dolph, then a tramway trackman of Fitzroy in Melbourne, travelled to South Africa and enlisted in the Scottish Horse at Cape Town on 15 March. He is believed to have served with the Scottish Horse’s 2nd Regiment for 6 months, before being discharged on 14 September 1901. He joined the 1st Australian Commonwealth Horse early in 1902 and as a result of his service, received the Queens South Africa Medal with clasps for Cape Colony, Orange Free State, Transvaal, South Africa 1901 and South Africa 1902.

In the First World War, Gunner Dolph Schmutsch No. 1495 commenced service with the 2nd Field Artillery

Brigade Ammunition Column. Then a ship’s fireman, he enlisted on 18 August 1914, just two weeks after the outbreak of war. Dolph was born at Heiligenhafen, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany on 19 October 1881, but upon enlisting gave his place of birth as London, to avoid problems relating to service then by those born outside the British Empire or who had non-British born parents.

Dolph embarked for Albany aboard the *HMAT Southern* on 20 October 1914, leaving his wife Mary (née Monteith) at their home in Charles Street, Northcote. His unit reached Egypt in December 1914 where he was soon in trouble for being absent without leave. The date he arrived at Gallipoli is not recorded but it was probably early May 1915.

At Gully Beach on 11 August 1915, he received a bullet wound to the buttocks and was evacuated to Malta, then England. In May 1916 he was posted to France, where after further service, he was granted leave to England in August 1917. He then transferred to the 1st Field Artillery Brigade and returned to France where he received shell concussion in October 1917. On recovery, he was posted to Belgium, where he served until June 1918, when he was transferred to England. He finally arrived back in Melbourne on 4 October 1918. He died at Bendigo on 20 July 1951 aged 70.

Raymond Royal Wuchatsch

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Wettenhall’s Road, Jeetho. On 28 June 1921, he married another Jeetho resident, Nellie Whiteman, the daughter of John Whiteman, a former German sailor who arrived in Australia in 1880. Ray and Nellie raised four daughters — Barbara, Yvonne (Dulcie), Thea and Ruth.

On 25 March 1942, after Japan’s entry into the Second World War, Ray rejoined the Australian Army (V388847) and was a member of the 23rd Battalion

Volunteer Defence Corps until discharged on 9 August 1943, aged 52. In 1945, Ray and Nellie sold the farm at Jeetho and moved to Bena, enabling Ray to go timber cutting with his brother Joe in the Poowong North bush country. The family later moved to Nyora, then finally in 1952 to Bena Road, Korumburra where Ray ended his working life at the Korumburra Butter Factory.

Ray died at the Korumburra Hospital on 23 March 1963 aged 72. He was a member of both the Nyora and Loch Sub Branches of the Returned Servicemen’s League (RSL).

Friends receive ANZAC Centenary grant

BY JOHN FRY

The Friends of Westgarthtown submitted an application under the Federal Government's ANZAC Centenary Local Grants Program. We have recently received confirmation that our application, entitled *Westgarthtown and WW1: German Descendants at War and on the Homefront*, has been successful and was awarded \$25,000 to complete the project. It is envisaged that the project will be completed for launching on ANZAC Day 2016.

The project is designed to juxtapose the World War 1 battlefield experiences of the descendants of German migrants to Westgarthtown with how their families were treated on the homefront. Here farmers were supplying the soldiers in training, were involved as local government Councillors, were business men etc as well as being families of those at the battlefield; but this did not stop them facing persecution because of their German heritage.

A 5-10 minute video will be produced outlining the stories of this community as their sons experienced war whilst they experienced racism on the homefront. Whilst much of the material to be used will be sourced from Friends Of Westgarthtown and its members' publications, it is envisaged that some additional historical research will be required. This could include the digitisation of WW1 personnel and other related files and photographic reproductions. (The material developed here could then in future be used in a permanent online exhibition on our website, making it even more broadly available to the community.)

Three portable free standing banners will be produced from the same material, to be used for display purposes and in conjunction with the video. These displays will occur at Ziebell's Farmhouse, which is visited by schools and a diverse number of tours each year, as well as being made available to the Epping RSL on appropriate occasions.

I would like to thank the Federal member for Scullin, Andrew Giles, for his support; Friends committee members Rob Wuchatsch and Léon Borrack for their commitment to the project; and the Epping RSL for their support of the application.

VALE Charmian Brent

BY ROB WUCHATSCH



Westgarthtown lost one of its very good 'Friends' on 11 December 2014 with the death of Charmian Brent from cancer.

Charmian came to Australia during the 1960s as the wife of Great Train Robber Ronald Biggs. After he fled to South America, she forged a new life for herself and her children, including completing her studies at Melbourne University. I first met Charmian in the late 1970's when we both worked for Australia's Department of Trade and we became good friends. We shared a mutual love of history.

During the early 1980s, when I was researching the history of Westgarthtown, I couldn't find a publisher for such an esoteric subject, so Charmian said 'You can publish it yourself — I'll help you'. Charmian went on to edit and design that book, published in 1985, plus several more for me over the next 20 years. My Westgarthtown book would probably never have been published without Charmian, as her encouragement and assistance were crucial to seeing it through to completion.

Charmian was a passionate Westgarthtown supporter and regular visitor for over 30 years. Sadly, her last visit was for the funeral of my wife Gaye, who died in April 2014.

Descendants run in Victorian state election

Two Westgarthtown descendants stood for lower house seats at the Victorian State election held on 29 November 2014.

Kathleen Maltzahn, great-great-granddaughter of Johann and Sophia Maltzahn, was the Greens candidate for Richmond.

Carl Ziebell, great-great-great-grandson of Christian and Sophia Ziebell, was the Liberal candidate for Ivanhoe. Here they each write about how they became interested in politics.



Carl Ziebell

Ironically it was my links to the German Lutheran settlement at Thomastown that formed the basis of my interest in politics.

I remember Sunday afternoons, walking to church with Gran and Pop (Anne and Henry Ziebell senior) and coming back to their house and seeing this small community (mainly descendants) having cake and tea or coffee and discussing life.

The local church played such a major role in the local community as it was a vehicle to discover which people may be ill or needed assistance, and without fail members of the congregation would visit them with an offering of cakes or meals.

I spent a great deal of time with people like Henry senior, Aunty Gus (Augusta Borrack) and my father (Henry Ziebell Junior) and they told me stories of how hard the German migrants worked on the farm, how they made do and how they took advantage of the great

Thomastown Lutheran Church Services

Services are held on the second and fourth Sunday of the month at 2.30 pm at the Thomastown Lutheran Church, German Lane, Lalor. For further details, contact Irma Hatty on 03 9338 9064 or see the Calvary Lutheran Church website at www.calvarychurch.org.au

Visiting Ziebell's Farmhouse

Ziebell's Farmhouse is open to the public on the second Sunday of each month, 1-4 pm. For enquiries, call 03 9464 1805 or enquiries@westgarthtown.org.au

Tours can be organised for groups of ten or more people. For information and bookings contact Tatiana Joukoff on 03 9464 5062 or joukofftatiana@gmail.com

Trinity German Lutheran Church Archives, East Melbourne

If you had German Lutheran ancestors in Victoria, the Trinity Church Archives at East Melbourne may be able to help you.

The most commonly used records held by Trinity Church Archives are the marriage, baptism and confirmation registers, church minutes and correspondence. Information on many early members of the Trinity congregation is also kept.

The Trinity Church Archives are located at 22 Parliament Place, East Melbourne Victoria 3002. Opening hours are Tuesdays from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. For inquiries, please contact Renate Jurgens on 03 9761 1430 or at auntnati@optusnet.com.au

opportunities Australia and Victoria had offered them. They made no secret as to which side of politics they believed in. They also taught me about the hard work and sacrifices that not only German, but Italian and Greek migrants made, so as to offer future generations a better life. They believed in aspirational living.

So fast forward to the 21st century. Although I am not a farmer, I have run my own business for over 20 years.

I was elected onto the State Government Small Business Advisory Council and I work as a consultant assisting small businesses. I am passionate about helping small business particularly with the red tape and difficulties they face with governments and unions every day.

I still believe in the aspirational values of my forefathers and their “have a go” attitude. I still believe that local communities make the best decisions for local areas, not big bureaucracies in Canberra. And I believe in helping those less advantaged with a hand up Not just a hand out. And to do this you need a strong economy that has minimal debt.

These are the principles upon which Sir Robert Menzies founded the Liberal Party and these are the principles that so many people in my local community in Ivanhoe believe.

Consequently, I have been twice elected as the person to represent the Liberal Party in the seat of Ivanhoe, and although unsuccessful I will continue to fight for what both myself and my ancestors believe.

I have a wife Natasha, daughter Sophia and son Charlie.

Kathleen Maltzahn

I was the Greens candidate for the state seat of Richmond in the 2014 election, coming within 1.8% of winning the seat from the sitting ALP member. It was my second bid to win the seat and I achieved a 3% swing. I campaigned strongly against the East-West tollway and for world-class public transport, for affordable housing and action on climate change.

I came to politics through my role as a campaigner and community worker. When I was 22, I went to work in the Philippines, with human rights and women’s rights organisations. For four years, I worked with women in the sex industry and saw first hand the impact of violence, poverty and slavery in their lives. Propelled to act, I set up Project Respect when I returned to Australia, an organization dedicated to challenging violence in the sex industry. I led the successful campaign in 2003 which stopped trafficked women being automatically deported,

Cultural heritage program 2015

BY GILLIAN BORRACK

The 2015 Cultural Heritage Program, which celebrates the History and Cultural Heritage of the City of Whittlesea, is enclosed with this April Newsletter.

The 2015 program has thirty events and we draw your attention to them all. This program has been running for more than fifteen years and the Friends have participated every year since the program began. It is a unique program and the only one of its kind in Victoria. We do hope you can support our two events, but also believe that you will find more events to attend and enjoy as well.

On Saturday 22 August the Yarra Plenty Regional Library, in partnership with Friends of Westgarthtown, are presenting **Research your German Family History** (for details see page 26). We urge you to attend the Thomastown Library for this event and join us at Ziebell’s Farmhouse for refreshments following the seminar.

On Sunday 4 October **Ziebell’s Farmhouse Open House and Garden** (see page 34) will be open throughout the day. This year the bulbs will be flowering and giving the garden another dimension. We have also planned a German sausage sizzle to operate at the entrance gate. We look forward to welcoming you!

got new laws against slavery and won police action.

I have also worked as Interim Director of the East Timor Human Rights Centre, Executive Director of Women’s Health in the North and Deputy Executive Director of the Eastern Domestic Violence Centre.

I joined the Greens in 2002, after being concerned about the Tampa refugee affair and also served as a councillor at the City of Yarra, from 2004–2008.

I live with my partner, Helena, in North Fitzroy. My father is John Maltzahn, son of Louis Maltzahn, who was the son of Henry Maltzahn. Henry’s parents were Johann and Sophia Maltzahn.

Descendants' Day

BY SYLVIA VAGG



The weather was perfect for our second Descendants' Day on Sunday 1 March 2015, even though many visitors began the day under the verandah, as rain was threatening. The garden at Ziebell's Farmhouse was verdant as a result of the mild summer, and of particular note, the numerous roses were still blooming beautifully.

The rough head count for the day was 80 people, which was a very pleasing result, with many new faces among the crowd and quite a few apologies. It was again a very informal occasion with the emphasis on mingling, however, an update on the activities of the Friends of Westgarthtown was presented. Descendants were informed of the progress towards museum status for the farmhouse and garden, as well as the earlier October date for the Open Garden with the focus on the garden's bulbs. Details were also provided about the family history research day to be held in August by the City of Whittlesea's Thomastown Library, with a visit to Westgarthtown to follow. The oldest and youngest attendees were acknowledged with a gift to mark the occasion and the day concluded with afternoon tea.

The Descendants' Day committee met prior to the day's activities and determined to keep arrangements as informal as possible and work to co-opt some new younger members to the committee. Tasks were also allocated to committee members to ensure the smooth running of the day. Thanks also to the Friends of Westgarthtown for their great support of the day. The 2016 Descendants' Day committee was confirmed as David Adams, Rebekah Vagg, Margaret Dade, Heather Purdy, Sylvia Vagg, Megan Belot and Carl Ziebell. It was pleasing that on the day, two young members — Jessica Adams and Milly Aitkens — were welcomed to the committee and we look forward to their input as they both have an interest and qualifications in tourism, event management and marketing.

The 2016 event (and all future Descendants' Days) will be held on the Sunday before the Victorian Labour Day holiday — which may be in March or February. So please put this in your perpetual diaries and let all your family know as well. We look forward to a bumper roll up in 2016 on Sunday 6 March.

FRIENDS OF WESTGARTHTOWN INC.

ABN 74 674 258 165 Inc. Reg No. A0032721Y

Enquiries (03) 9464 5062
PO Box 95 Thomastown VIC 3074
enquiries@westgarthtown.org.au
www.westgarthtown.org.au

President **John Fry**
Vice-President **Rob Wuchatsch**
Secretary **Gillian Borrack**
Treasurer **Léon Borrack**
Committee **Paul Schultz**
Doretta Belot

Historian **Rob Wuchatsch**
Heritage Architect **Geoff Borrack**
Tours Coordinator **Tatiana Joukoff**
Caretakers **Darren Kennedy**
Sheryl Kennedy
Editor **Rob Wuchatsch**
Design **Léon Borrack**

Westgarthtown is the oldest and most intact German/Wendish settlement in Victoria. Established in March 1850, it will celebrate its 165th Anniversary in 2015.

The Thomastown Lutheran Church at Westgarthtown is the second oldest surviving Lutheran Church building in Australia and the oldest still used as the principal worship centre of a Lutheran congregation.

Heritage Victoria has included the Lutheran Church, Cemetery and Reserve; and Graff's, Siebel's, Wuchatsch's and Ziebell's houses on its Heritage Register, recognising their outstanding heritage value and providing legislative protection for the future.

Ziebell's Farmhouse is Victoria's oldest German immigrant building.

Siebel's Farmhouse, erected in 1860, is the birthplace of Albert Siebel, who in 1934 established the Pura Dairy at Preston, to retail Westgarthtown's milk. Pura has now developed into a leading national Australian brandname.

Wuchatsch's Farmhouse is believed to be the oldest house in Melbourne to have been constructed, owned and continually occupied by the same family.