

The Mallee Stump



The Soldiers Memorial Wyalong
See article page 19

WYALONG DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY GROUP INC.

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Free to members

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Jock was in London wearing his tartan when a
curious lady asked if there was
anything worn under the kilt.

'No madam,' he replied with a flourish.
'Everything is in perfect working order.'

LESSONS WE LEARNED IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS

1. China won the 3rd world war without firing any missiles.
2. Europeans are not as educated as they appear.
3. Rich people are in fact less immune than the poor.
4. No priest, sheikh, ustad, or astrologers could save any patient.
5. Health professionals are worth more than football legends.
6. Animals most likely feel the same way in the zoo, as we do in quarantine.
7. The planet regenerates quickly without human interference.
8. Oil is worthless in a society without consumption.
9. Majority of people can comfortably work from home
10. Everyone can survive without junk food.
11. Living a hygienic life is not at all difficult.
12. Men can cook too.
13. Media is full of nonsense.
14. Actors are just entertainers, not heroes.
15. Life is so fragile, handle with care.

Saw Mr. Smith and he said he had sold the accused two shillings worth of oaten chaff. Mr. Plowes said the things were stolen from his house at Buddigower.

William Plowes, deposed. Am manager of Buddigower station for Mr. G. Thomson, of Cootamundra. Last Friday I had been out on the run and returned in the afternoon, I missed an axe and chaff and oats. The axe produced belongs to Mr. Thomson, and is the one I missed, I knew it by certain marks. The oats and chaff produced are like what I lost. The things were in the house, and the door and windows had been fastened by a strap when I went away. On my return straps had been cut and the windows open. Went to Yalgogrin the following Saturday to buy an axe. There saw the two accused and Constable Roberts, and identified the axe and chaff and oats. Saw the tracks of a sulky where it had stood opposite the house. Traced the tracks on to the road. Did not authorize anyone to take the things.

The accused, who reserved their defense, were committed to take their trial at the next Court of Quarter Sessions, to be held August 4 next. Bail allowed each in £80 and two sureties of £40.

The same accused were also charged on suspicion that, in company, on or about June 12 last, they did wilfully kill one bull and then did steal the carcase and skin, the property of Mr. Menzies, of Dundoo Hill Station, near Lake Cudgellico.

EDITOR'S REPORT

Unfortunately the Group is in "Lock Down" and we are unable to meet. But going by what we hear and see on TV we are a privileged country and our survival technique put together by our Governments both Federal and State, and the support of most Australians, we will come out the better for it.

We have studied the lessons of Spanish Flu ...
and those living through the Depression Years
making do with what is available
rediscovering how to survive on less money
cooking skills that were put aside or forgotten
we will come out of this as a better and caring nation.

May we learn from what we are now doing to make us better caring Australians.

When it comes to the Australian of the Year ...

we will find it hard to pick one that stood out above all others.

Our Prime Minister State Premiers

Shane Fitzsimmons NSW Fire Chief Front line Police

Hospital Staff Doctors, Nurses, Ambulance and Emergency

Army, Navy and Air Force personnel

the list is enormous. I hope you enjoy this April's Journal.

Terry Butcher

Wyalong was a grazing property well before the Neeld's came in 1894

Albury Banner and Wodonga Express 1st. July 1881 page 11

STOCK REPORTS.

ALBURY, Thursday.

Messrs. CHAS. L. GRIFFITH and Co. report :—
We held our usual fortnightly sale at our Albury yards on Wednesday last. Cattle.—About 130 head yarded, a good proportion of which were stores, the remainder mostly medium and inferior; nothing prime yarded. We sold draughts for Mrs. Hore, Miss Edwards, and Messrs. W. Hore, Cary Bros., and M'Nickle and others—light bullocks up to £5 7s. 6d., cows to £3 15s. Fat Calves.—About 12 yarded, mostly middling and inferior, and sold up to 24s. Horses.—Only a few to hand, and realised current rates. We also sold by auction at Bowna on Thursday, 16th June, 4500 merino ewes from Wyalong, at satisfactory rates; also at our Albury yards on Thursday, 23rd June, on account of Messrs. Large and Mair, of Tumut, 286 store bullocks, at highly satisfactory rates. Our next fortnightly sale will be held on Wednesday, 15th July.

Albury Banner and Wodonga Express 10th. August 1883

The Grenfell Record says the human bones found on the Wyalong run by Mr. Kenny are supposed to be the remains of a shepherd lost many years ago from one of the stations owned by Mr. A. G. Jones, between the Murrumbidgee and the Lachlan Rivers.

POLICE COURT.

Monday July 27 1903.

(Before Mr. G Stevenson, P M)

Two young men named Gilbert Edward Green and Thomas Gordon Barnes were charged that they did in company on the 25th of July last break into the dwelling of William Plowes, of Buddigower, and steal there from one axe and a quantity of chaff and oats, to the total value of 9 shillings.

Sergeant Clifford conducted the prosecution, and the following evidence was taken.

Henry Roberts deposed: Am a police constable stationed at Yalgogrin. On Saturday last from what was told me by Mr. W. Plowes, I went to the residence of G. Thompson at Yalgogrin and there saw the accused Barnes. Asked him his name. He replied, "Gordon Barnes, I came from Kildary in a sulky yesterday evening." He had not called on any houses on his way. Asked him where the sulky was. He replied, "At the back of Winn's." Asked him to come over to the camp and opened the bag produced, containing chaff and oats. He said the property was his and he had got it a Smith's store. Picked up the axe produced, and asked him if it was his property. He replied "Yes and had brought it from Coolamon"

I said it was one I was looking for. Then said to him, "Have you got a mate?" He said, "Yes, he is at Winn's house". Then asked him to come over to Winn's house. There saw the accused Green who admitted his identity. Then said to him, "Come with me to the town." Both accompanied me to Smith's store. There met W. Plowes, who claimed the axe as his property. He identified it on account of the handle being worn away through carrying it on the saddle, also by the way the handle was put into the axe. I then said to Plowes. "What about the chaff and oats." He said "The chaff I lost is wheat-en chaff, very rough cut." He then looked into the bag and said "That is like the chaff I lost," I then turned to the two accused and said "Do you have what Mr. Plowes has to say?" They made no reply.

I then charged them with the offence. I took them to the lockup.

To the Sergeant: At the camp there was another bag with chaff in it.

Just Bits and Pieces

By Stan Dodgson

My father-in-law always enjoyed a corned leg of mutton for Sunday lunch and used the cold meat to make sandwiches for his lunch box. He had one ordered at the butcher shop to be collected every Saturday morning.

One morning he was explaining to the busy butcher the size of the leg he wanted. The butcher said, "just slip through that door into the back room and pick the one you want from those soaking in the brine". A big tub containing various legs of mutton, pieces of silver-side and rolls of corned beef lay resting in the brine. Also crawling around on top of some vagrant bits of fat were large white maggots with black hair all over them.

Sunday lunch changed from corned leg of mutton to roast beef from a different shop.



In days gone by, before refrigeration and maybe even now a farmers quick meal may consist of a heap of cold mutton, bread and butter and not much else except a mug of tea and possibly a cigarette. Merv had finished his plate of meat and was working on a big slab of damper covered in a generous helping of dark plum jam. I had just began chewing my first mouthful of meat. My jaws suddenly froze with my mouth wide open, slowly leaning forward I let that mouthful fall back on my plate. Merv leaned over for a closer look and noticed a maggot wriggling about on top of it. "Well, said Merv, I have finished mine, and there was none in it Thank God."

He pick up his white enamel plate and taking it over to wash it when he noticed a puddle of black sauce on the middle of the plate. A thin black line ran from this puddle toward the edge of his plate at the end of this line was a little white maggot making a valiant attempt at freedom.

In some of those years, a good fox skin could bring as much as three pounds, this was equal to a weeks wages for a man, so any fox that sought refuge in a rabbit burrow or hollow log. Many dignified ladies were not above shooting a fox with a Winchester 22 or using an axe, shovel and pick or mattock to make a valuable capture.

Upon arrival at a farm the first thing Wing did was give any children present, a piece of fruit. He smoked a big old bent stem pipe that seemed to be continually dangling down in front of him. This held his bottom lip pressed against his chin. Great streams of slobber seemed to be hanging from the bottom of this pipe, they seemed to stretch down towards the ground before breaking off and falling into the dust.

If it happened to be near sundown on arrival, he made his camp at our shearing shed. Scouting around he would find an old cypress pine post, using a sharp tomahawk he split chips from this post, with infinite care, he split the slivers of pine into splinters that fine that they immediately burst into flame when a lighted match was put under them.

This fascinated me, as our family usually started a fire using kerosene. Wing did not use paper even. His meal consisted of hunks of bread with thick slices of meat on top.

I don't remember if he used any sauce or pickles.

Wing Daan died on the 25 November 1951 aged 60 years and is buried in the Presbyterian Portion H 11 of the Wyalong Cemetery.

Wing Quay died 11 December 1960 aged 73 years. He is in an unmarked grave. It could be G10 Presbyterian Portion.

Why are so many Scottish churches circular?
So nobody can hide in the corners during the collection.

FREDERICK JOHN BLEYER (Friendly Fred)

Fred's Story by his daughter Sue Scriven

Born Sydney 4th July 1922

Died 17th March 2013

Fred was the eldest child of Frederick and Rita Bleyer, brother of Harry and sisters Amanda and Monica who all predeceased him. He commenced his schooling at St Anne's at Bondi.

During his later school years when the depression hit, to help the family, he would be up at 4am work at the local butchers making sausages and then sell the morning papers on the street corner before he went to school.

His love of sport was important in his life. He was ball boy at a Davis Cup tie at White City, sold ice creams in the stands at Sydney Cricket Ground, assisted Jockeys at Randwick Racecourse riding the horses at training. He played all his junior and senior football with Eastern Suburbs. Hence his great love of the Sydney Roosters.

Fred commenced work at White Trucks in Sydney in the Motor Spare Parts department and worked there until he joined the army in 1941 and as a nineteen year old, was sent to New Guinea in the 2nd World War where his regiment defended the Kokoda Trail. It was during this time in battle he lost his finger and after recuperation was sent back to the Australian Advanced Ordinance Depot at Port Moresby supply spare parts for the vehicles used in combat.

Fred was discharged from the army in September 1946.

Fred married Olga Hyland on December 14th, 1942 on a Tuesday

Did you hear about the Scotsman who married a girl born on February the 29th so he'd only have to buy her a birthday present every four years?

Wing Daan

By Stan Dodgson

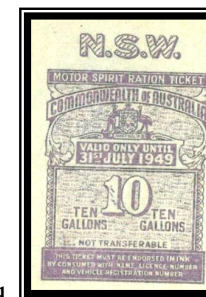
Wing Daan, I knew him as. He was a Chinese hawker. On the side of his green boxlike truck was the name "Dan Quay", or Wing Quay, Wyalong.

On the back of this vehicle were boxes and bags of fruit and vegetables, and sharing this space, nestled up against the cabin was a gas producer. This was a contraption that was used to burn charcoal and produce a gas to run the vehicle instead of using petrol.



A dilapidated looking wooden trailer was attached to the rear end of the truck. On this he loaded sheep skins, dead wool, crutchings and probably fox and rabbit skins as well. He purchased these things during his travels. I guess the housewives looked forward to seeing old Wing's truck turn in at their gate. So too did any teenage boys who had been saving up bags of wool plucked from sheep that had died and not been skinned early enough. Rabbit skins also were another form of pocket money.

This was during the war years, about 1942, and petrol was rationed, lots of things were rationed, butter, tobacco, and many other things as well. Coupon books were issued to people and when buying things, coupons had to be handed over as well as money.



fire.

On Friday it looked like a change, the wind coming from the north, but at noon it veered to the west, and it all cleared off.

15th October, 1900.

The Soldiers Memorial Wyalong.

SOLDIERS MEMORIAL AT WYALONG.

A meeting of the Soldiers' Memorial Committee was held in Wyalong last night at 8 p.m. and as a result the erection of the memorial has been further advanced.

The matter has been held up pending- the consent of the subscribers of the School of Arts .

At the annual meeting, Dr. Shaw sought permission of the subscribers for the War Memorial Committee to erect a suitable room or building.

His motion lapsed for want of a seconder, the general feeling being that it would be unwise for the subscribers to allow any Committee other than the School of Arts Committee, to make any alterations or additions to the present building.

At a later meeting of the subscribers the motion was amended and passed that the School of Arts Committee build a room or building as a Memorial. At last night's meeting, a letter from the School of Arts Committee asked for suggestions as to a building.

Three plans were inspected, and on the motion of Sergeant Colmer it was agreed that this Committee recommend the building of a large room as a Soldiers' Memorial, that the money in hand be handed to the School of Arts Committee, that a marble roll of honour be erected on the front of the building, and that a suggestion be made that the ladies be allowed to assist in furnishing the building.

The three plans were:—

1.—A plain room to be used as a club room with verandah.

2.—A room with caretakers' quarters.

3.—A room with caretakers' quarters and shop in front.

Mr. Skidmore proposed a very hearty vote of thanks to Dr. Shaw for his enthusiasm and personal interest in the scheme. This was carried by acclamation.

The matter now rests with the School of Arts Committee which meets on Tuesday night

How do you disperse an angry Scottish mob?
Take up a collection.

when home on leave, their honeymoon was a trip to Manly on the Ferry, then he was sent back to New Guinea with his regiment on the Saturday.

Together they had three children Susan, Jane and Philip.

After building and living in their first home at Lane Cove they moved to Miranda.

After a conversation with Alf Aberline (of West Wyalong) he was offered a spare parts job in a little town called West Wyalong. History states in 1954 the move was made. After working at Aberline's for some time he took a position with Westcott Hazel Travelling the countryside selling spare parts. This job lead to a move to Parkes where the family lived for 18 months. However they missed West Wyalong too much and moved back in 1961 for Fred to commence his new Business Fred's TV and Motor Parts, just next to Helyers store.

When Retravision was formed in 1962 Fred enjoyed being on the original Board of Directors and had an interesting journey through the years in the electrical industry with the arrival of Television in West Wyalong being the major excitement. Followed by a rapid advancement in technology which Fred enjoyed to follow through the years.

He was thrilled he was still going to work on his 80th birthday, even if it was only for half a day and Fred's TV was still part of West Wyalong.

During this time, he was President of the West Wyalong Bowling Club 1963-1965, President of the Lions Club 1965-1966 and President of the Rugby League Club 1965-1969. He was honoured to be made a Life Member of each of these Organisations.

Fred had a great pride in our town of West Wyalong, he loved country life and the people. He appreciated greatly the care shown to him particularly when he was wheelchair bound. He especially appreciated the facilities at the swimming pool which enabled him to still go swimming. As kids he taught us the ABC stood for Apple, Bat and Car. He still lived by his ABC except it stood for Attitude, Belief and Concentration.

Just Bites and Pieces continued

By Stan Dodgson

I remember one lunch time at the wheat silos, a lonely place, no shops and expecting to be home for lunch, we took no food. There was an unexpected breakdown of the machinery that handled the wheat. This was in the days of bagged wheat, so it took two of us to load the grain by hand and take to the silos. Lunch time came and went and the uncle I was with said, "Ah well, diner time, We'll tighten our belts two holes a have a big drink of water. That's another memorable meal.

The Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser Saturday, 20 October 1900, page 6 THE BLAND.

[FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.]

Things pastoral are looking well out this way; shearing is in full swing nearly everywhere. Billabong cut out last week, and Oakhurst, I believe, will be done in a fortnight; Caragabal, where they are cutting very well, also finishing up shortly. I saw some very nice wool at Burge's the other day, samples of which they are keeping for the district collection — and I don't think it will disgrace it. Grass is in abundance everywhere, and the lambs look splendid, the March and April lambs looking like young sheep already.

I happened to be in at the Wyalong show, there being about 2000 present on the second day. Messrs. Stewart and Wilson showed some very nice sheep, and it is a pity there was not some competition. The horse and cattle sections were very good. Mr. Geyer took first and champion for coaching stallion with Limerick. Mr. David Weir showed some very nice stock by Pioneer; his cattle exhibits were also well worth looking at. In fact, as far as cattle and horses went, the Grenfell show didn't come near it, and as the initial show it was a great success.

It has been pretty dry the last few weeks, and the crops could do with a drop of rain now, as a great deal of it is coming out in ear, and if it does not get a good fall soon there is the danger of it getting pinched; and things did not look very hopeful on Saturday, 6th inst., as there was a very heavy frost in this part of the district. If we got a repetition of last October, things will not be too nice I saw some vines, figs, and tomatoes at Mr. McTaggart's, (*on Piper's Hill Quandialla Road*) and they looked as if they had been scorched in a

Then there were two Scots who bet a pound on who could stay under water the longest. They both drowned.

ber, but Blamey appointed him to the military court of inquiry into Major General Gordon Bennett's escape from Singapore. Another task, more to his liking, was the chairmanship (1945-58) of the Repatriation Commission in Melbourne; he devoted himself strenuously to the welfare of veterans. Yet the army still called: he commanded the 3rd Division, C.M.F., in 1947-50 and was the C.M.F. member of the Military Board in 1948-50.

Elevated to K.B.E. in 1958, Wootten returned to Sydney on his retirement that year from the Repatriation Commission. He was exhausted by the intensity of the work, after two world wars and the difficult years between them. 'Even the zest for sailing had gone', but he watched tennis and Test cricket. Although Sir George lived for a time in nursing homes, his wife and family cared for him. He died at the Repatriation General Hospital, Concord, on 31 March 1970 and was buried with full military honours and Anglican rites in Northern Suburbs cemetery; his wife, and their two daughters and younger son survived him. A portrait (1956) by (Sir) William Dargie is held by the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.



John Meagher & Co. Pty. Ltd ~ Hardware Department



Dot Phillips nee Harmer (Crockery), Jack Carroll (Hardware Mgr), Noel (Bluey) Ryan, Arthur Digby (Fred Butcher's Brother in law), Norman Clark, Ivo Butcher and Jack Duffy. 1955

You Get What You Pay For.

A sign in a repair shop said:

"We do three types of jobs:

Cheap, Quick and Good.

You can have your choice of any two.

A good, quick job isn't cheap.

A good cheap job isn't quick.

And a quick, cheap job won't be good."

Sandy: "Will you marry me ?"
Girlfriend: "No, but I'll always admire your good taste."

A blonde is overweight so her doctor put her on a diet. "I want you to eat regularly for two days," he tells her. "Then skip a day and repeat the procedure for two weeks.

The next time I see you, you'll have lost at least five pounds."

When the blonde returns, she's lost nearly four stone. "Why that's amazing," the doctor says. "Did you follow my instructions?"

The blonde nods. "I'll tell you though, I thought I was going to drop dead that third day."

"From hunger you mean?" Asks the doctor.

"No," replies the blonde, "from skipping."

size, Hill, you sit with circumspection'. It was probably his bulk that accounted for the rarity of his visits to forward troops during battle. His children were to remember him for his gentleness and the fun they had with him, but this was also the man who was to dismiss Brigadier Bernard Evans at Finschhafen, New Guinea.

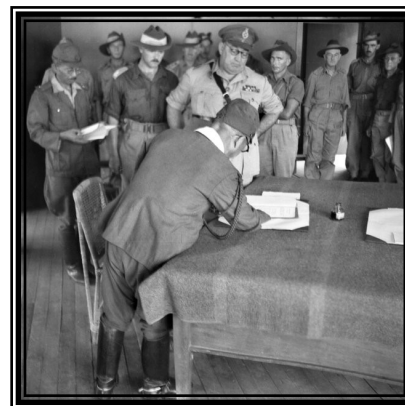
The task of training his division for jungle warfare and amphibious operations was not lightened for Wootten by the death of his elder son George in an aircraft accident in May 1943 while he was on active service with the Royal Australian Air Force. From September that year to January 1944 he led his division to victories in New Guinea at Lae, Finschhafen and Sattelberg. A year of rest and training in Australia was followed by the pointless but successful operations of June-July 1945 in Borneo around Brunei and Labuan.

Japanese Surrender to Major-General Wootten at Labuan

Wootten worked to re-establish civil order in the former British territories, supporting the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit attached to his headquarters. He was appointed C.B. (1945); General Sir Thomas Blamey twice recommended him and other generals in vain for appointment as K.B.E. In 1944 he had received the United States of

America's Distinguished Service Cross. One of his brigadiers, Selwyn Porter, remembered him as 'the shrewdest Divisional Commander whom I have encountered . . . He was sound, sure and careful'.

Wootten left Labuan for Sydney on 22 September 1945 and transferred to the Reserve of Officers on 14 Octo-



Desert. Nine days later he came under the command of Major General (Sir) Leslie Morshead who had raised and trained the 18th Brigade. After nearly five months besieged, Wootten's was the first brigade to be relieved. It rejoined the 7th Division, but only after the 7th's successful campaign in Syria. He was awarded a Bar to his D.S.O. for his leadership at Tobruk.

In March 1942, Wootten returned to Australia. When belatedly the 7th Division was sent to Papua to intervene in the crisis on the Kokoda Track in August 1942, his brigade was detached to bolster the defence of the Milne Bay airstrips. Having helped Milne Force to crush the Japanese, he took part in the worst fighting of the Pacific war—Buna and Sanananda, where pressure from General Douglas MacArthur's ignorant General Headquarters for quick results in impossible situations caused unnecessary casualties. In March 1943, as temporary major general, Wootten succeeded Morshead as commander of the 9th Division, which was training on the Atherton Tableland, Queensland. He was appointed C.B.E. in May.

Wootten's massive frame attracted irreverent nicknames, but he won the respect of his division. If he was not as close to his soldiers as Morshead, he left lasting impressions of his mental power and tactical skill on officers of great distinction. MacArthur rated him as 'the best soldier in the Australian army who had it in him to reach the highest position' and Lieutenant General Robert Eichelberger, who commanded the Americans at Buna and Sanananda, wrote: 'He was always one of the best'. Brigadier Sir Frederick Chilton saw him as 'a formidable man indeed—I have never met another man of stronger will and personality'. Although his anger could be frightening, it was usually brief; his sense of humour extended even to himself. To the officer discreetly watching him test a wooden bench he remarked: 'When you are my

Donald: "Have you ever seen one of those new machines that can tell when a person is telling a lie?" Sandy: "Seen one? I married one!"

Donald: "I always feel that I'm covered in gold paint, doctor." Psychiatrist: "Oh, that's just your gilt complex."

Sir George Frederick Wootten

born 1893 died 1970

With extracts by **A. J. Hill** in his article published in

[*Australian Dictionary of Biography*](#), Volume 16, (MUP), 2002 and Miriam Clancy's Article.

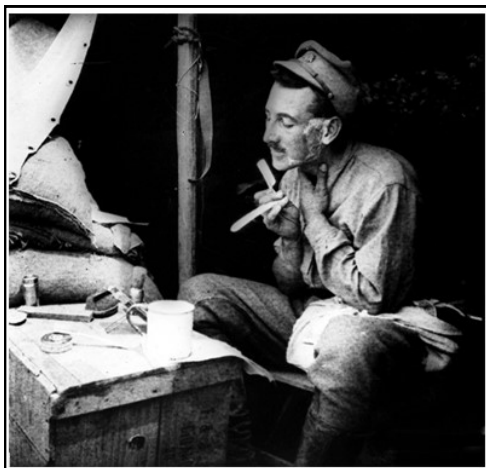
Sir George Frederick Wootten (1893-1970), soldier, solicitor and administrator, was born on 1 May 1893 at Marrickville, Sydney, seventh child of London-born parents William Frederick Wootten, carpenter and later civil engineer, and his wife Louisa, née Old. He attended Fort Street Model School and, encouraged by his father, entered the Royal Military College, Duntroon, Federal Capital Territory, in 1911. Graduating in August 1914, Lieutenant Wootten was posted to the 1st Battalion, Australian Imperial Force. He went ashore at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, became adjutant of his battalion next day and quickly won a reputation for courage. In May he was promoted captain. By the time of the evacuation in December he was a major.

When (Sir) John Monash was forming the 3rd Australian Division in England in 1916, Wootten served briefly on his staff, but he made his name at the infantry brigade level in 1916-17. He was brigade major first to James Cannan of the 11th Brigade, then to (Sir) Charles Rosenthal of the 9th Brigade, both outstanding commanders.

Wootten was awarded the Distinguished Service Order in October 1917 for excellent staff work. Two months later he was transferred to the headquarters of the 5th Division where he worked in the operations branch. In October 1918 he joined the General Staff at Field Marshal Sir Douglas (Earl) Haig's headquarters. His six months

there completed a remarkable wartime experience as a staff officer. He was four times mentioned in dispatches. Only 25 years old, he was posted to the Staff College, Camberley, England, in March 1919.

At St Joseph's Catholic Church, Roehampton, London, on 3 January 1920 he married Muriel Anna Frances Bisgood, a nurse.



Captain George Wootten, Gallipoli June 1915

That month Wootten sailed home to an Australia tired of war and with little interest in its army which was about to be reorganized and sharply reduced. Junior staff appointments in Adelaide then Hobart had no allure for Wootten who, as a brevet major, was on

captain's pay. In 1923 he resigned his commission.

His father-in-law in England came to the rescue, obtaining for him the managership of a clothing factory. He went back to England where he made a success of his job and enjoyed playing Rugby Union football. His children did not flourish, however; advised to move them to a warmer climate, he returned to Australia in 1926 with little prospect of work.

Perhaps Wootten recalled the advice of his headmaster at Fort Street that he should become a lawyer. As assistance was available from the Repatriation Commission, he opted for the law and was articled to

J. E. Harcourt at **West Wyalong**. This was a period of poverty for the Woottens, whose fourth child was born in 1930, although their vegetable garden and poultry enabled them to eat well.

Like many former officers, Wootten joined one of the anti-communist organizations, the Old Guard; by 1931 he was employed as an organizer in Sydney. On 30 July that year, having completed his articles, he was admitted as a solicitor. He practised in a number of centres including Singleton, then went back to **West Wyalong** in 1936 to join a firm trading as G. P. Evans, Englert & Wootten Solicitors, but there was not much work in so small a town.

His army pension, with money and parcels from England, kept the family going.

Developments in the army, made in response to events in Europe and East Asia, gave Wootten his chance. He was given command of the 21st Light Horse Regiment, Citizen Military Forces, in 1937 and promoted lieutenant colonel. By this time he was, in one respect, a changed man. Having given up smoking in 1930, he had begun to put on weight; he was over fifteen stone (95 kg) when he took command. By 1941 he would weigh twenty stone (127 kg). He was 5 ft 9 ins (175 cm) tall.

On 13 October 1939 Wootten was seconded to the A.I.F. and appointed to command the 2nd/2nd Infantry Battalion, despite doubts about his physical fitness for such a post. When the A.I.F. Reinforcement Depot was set up in Palestine late in 1940, he was promoted temporary brigadier and made its commander. In February 1941 he was given the well trained and equipped 18th Brigade.

As part of the 7th Division which was earmarked for the expedition to Greece, Wootten was instructed in March 1941 to capture the minor Italian fortress at Giarabub, Libya. This done, he was suddenly ordered on 4 April to move his brigade forthwith to Tobruk because the German *Afrika Korps* was transforming the situation in the Western