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**Life**

Showcasing the wonderful people, places and events on the Granite Belt

# Heroes' stories researched

By **PETER MCLADY**

*BORN and raised in Stanthorpe, Peter McLady might live in London these days but his thoughts often trail back to home as almost four years ago he started the research project of a lifetime.*

*Peter, son of Eunice McLady, has traced the story behind every name on the Stanthorpe First World War honour board.*

*He has travelled to each of their graves except two in Egypt, one of which sits on the Gaza Strip.*

*To commemorate each of these young men, the Stanthorpe Border Post will run their story on the 100th anniversary of each of their deaths.*

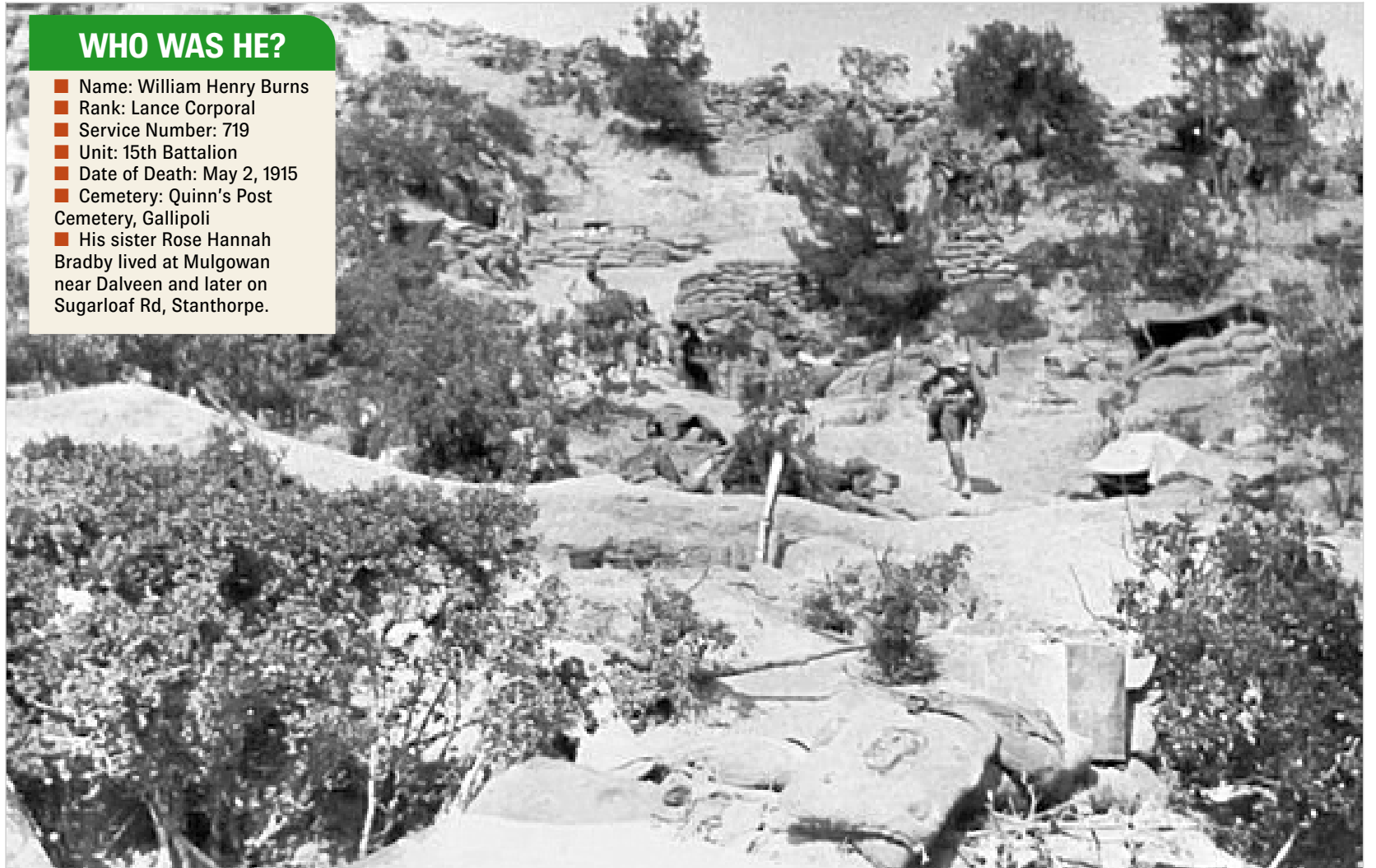
LANCE Corporal William Henry Burns was the Granite Belt's first casualty of the First World War.

Aged just 22, he spent only one week in the frontline at Gallipoli before he was killed on May 2, 1915.

It is likely he is T Burns remembered on the Stanthorpe War Memorial. There were 59 Australian servicemen with the surname Burns who died in the First World War, according to the Australian War Memorial (AWM) Roll of Honour. William is the only one who appears to have a strong connection with the Granite Belt.

Why William is remembered as "T Burns" is unknown. He may have been known as "Tommy" named after World Heavyweight Champion boxer Tommy Burns who fought a title fight against Jack Johnson in Sydney on Boxing Day, 1908. His sister Rose Hannah Bradby was named next of kin and lived at Mulgowan near Dalveen and later in Sugarloaf Rd, Stanthorpe. William's older brother, Francis Thomas Burns, served with the 26th Battalion A.I.F. After the war, Francis lived at the Soldiers' Settlement, Ballandean.

For the Roll of Honour, Francis wrote that his brother William was a labourer by trade. It appears their parents, Thomas Phillip and Margaret Burns were deceased at the time he enlisted. After enlisting in Dalby on September 21, 1914, William moved to the Enoggera Camp in Brisbane. He was one of the first to enlist in the newly formed 15th Battalion and was appointed Lance Corporal. William joined one of the six Queensland companies that left by train from Brisbane for the Broadmeadows Camp near Melbourne on November 22, 1914. The Battalion left



**WHO WAS HE?**

- Name: William Henry Burns
- Rank: Lance Corporal
- Service Number: 719
- Unit: 15th Battalion
- Date of Death: May 2, 1915
- Cemetery: Quinn's Post Cemetery, Gallipoli
- His sister Rose Hannah Bradby lived at Mulgowan near Dalveen and later on Sugarloaf Rd, Stanthorpe.

**DANGEROUS TERRAIN:** Dugouts on the right of Pope's Hill near Quinn's Post at Anzac Cove. The sandbags on the skyline formed the frontline trench, which had a steep, almost perpendicular drop on the other side into a gully. PHOTOS: AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL



**A photograph taken from the rear of Quinn's Post looking towards Pope's Hill and Walker's Ridge. (Donor W.H. Guard).**

Australia on active service on December 22, 1914, from Port Melbourne aboard the SS Ceramic.

They reached the Suez Canal on the morning of January 28, 1915. On February 3, they disembarked at Alexandria Harbour, Egypt and travelled to their training camp near Heliopolis. The Battalion underwent several months of extensive training, including field days and route marches in the desert (1). On 10 April, the Battalion travelled to Alexandria, where they boarded the ships for the Gallipoli Peninsula.

William was part of C Company of 15th Battalion

that landed at Anzac Cove on the morning of Monday, April 26.

When ashore they ate a hasty meal before moving up Shrapnel Gully to a point behind Courteney's Post, where the 15th Battalion Headquarters was located. Orders were then given for the men to move up on to the high country.

The next morning, C Company took over the position at Quinn's Post.

By Wednesday, April 28, the 15th Battalion had taken positions at Razorback, Courteney's and Steele's Post, Pope's Hill, and Bloody Angle. These were the locations of some of the fiercest fighting during the

Gallipoli campaign.

On May 2 the 15th Battalion "remained at post on Pope's Hill but there was a concerted advance on the enemy's position", according to the 15th Battalion War Diary. "No 4 Company under the command of the Otago Infantry reached the enemy trenches but were unable to hold them on account of being unsupported."

In his book, History of the 15th Battalion, Lieutenant Thomas Chataway wrote: "Before the charge took place the battalion suffered quite a number of casualties while merely holding the line".

William was one of these



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Aged just 22, he spent only one week on the frontline at Gallipoli before he was killed on May 2, 1915.

casualties. He died of wounds on May 2 and was buried at Quinn's Corner the same day with Reverend Frederick W. Wray officiating.

The Australian Department of Veteran Affairs website's Gallipoli and the Anzacs section explains that Quinn's Post Cemetery was established on the afternoon of April 25, 1915, by a New Zealand machine-gun crew but was taken over by Australians the following day. On April 29, Captain Hugh Quinn of the 15th Battalion AIF, after whom the post was named, took over command of the position that quickly earned a reputation for being the most dangerous place on Anzac.

At 2.30am on that day

Chaplain Frederick Wray made the first of almost daily trips to bury the dead at Quinn's.

His diary during the early days of the campaign revealed the frequency of his visits:

- April 28 At 12.30 reached 14th lines on Quinn's Corner... at 2.30am buried 29, including two NZ officers.
- April 30 Went up to Quinn's Corner and buried 5 men.
- May 1 Buried 1 man at Gully cemetery and 9 at Quinn's Corner.
- May 2 Buried 7 at Gully cemetery and 3 at Quinn's Corner
- May 3 An awful day, the 16th were enfiladed by machine guns and did not hold their trenches... the 16th lost 400 out of 600, the 13th 200... Saw a sniper get seven out of eight at Quinn's Corner and he got Lt Binnie... I buried eight, including Lts Binnie and Freeman at Quinn's Corner." - (Chaplain Frederick William Wray, PR00247, AWM)

William Burns was one of the three men buried by Chaplain Wray at Quinn's Corner on May 2, 1915.

In 1923, Lance Corporal William Burns was re-interred in the Pope's Hill Plot of Quinn's Post Cemetery.