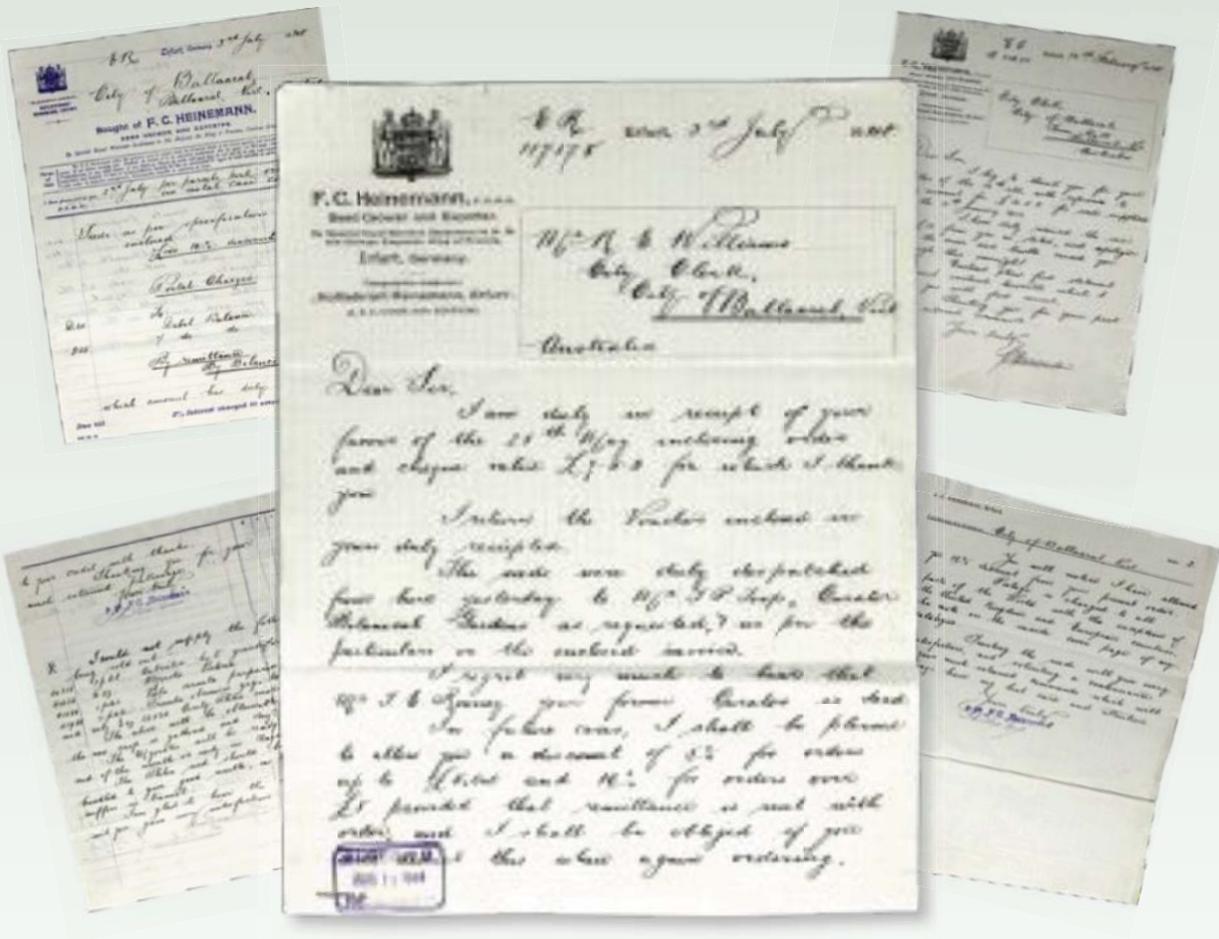




# THE BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS AND

# World War 1



*In Europe a shot rang out ..... and in Ballarat relationships established over half a century were rent asunder.*

Source: VPRS 2500 Unit 109 Gardens Folder





# A GARDENER ENLISTS



## *Charles Robert Rooney*

*Born Ballarat 1894 – Died Bullecourt France 1917*

Sergeant Charles Rooney of the 46th Battalion was the Council's first employee to die in battle.

Charles Robert Rooney grew up at the Gardens and lived with his family in the South Lodge. He attended Pleasant Street State School. A cadet for a year he served four years in the local 14th Infantry Battalion -12th Reinforcements (a precursor to today's Army Reserves) as a private who played the bugle.

Following the completion of a six year long apprenticeship, he worked as a gardener at the Ballarat Botanical Gardens where his late father, Thomas, had been Curator until his death in 1914.

On 9th July 1915, aged 21 years and 6 months, he signed up. He began training with the 4th Training Unit in November that year and embarked from Melbourne on A40 HMAS Ceramic. In Egypt he was transferred to the 46th Battalion on 6 March 1916 and sent to France. The 46th Battalion was made up of Gallipoli veterans, whose ranks had been decimated, and fresh new recruits from Australia. The majority were from Victoria.

Rooney was rapidly promoted to Corporal, then Sergeant and fought on the Western Front until receiving a gunshot wound to the head and right shoulder in November at the battle of Pozieres. After a period of treatment and recuperation in England, he returned to France in March 1917 and was wounded again on 11 April 1917 while fighting near Bullecourt.

Rooney was initially listed as Wounded in Action, Missing. A Court of Enquiry changed that to Killed in Action. His name is commemorated on the memorial at Villiers-Brettoneux.

In his will he left £100 to his mother and to his brother his bicycle.

*Source: Australian War Memorial, Canberra.*

*Photo: Collection Ballarat Town Hall*





# THE CURATORS SONS



Two sons of Curator Thomas Toop served during WW1. Arthur Westray Toop was born in Ballarat in 1893 and Thomas Westray Toop in 1897.

Arthur Westray Toop was working as a carpenter in Melbourne when he enlisted in December 1914. Following enlistment, Arthur was assigned as a sapper to 2nd Field Company Australian Engineers. He was in Egypt waiting for orders when he was struck down with Typhoid. His death was noted as due to 'Typhoid and Perforation'. A small parcel of his effects was sent back to the Curator's Cottage.

Thomas Westray Toop joined the newly formed Navy in 1912 and was a crew member of the flagship HMAS Australia. She was one of only three Indefatigable-class battleships built for the defence of the British Empire and was ordered by the Australian government in 1909. She was launched in 1911, and commissioned as the flagship.

Toop saw service in the Pacific and the North Sea, where HMAS Australia was involved in early attempts at Naval Aviation and in the Zeebrugge Raid. HMAS Australia only ever fired in anger twice: at a German merchant vessel in January 1915 and at a suspected submarine in 1917.

He continued in the Navy, ending his long career as instructor on the land based HMAS Cerebus. He served for a total of 40 years and was awarded the DNSM in 1952. After his retirement from the Navy, Thomas Toop senior relocated to Melbourne to live with him.



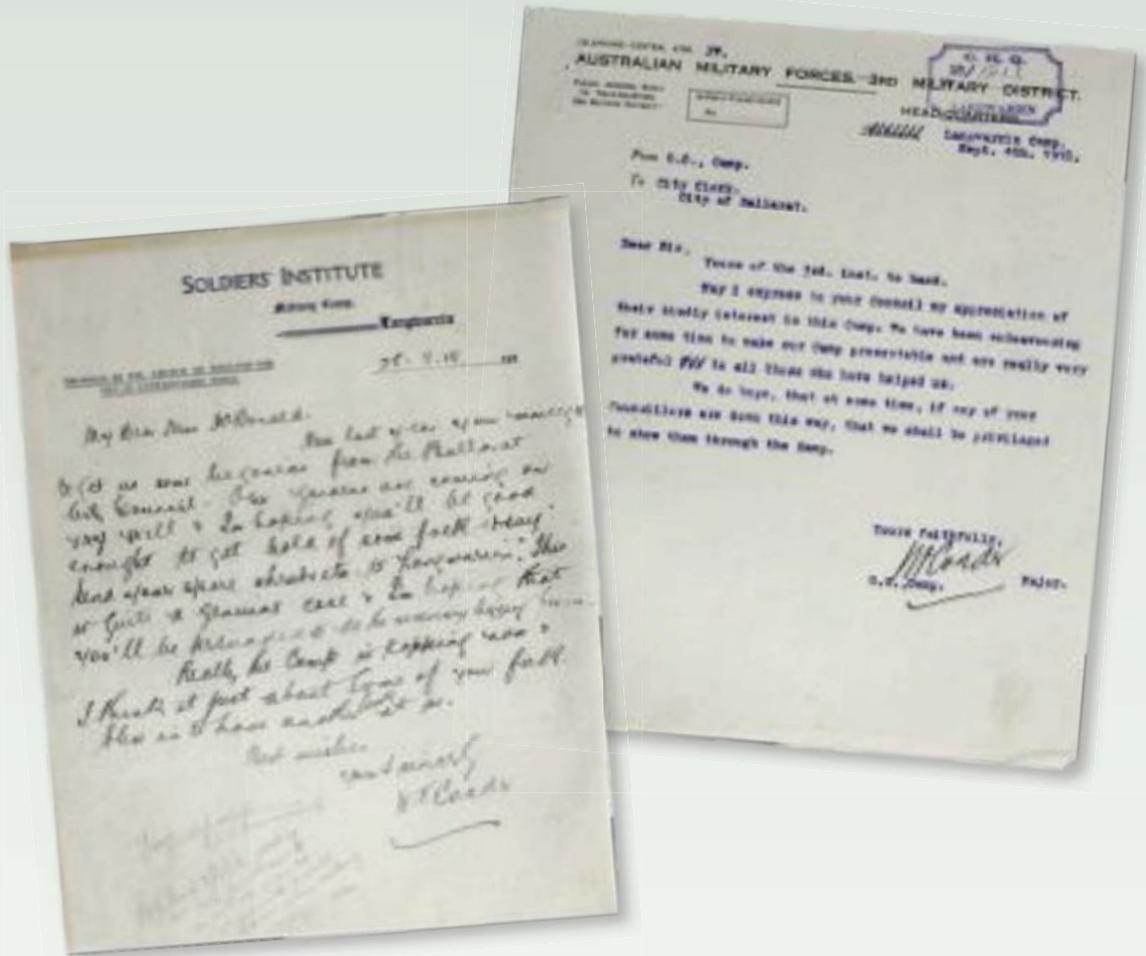
Source: AWM

Photos: K. Crawford and Carol Hall





# AT THE GARDENS



In 1915 the Langwarrin Military Hospital was established on the Langwarrin Military Camp site. It was set up for the treatment of soldiers returning from service in France and Egypt. It is understood that Brigadier General Pompey Elliot's wife Kate was responsible for contacting the City Council to arrange for the camp to be sent plants from the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. Regular parcels, including *Begonias*, enabled the Convalescing soldiers to establish gardens as part of their therapy.

This gesture was much appreciated by the recuperating soldiers and thanks were sent from the camp.

Source: VPRS 2500 Unit 114 Misc. Folder





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# AFTER THE WAR

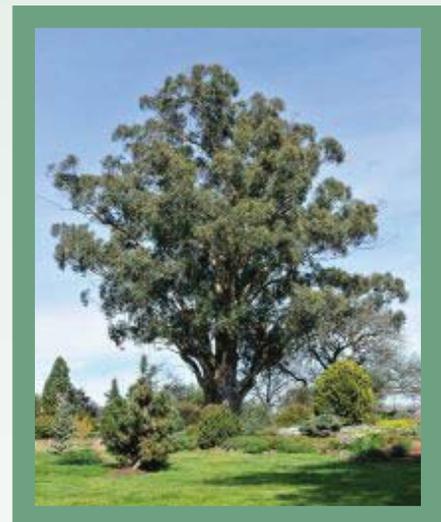


After the War ended members of the Jubilee Methodist Church initiated the development of the Avenue of Honour. As a member of the congregation, Toop helped Mrs M. 'Tilley' Thompson organise this venture. After much debate the site along Burrumbeet Road was selected. It was re-named Remembrance Drive. Packets of Forget-me-not seeds were sold at the Gardens to raise funds for the project. Toop himself designed the Cairn at the western end of the Avenue.



To help establish the Avenue, Mr Mosman, father to FBBG Foundation Member and inaugural History Group convenor Roy Mosman, was given the task of watering, mulching, weeding and formation pruning the Avenue.

The now heritage listed *Eucalyptus globulus*, a remnant of Curator George Longley's western wind break, was formally named the *General Williams* in honour of the War Service of R. E. Williams. Town Clerk and Editor of the Ballarat Courier, Williams was seconded to Melbourne from the local 14th Infantry Battalion. As Brigadier General and Acting Commandant Victoria he dealt with the details of enlisting and returning soldiers.



Source: Australian War Memorial and VPRS 2500





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# OUR FORGOTTEN AVENUE OF HONOUR



Requested by the Council to find suitable places in the Gardens to recognise the military service of Municipal employees, Toop replied :

*'In regard to our employees who have enlisted I have given the matter careful thought and as much as I would like to see the planting done in the Gardens am at a loss to find sites. The whole of the area comprised in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Reserve including the drives is so well planted with established trees as to preclude further planting and the existing open spaces are taken up as sports grounds.'*

A site along the western border north of the Nursery to the Zoo was agreed upon, and Cypress and Oak selected for planting. No plaque was considered necessary at the time.

Source: VPRS 2500





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*The Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens  
History Group  
wish to acknowledge*

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The Botanical Art Group FBBG

and

The Staff at the Ballarat Botanical Gardens

*for their assistance in the preparation  
of this exhibition.*



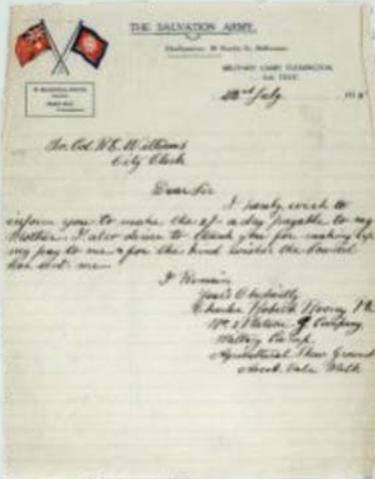


# WW1 TIMELINE

## The Final Rooney Year

**1914** - George Longley's embankment reappeared after 42 years, and it was possible to walk dry-footed from Macarthur Street to the Gardens. (Despite the War the Regatta was held 1915).

**1914** May 6 - Thomas Edmond Rooney died aged 57. The Funeral cortege left from his residence. The Mayoral Report of that year noted: *'On May 6th, 1914, died Thomas Rooney who had done so much to make the begonia and orchid houses famous throughout Australia. His place was taken by T. B. Toop who for the last twenty years has carried on the good work, specializing in landscape gardening and splendid beds of dahlias and gladioli.'*



## The Toop Years

Tom Toop (1868-1956)

is regarded as the father of Ballarat's Begonia tradition

**1914** - Tom Toop was appointed Curator.

**1914** Aug 4 - Britain declared war on Germany and WW1 commenced for British Empire countries

**1915** Mar-Sep - City Council issued shooting permits for the destruction of cormorants from daybreak to 10 am at the Lake

**1915** - Soldiers were quartered at the Ballarat Agricultural Showground **and drilled at the Gardens**. Regulations were made banning swimming in the lake. The Camp was made aware of damage to the Gardens by soldiers

**1915** - Work on (Ben Jahn) Zoological Gardens commenced. Henry Ben Jahn had died in Germany in 1911, leaving the bulk of his estate to the City to build a small Zoo

**1915** - The labelling of plants in the Gardens commenced

**1915** - Excess cyprediums were sold to Bendigo Botanical Gardens

**1915** - Drought across the region at each end of the year. Mr Toop stated: *The past season will long be remembered as the driest on record. As early as July we were advised to use every care in conserving water. In August the situation became so critical that absolute prohibition of the use of the hose was necessary. Water carting from Lake & heavy mulching undertaken. 25 December Christmas Day morning a severe thunderstorm passed over the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, the lightning striking & completely shattering a fine specimen of*

*Wellingtonia... The Lake is down to an average of 7.25 inches in depth, the lowest level since the drought of 1868-69. With Government Subsidies at least 6 major projects completed by 'day labour', men out of work because of drought and war*

**1915** Jan - The Insane Hospital grazed milch cows on the North Gardens reserve. £2.10.0 in agistment fees was received

**1915** Apr 25 -

**Australian troops landed at Gallipoli**

**1915** Nov 21 - Arthur Westray Toop dies in Egypt

**1916** Mar - The Widow of Tom Rooney requested more time to vacate the cottage

**1916** Apr - The Ballarat Botanical Gardens sent shrubs, trees and flowers to the Shire of Donald

**1916** - Staff numbers substantially depleted

with the enlistment of gardeners, including Lindsay, Greville and Middleton.

**1916** - Both sets of Entrance Gates were melted down in Sebastopol as a contribution to the War Effort

**1917** - Ballarat Botanical Gardens began to send plants to Langwarrin Military Camp

**1917** Apr 4 - The Ben Jahn Zoo opened in the North Gardens Reserve

**1917** Apr 11- Charles Rooney dies at Bullecourt, France

**1917** - Trees were

**planted 'in conspicuous places' by the IOOF, the Carter's and Driver's Union and the Plumber's Union in memory of those members who served**

**1917** Aug 17 - Toop was asked to consider the apprenticeship system *"I have given the matter of the apprenticeship of boys at the Ballarat Botanical Gardens serious consideration. I am of the opinion that the system at present in vogue cannot be improved upon. It is a system that has worked satisfactorily for the past eighteen years & under it any boy who has the desire & intelligence to learn has every opportunity & assistance to become a proficient improver at the end of his term"*

**1918** - A rustic bridge was added to Fairyland

**1918** - Gardens supplied plants, including begonias, to Langwarrin Military Camp

**1918** - Gardens supplied acorns of the *Quercus palustris* to the Municipal Council of Johannesburg. *"Mr Ware has just returned from Australia and tells me that the British Oak is susceptible to scale as it is here. I have endeavoured to procure seed of Quercus palustris from America and France, but it has always arrived in a bad state. Would you therefore let me have say 50 or 100lbs if possible and let me know the charges? I hope I am not too late for the season's crop. Yours, Robert Phillips"*

**1918** - Excessive rainfall prompted the urgent necessitation for underground drainage

**1918** Nov 11 - **Armistice Day, end of WW1**

**1919** - A very dry spell occurred from early December to the middle of February. Watering was carried out under the most trying conditions owing to inadequate water pressure. For five consecutive months hoses were run almost without exception night and day

**1919** - Kardinia Park donated a pair of kangaroos to the Zoo, and received water lilies in return. In 1920 they donated six deer

**1919** Mar 23 - Victorian Railways Military Band held a Sacred Concert in the Gardens after their picnic. Many bands played at both the Gardens and View Point

**1919** Jun 9 - **The Avenue of Honour was completed with the final planting of 3728 trees**  
**1920** Jun 2 - HRH Prince Edward, Prince of Wales, officially opened The Arch of Victory. He also visited the Ballarat Botanical Gardens.

To commemorate the visit of the Prince of Wales, a new conifer, *Fokeneynia bodginissi* was planted

**1920** - Abnormally dry winter  
**1921** - Southern entrance gates and a pergola were erected with funds from Hon J Y McDonald Bequest and planted with purple wisteria and white clematis. Climbing

roses were planted at the base of the pergola. The design featured classical columns with Ionic capitals

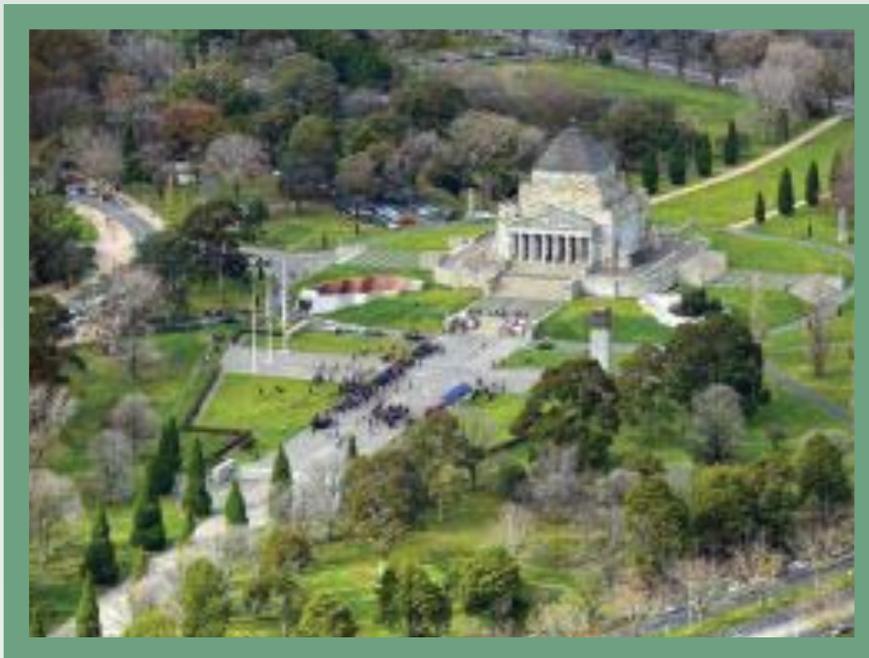
**1921** - Toop married Miss Mabel Mann

**1921** - The Gardens employed a staff of only 6 men, compared with 15 in 1890 and 12 in 1913





# THE DOMAIN AT THE SHRINE OF REMEMBRANCE



The Domain Gardens were designed by Hugh Linaker -b 1872- d 1938. Linaker was apprenticed at the Gardens under George Longley. An ambitious fellow, at the age of 29 he successfully applied for the post of Curator at Ararat's Alexandra Gardens, entirely redesigning them in his eleven year tenure.

In 1912 he became Government Landscape Architect. In this role Linaker was responsible for the design of the grounds and gardens of every Mental Institution in Victoria. He was responsible for the design of the Public spaces and streetscapes in the 'model' town of Moe as well as at the Buchan Caves.

His last major undertaking was the design of the Domain Gardens in which the Shrine of Remembrance sits. Shortly before his retirement from the public service Mr. Linaker was asked to undertake the landscape work for the Shrine and King's Domain. These Gardens were completed in 1935 by sustenance workers, just in time for Melbourne's Centenary Celebrations.

Though now modified and modernised close to the Shrine, the Domain still embraces Linaker's vision of sweeping lawns and trees.

*Source: Linaker Family*

