

Alumni Newsletter

Hurlstone Agricultural High School

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Issue 2

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Welcome to Issue 2 of the Archive newsletter. In this edition we have decided to introduce a regular article highlighting our Old Boys who fought in World War 1. The Great War Centenary has lit a spark for the Archive Group to examine and explore each one of our Old Boys who bravely fought in the Great War. Their stories have promoted conservation in our group with many of us who had family who experienced the war by either enlisting or just by living in the affected countries. It makes us realise the sacrifices and bravery our families endured during WW1. It has been interesting that conservation has started with WW1, but drifted into WW2 and the other subsequent wars that followed after. It seems everyone has been affected in one way or another by war. The students were given an Old Boy to research in their own private time and the idea was met with enthusiasm and compassion. I have found documentation in Archives that illustrates that each morning at assembly the principals at Hurlstone during WW1 and WW2 would read out the updated list of casualties, missing in action or killed in action. This stated that this was a deed which was arduous and emotional.

We would like to thank all the Alumni who support all the Alumni based events we had for 2014. The students have often expressed how much they enjoyed meeting and interacting with the Alumni, especially at the 140th Hurlstone Dinner Celebration. We look forward to catching up again in 2015.

Mrs Johanna Leglise and the Hurlstone Archive Group.

World War 1 Old Boy Colin Blumer

Colin Blumer was born in Mudgee, New South Wales in 1895, and attended Hurlstone Agricultural High School. He was in his second year of agricultural studies at Hawkesbury Agricultural College when war broke out in 1914. He lied about his age in order to enlist on 26 August 1914, stating that he was 20 years old rather than 18. His family was not happy about this but did not stop him.

On 5 April 1915, Blumer was promoted to sergeant, and on the same day the 2nd and 3rd Battalions departed for Gallipoli aboard the captured German liner *Derflinger*. Blumer and the 3rd came ashore at 5.30 am on 25 April 1915 under heavy gunfire. Forming up below Plugge's Plateau, they advanced, fully laden with packs, ammunition, picks, shovels and entrenching tools. Blumer was wounded on four occasions while serving at Gallipoli. On 17 May, two days before the disastrous Ottoman Offensive, he was shot in the thumb and spent a month out of action. Three weeks after his return, with the battalion engaged in intense trench warfare near Lone Pine, he received a gunshot wound to the back that kept him away from the front for a further two months. He was slightly wounded once more on 9 September, but remained on the peninsula. However, on 19 November at Bolton's Ridge, he sustained serious chest and arm wounds from shrapnel resulting in his evacuation to Egypt and the end of his time at Gallipoli on 23 July 1916, Blumer and the 3rd Battalion were given the objective of Pozières trench on the Western Front, which they captured with few casualties. Many others were buried as severe shelling levelled the trenches. The battalion's losses totalled 104 killed, 375 wounded and 43 missing. Blumer was awarded the Military Medal for keeping up his men's spirits and leading them forward, despite having been wounded and, on one occasion, buried under mud.

Sergeant Colin Blumer was awarded the Military Medal for his courageous leadership at Pozières on 25 July. The citation read (in part): *"Although buried once and wounded he continued at duty and by his confidence and cheery words kept up the spirits of his men during a most intense bombardment of the trenches till ordered to advance, when he led his men forward."* In early October 1916, Blumer and the 3rd joined the front in Ypres. Blumer, in a group specifically trained in trench raids, led a raid on the night of 12 October. As they rushed the German trenches, however, they met with strong resistance and a heavy fusillade of bombs. Blumer sustained a bomb wound to the left leg and eye, and was evacuated on 13 October to the 3rd London General Hospital. He was commended for his actions. The military citation read:

"For great bravery while leading his men in a raiding party on the night of the 12/13th at YPRES while crossing NO MAN'S LAND he was wounded, but entered the enemy's trench and led his party being again wounded. He was the last man of his party to leave the hostile trenches. He set a fine example of determination and courage. 2/Lt. BLUMER received the MILITARY MEDAL for gallantry at POZIERES while a Sergeant."

Blumer completed the studies he had been undertaking when the First World War intervened. In May 1924, he was awarded a Bachelor of Veterinary Science, having also won the William Cooper and Nephews' Prize for Veterinary Parasitological. Three months later he was appointed as a veterinary surgeon in the Stock and Brands Branch of the Department of Agriculture. On 20 December the same year, Blumer married Clarice Aileen Beer in Nambucca Heads. They had no children but when he died in 1960 his funeral was well attended. He became highly praised for his work in veterinary science.

Written by Kristina Petkovich



For Alumni / reunion enquiries please contact Johanna Leglise on phone 9829 9222 or email Johanna.Leglise@det.nsw.edu.au

Richard Purves Retired

One of our longest serving teachers Mr Richard Purves retired at the end of 2014 after 36 years teaching at Hurlstone. Richard started in 1978 as a history teacher. We wish Richard all the best in his retirement.



Richard Purves 1978



Richard Purves 2014

Country Fair 2014

2014 was the 75th annual Country Fair. Despite Mother Nature raining on our parade it was a day to remember by all. There were amazing food stalls as well as rides for the kids, the farm was open for all to see on tractor rides.

There was an amazing farmyard nursery and school tours on top of that there was the alumni stall. Outside Clarke house there was face painting and also there was additional busking in the school hall. It was good to interact with "Old Boys" and "Old Girls" and hear the amazing mischief that they got up to when they were here at Hurlstone. As unfortunate as the weather was it was a day that I will never forget.

Written by Annie Paton Year 8



Celeste Dao helping out at the Alumni Stall

John Edmondson's 100th Birthday 8/10/2014

On Wednesday 8th October a group of students from Hurlstone Agricultural High School which included staff members Mr Currie, Mrs Castle, Mrs Vercoe and Mrs Leglise went to John Edmondson High School for the 100th birthday Celebration of John Edmondson VC.

Thomas Jones and Vic Watts from the John Edmondson Memorial Club also attended. It was a great educational experience and when I was writing my speech which I presented on the day. I learnt many things about my school, JEHS and World War 2. I also learnt what some of our Old Boys did (in the time before WW2) including slacking off during squad. It was interesting to learn more about Hurlstone, especially about the types of things boys would do when they are bored.

We had a great time at JEHS and some of us made new friends.

Written by Anna Dinh Year 8



Julia Pham, Celeste Dao, Alexander Qui, Hannah Ly, Kristina Petkovich, Annie Paton



Anna Dinh

World War 1 Performance Request

Mr Armitage is requesting any written archival material from WW1 involving the Gallipoli Campaign or the French Front Assault (eg Somme Valley) for inclusion in a performance commemorating the 100th anniversary of the beginning of WW1.

Mr Armitage would also like any documentation that illustrates the perspective of the war from the wives and family left behind.

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