Sweetland, Henry St John

ASC 1889

Lieutenant T H. ST. J. SWEETLAND, R.A.A.

Like his brother lieutenants, Mr. Sweetland is a native of N S W, having been born at Newcastle in 1869. He was educated at All Saints' College, Bathurst, afterwards going home for twelve months

To complete his studies. Mr. Sweetland, who joined the Royal Australian Artillery in January, 1896, was for three years attached to the garrison division, in which he served at South Head under Major A. H. P. Savage. He is a smart and popular young officer, and the youngest subaltern in 'A' Battery, to which he transferred at the beginning of the present year.

Evening News Sydney 2/1/1900 P.5

Description

Depicts soldiers running across a landscape. This stylised illustration of a fight between British soldiers (on the right) and Boer commandos is quite misleading. It misrepresents the ranges at which firing occurred - this usually happened over much greater distances. However, it does suggest how infantry spread out across the country and how they moved forward under covering fire. Possibly Koegas area..

The work has very tentatively been ascribed to Lieutenant H. St. J. Sweetland of "A" Battery Royal Australian Artillery.
Description

Koegas area, possibly northern. Most likely depicting British mounted force being fired on by concealed Boers on hillside. The large white smoke puffs from the fired guns are perhaps caused by the Boers using cartridges loaded with black powder. The orderliness of the patrol, combined with the tails on the horses being trimmed to a uniform length strongly suggests the patrol is British.

These two drawings are part of a series of works that were found at Ipswich Railway station, and were subsequently donated to the Memorial. The works were reportedly stored in a drawer in the railway office from at least 1930, until they were donated in 1974.

Readers are alerted to the series of letters written in Egypt concerning Sweetland’s return to Australia, “under a cloud” as per extract below:
CONFIDENTIAL.

Headquarters,

The Force in Egypt.

I forward this case for decision. The facts are, as far as I know them, as follows: -

Major Sweetland, has been I understand, removed from the 1st Field Artillery Brigade on the ground that he would never be able to exercise the necessary control or Command of men in the field.

**Extract from Embarkation Roll:**

<table>
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<th>1st BATTERY.</th>
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<td>Sweetland, Henry St. John</td>
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Note below, extract from daily war history (second paragraph)
Sweetland. Commanded the first of their guns ashore on the day after the landing.

26-4-15

The day of landing. A simultaneous landing made at CAPE HELLES, GABA TEPE and BULBAIR temporarily only by the 28th Div (1st Div & A. & N.Z. Div.) and R.N. Div. respectively. H.T. ATLANTIAN proceeded to CAPE HELLES at 0500 for the purpose of disembarking horse boats and remained there until 1200 when sailed for GABA TEPE. H.T. INDIAN AND CARDIGANSHIRE proceeded direct to GABA TEPE. Landing effected and position established at MMAN HELLES about 2 miles north of GABA TEPE. Landing made by the 3rd Bde. of Infantry, who were launched in destroyers and followed by 2nd and 1st Bdes. Hostile batteries shelled the transports during the afternoon, and they had to stand out from the shore, to safer anchorage. Artillery fire and musketry on shore were intense and combined with the naval bombardment made the noise deafening.

At 0800 one gun and two wagons of the 1st Bty were taken ashore and moved up into action at the top of SHELL GREEN. Major Sweetland and Lieut Irwin and detachment of 1st Bty accompanied the gun. At 1200 one section of 2nd battery was disembarked and towed to the shores, but under instructions per O.D.S. were returned to the ship and reloaded again at 2200. 2nd battery (less one section), Col Christian, Major Lloyd and detail of B & H.Q. were sent ashore but were returned to the ship in a similar manner. 1st Battery remained in action the whole day firing upwards of 600 rounds at ranges of about 400m. The gun was withdrawn at night and reembarked on the ATLANTIAN. Lieut Irwin and six (6) men remained on shore to assist in ammunition carrying.

Note below actual war diary entry 9/5/15, second line Sweetland withdrawn with "nervous Breakdown."
Note above, returned to Anzac 30/8/15 and admitted with “Concussion” 11/10/15.
MAJOR SWEETLAND.

Maj. Harry St. John Sweetland, reported wounded, was born in 1869. He commenced his military career as a 2nd Lt. in the Royal Australian Garrison Artillery in 1896. He was promoted lieutenant the same year and captain in 1907. Six years later he received his majority. Maj. Sweetland was officer commanding the R.A.G.A., Western Australia, from 1907 to 1910, and was company officer, R.A.G.A., N S W, January and February; and company officer, No.3 battery, R.A.F.A. from 1911 till 1914 becoming officer commanding No. 3 battery, in April of last year. He was then made staff officer for Field Artillery in Queensland, and went to the front with the 1st Field Artillery Brigade. Maj. Sweetland served through the South African campaign, and was present at the operations in Cape Colony, Nov. 10, 1900, to May, 1901. Transvaal, May to Oct., 1901 and the Orange River Colony from Jun. 1 to 30. He was awarded the Queen's medal with four clasps.

School Register gives his later history, as having "Commanded Freemantle Port Defence 1918-1919. R.A.G.A. (Garrison Artillery) Thursday Is. Retired,

1924 Deceased.
Headquarters,

The Force in Egypt.

I forward this case for decision. The facts are, as far as I know them, as follows:-

Major Sweetland, has been I understand, removed from the 1st Field Artillery Brigade on the ground that he would never be able to exercise the necessary control or command of men in the field.

He returned to Cairo some time ago, as sick, was admitted to Hospital and duly discharged. The O.C. No 1 Australian Divisional Ammunition Column hearing he was here applied for his services to assist him but on hearing of this General Hobbs, Commanding 1st Australian Divisional Artillery who was also sick in No1 Australian General Hospital informed me in course of an interview of the above adverse report and accordingly I objected to Major Sweetland being employed with the Divisional Ammunition Column. From all I have heard I am of opinion that this Officer should return to Australia and it would be to the best interests of the service if he did so.

James Spens Major-General.
Continental Hotel. 24/3/34
Cairo,
December 20th 1918.

AL.

A.A. & Q.M.C.

Cairo Military District.
Abbassia.

Referring to our interview of this morning. After careful consideration I regret to say that I cannot see my way clear to accept the advice of the G.O.C. to apply to be sent back to Australia on the grounds that I am unemployed. I beg to point out once more, I am a regular Officer, and such a course is impossible. I have been marked fit for duty, and if at a time like this I am unemployed I certainly want to know why. The suggestion that there is nothing for me to do, is not borne out by the facts, as my services have already been applied for by the O.C., D.A.G. 1st Austn Division. The facts of my having been struck off the strength of the 1st Australian Division under a misapprehension could easily have been rectified either by my being reposted or attached for duty. It is quite impossible for me to have my case investigated in Australia as there is no one ther who knows anything about it. It now is clear to me that charges of some sort have been made against me, and I ask as strongly as possible that the persons making these charge be given an opportunity of coming forward, making them openly and proving them. As the matter has now become one of my professional reputation I once more respectfully request that it may be made the subject of an inquiry in Egypt. Where I to apply to be returned to Australia I coul
Headquarters,

The Force in Egypt.

There is not to my knowledge anything against this Officer. He was reported by a Medical Board as suffering from shell concussion which I believe to be the case. He has since been passed by a Medical Board as fit for duty at the Base. There is at the base no duty upon which I wish to employ him and he should therefore be returned to Australia.

(Sgd) A.J. Godley. Lieut-General.
Ismailia, Commanding A. & N.Z. Army Corps.
12/1/16.

General Officer Commanding,

Cairo District.

For information.

Will you please make the necessary arrangements for this Officer to return to Australia.
G.C.,
A.I.F., Headquarters.

I beg to report that Major H. St. J. Sweetland, 1st Bde. A.F.A., aged 45, has been declared fit for duty by Medical Board dated 14-1-16.

Kindly return copy of Board Proceedings.
Lieut-General Commanding,

This Officer has been so long absent from duty that I consider there will be difficulty in finding him suitable employment. In these circumstances I recommend that he return to Australia where his services can be utilised in training reinforcements.

27/1/16. C.C.B. White B.G.G.S.

Approved

Hilly

29/1/16.

Headquarters;
A.I.F. Cairo.

To please note approval of the General Officer commanding to the return of Major Sweetland R.A.F.A. to Australia and for necessary action accordingly.

T. Griffiths Major.
M.S.


S.G. to inform Major Sweetland accordingly. Q.M.G.
31st January.

Headquarters,

A. & N. Z. Army Corps.

With reference to your minute of the 12/1/16, (Correspondence No. C 41) relative to the case of Major H. S. J. Sweetland, may I be informed please whether the General Officer Commanding A. & N.Z. Army Corps still desires this officer to be sent to Australia, in view of the fact that he is now fit for full duty, (vide my minute of the 22/1/16, correspondence No. 205/1/326.).

Colonel,
Commandant,
The Australian Imperial Force Headquarters.

Headquarters, A.I.F.
Cairo.

Please see previous papers returned to you yesterday.

(Sgd) T. Griffiths Major.
M.S.

2.2.16. A. & N. Z. Army Corps.
Major H. St J. Sweetland,
1st Field Artillery Brigade.

You will proceed to Port Said on Friday 11th instants for the purpose of proceeding to Australia by the S.S. Orontes.

2. On arrival in Melbourne please report direct to the A.G. of the C.M.F.

3. The General Officer Commanding, A. & N.E. Army Corps, considers your services could be utilized in training Artillery reinforcements in Australia.

4. Please attend at the office of the Q.M.G., A.I.F. Headquarters, at 10 a.m. on 10th instants for steamer and rail warrants.

Brigadier-General,
Commandant,
The Australian Imperial Force Headquarters.
DIVORCE COURT.

Restitution of Conjugal Rights. Remarkable Appeal.

A decree for the restitution of conjugal rights was made by Mr. Justice Gordon in the Divorce Court to-day, ordering Major Henry St. John Sweetland to return to the petitioner, his wife. A remarkable letter written by Sweetland to his wife stating amongst other things: 'I am hopelessly irrevocably in love with another girl and cannot possibly give her up. It is impossible for me to go back to our married life I can only, therefore, ask you to try and get a divorce. As you have found it easy to remain away from me for twelve months, you should have no difficulty in leaving me altogether.'

Daily Observer, Tamworth 1/12/17 P.2

1924 Deceased.