Clunies-Ross, Henry Egerton

ASC 1904

As Henry last served in the “British” forces, he is not listed at the AWM under one of his former Australian units. The names of such people on the Commemorative Roll.

Rank: Captain

Unit: King's African Rifles

Service: British Army

Date of death: 27 September 1918

Place of death: London

Cause of death: Died of malaria and pneumonic influenza.

Notes: Born at Bathurst, 05/09/1891. Late Captain, 19th Bn., and 3rd Div. Cyclists Battalion A.I.F

Date of embarkation: 18 May 1916. Sydney: HMAT Demosthenes

Cemetery or memorial details: Eastbourne (St Mary Churchyard,) Sussex
Enlisted 5 May 1915. 2Lt 19th Bn; Lt 8 October 1915. Returned to Australia from Egypt 17 September 1915, re-embarked 18 May 1916. 3rd Div. Cyclist Coy. Capt. 1 May 1916; attached to 39th Bn 10 June 1917; transferred to King's African Rifles 24 September 1917. Died in London of malaria and pneumonic influenza.

Brother Robert (21) attended Newington. 17th Bn K.I.A. 3/10/18
Brother Alan attended A.S.C. 1901-1904. Lt. WWI returned. (See, School Register.)

Following three entries are from the book on the 19th. Two ASC men are listed:

RAISING THE 19TH BATTALION

A Company:
Major Alexander Windeyer Ralston
Captain Frederick Ross
Lieutenant Henry Clunies-Ross

D Company:
Captain John Edgley

Training for war did not cease during the long sea voyage. A senior officer was appointed 'OC Troops' for each vessel (but not necessarily the most senior officer on board) responsible for administration, good order and discipline during the voyage. Each transport ship had a training regime which began with Reveille at

From embarkation list "A" Company 19th Battalion

Clunies-Ross, Henry Egerton

23 Journalist

S. "Thalia," 88 Beach-road, Darling Point, Sydney; Mrs. Hannah Elizabeth Clunies-Ross, "Thalia," 88 Beach-road, Darling Point, Sydney

Details from his brother's card:

Particulars Required for the Roll of Honour of Australia in the Memorial War Museum:

1. Name (in full) of Fallen Soldier: Robert Clunies-Ross
2. Unit and Number (if known): 7698, 17th Bn
S. Was he connected with any other Member of the A.I.F. who died or who distinguished himself. (Please state Relationship)


Name: Allan Elphinstone Clunies-Ross

Relationship to Soldier: Brother

Address: 13 Bond St., Sydney

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### Clunies-Ross, Henry Egerton

**War Service Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Names</th>
<th>Lieut.</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Embarked at Sydney on H.M.A.T. A40 "Ceramic" 25/6/15

- **Da. No. 1. 14. 3.**
- **Trans. to M.G. Tng. Dept.**
- **29/7/16 Taken on strength of Aust. Cyclist Tng. Bn. from No 1 Command Depot Perham Downs.**
- **26/4/17 Marched into Hardening & Drafting Depot Perham Downs**
- **26/7/18 Embarked at Cape Town.**

"Caught the cycling craze" AIF Cyclist units 1916-1919.

By Graham Wilson

“The officer appointed to command the 3rd Aust. Div. Cyclist Coy. Was Captain Henry Egerton Clunies-Ross, a distant relative of the Clunies-Ross family of the Cocos-Keeling Islands?”

The AIF Cyclists constituted one of the smallest and at the same time least known sections of the AIF. Approximately 1,600 officers and men served with the cyclist units between March 1916 and April 1919. Eleven cyclists were killed in action, or died of wounds as a result of an accident whilst on war service. A further 17 men died of disease.

Internet comment by “Cycling Chaplain Eddie Bakla”
The first two cyclist bodies raised in mid-March 1916 were designated the 1st and 2nd Division Cyclist Companies, with the 4th and 5th Division Cyclist Companies being formed in Egypt during late-April. A similar cyclist unit commanded by the just promoted Captain Henry Clunies-Ross was included on the establishment of the newly raised 3rd Division then training in Australia before sailing from Sydney on 13 May, bound for England and further training. By July, the 3rd Division was assembling in camps on the Salisbury Plain, and on 14 July 1916, John Monash was promoted to major-general, and given command of the new division, due to commence its training prior to moving to France later in the year (the Time Line Chart in Appendix 1 will help to explain the structure of the Cyclist Corps during 1916-18).

Following two pieces are for interest only, the cyclists are from another unit and are from the “Vignacourt Collection.”

Two members of the 1 ANZAC Corps Cyclist Battalion, July 1916

In early 1916 the AIF called for volunteers to transfer to the newly formed cyclist battalion. Carl James Dettmann (right) was one of many light horsemen who gave up their horses for bicycles. In July 1916 Dettmann’s battalion, then billeted at Vignacourt, was engaged in reconnaissance and undertook various training exercises, including practising tactics for fighting in woods and taking cover. Cyclist battalions were also often used to manage traffic and support signals units.

silver gelatin photograph, printed 2012

courtesy Kerry Stokes Collection,
The Louis and Antoinette Thuiller Collection
C. BERRY,
Cycle & Motor Manufacturer.

Victoria Motor Garage,
Mablethorpe, Linco.
August 24th, 1917.

Paymaster,
York.

Dear Sir,

On October 19th, 1916, an Officer Captain, hired one of my Motor Cars to collect government property, signal flags etc. from different camps at Belton and Harrowby and Grantham. He asked me to send in my account and it would be paid from Headquarters. I have not been able to get any reply. He gave the name of Captain Clunies Ross and was stationed at "M" Lines, Belton Park. The amount I require is 36/- Can you assist me in any way.

Yours faithfully,
(sgd) C. Berry.

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From:- Command Paymaster,
North Command.

To:- Mr. C. Berry.

York, 30.8.17.

Will you please furnish the name of the Officer concerned and the Unit in which he is serving.

(sgd) J. Leonard,
for Command Paymaster,
Northern Command.

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From:- C. Berry.

To:- Command Paymaster, York.
Mablethorpe, Aug. 31st, 1917

Dear Sir,

The name given was Captain Clunies Ross. He was stationed at Belton Park Camp at "M" Lines. I do not know the Unit. This was on 19th October, 1916.

Yours faithfully,
(sgd) C. Berry.

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From:- Command Paymaster, Northern Command, York.

To:- Headquarters, Belton Park.

York, 4.9.17.

With reference to the attached correspondence, will you kindly ascertain to what Unit this Officer belongs and on what authority the motor car was hired. Also if any Army Form Q.1791 has been rendered on account of these invoices

The Under Secretary of State.
Colonial Office.
London S.W.1.

DOWNING STREET
26th Sept., 1918
With reference to your letter of the 28th of May, No. 1410/2/21482/9F T. Discharge, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Long to inform you that Captain H. E. Clunies-Ross, King's African Rifles, was recently invalided to this country from East Africa. Mr. Long has learnt with regret that he died at the Queen Alexandra Military Hospital Millbank on the 27th of September.

2. The arrangements for the funeral of Captain Clunies-Ross, which is to take place on the lst of October, are being made by the Hospital authorities in consultation with the brother of the deceased officer, Private A. Clunies-Ross, Australian Imperial Force, C/o Mrs. Campbell, 141 Knightsbridge, London W.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
W. E. Ellis.
The Commandant, pp. Under Sec. of State.
Australian Imperial Force.

DEATH OF CAPTAIN H. E. ROSS.

Captain H. E. Clunies-Ross, who, prior to enlisting in 1914, was a member of the literary staff of the "Sydney Morning Herald," has died at the Queen Alexandra Hospital in London from malaria, contracted while on active service in German East Africa. He was 27 years of age, and was the second son of the late Mr. W. J. Clunies-Ross, lecturer in chemistry and metallurgy at the Sydney Technical College, and Mrs. Clunies-Ross, of The Gunyah, Alt Street, Ashfield. Two of his brothers, Sergeant A. Clunies-Ross and Private R. Clunies-Ross, are serving in France, and his only other brother is a student of Veterinary Science at the University of Sydney. His uncle, Major Martin Donohue, the well-known war correspondent, is serving with the Intelligence Corps in Mesopotamia. On enlisting in 1914, Captain Ross went to Egypt with the 19th Battalion, and was promoted to 1st Lieutenant, but he was invalided home in October, 1915, with enteritis. On his recovery in Australia, he was promoted to the rank of Captain, and placed in command of the 1st Cyclists' Company, with which, in May, 1916, he went to France. There he was engaged at Messines Ridge and elsewhere. Last year he was transferred from the AIF to the King's African Rifles, and sailed for Africa in September of that year. He contracted malarial in German East Africa after serving there for several months. For a time he was in hospital at Lindt, whence he was transferred to Nairobi, and then he was removed to the Queen Alexandra Hospital in London, where he died on September 27. Captain Ross was a grand-nephew of the late Mr. Clunies-Ross, owner of Cocos Island.

Private Robert Clunies-Ross, son of the late Mr. W. J. Clunies-Ross, lecturer in chemistry and metallurgy at the Sydney Technical College, and Mrs. Clunies-Ross, of The Gunyah, Alt Street, Ashfield, and nephew of Major Martin Donohue, the well-known war correspondent, was killed in action in France on October 3. He was a brother of the late Captain H. E. Clunies-Ross, of the literary staff of the "Sydney Morning Herald,"
who died of malaria contracted while on active service, in German East Africa. Prior to enlisting the late Private R. Clunies-Ross was engaged in the office of an accountant. Another brother, Allen Clunies-Ross, was gassed in France, and is now in London.

**Note Courtesy Archivist Newington College:**

Ian's time at Newington does not appear to have been particularly memorable for him. He in turn was not by any means an outstanding pupil, and it was a source of surprise to his headmaster when he obtained a second-class honour in English at the Leaving examination. In 1914, while he was at Newington, his father died of cancer, leaving the family in much reduced circumstances, and not long afterwards his three older brothers left for the war: Egerton, a keen part-time soldier, with a commission, to serve in various fields including East Africa; and Allen and later Rob as privates to France. Ian reached the age of eighteen in the second-last year of the war, but it seems that his mother exerted her legal right to prevent his enlisting while he was under the age of twenty-one.

**Australian Dictionary of Biography**

*Clunies Ross, Sir William Ian (1899–1959)*

C. B. Schedvin

Sir William Ian Clunies Ross (1899-1959), veterinary scientist and administrator, was born on 22 February 1899 at Bathurst, New South Wales, fourth and youngest son of William John Clunies Ross, teacher, and his wife Hannah Elizabeth, née Tilley. William's father Robert was a sea captain from Scotland and a brother of John Clunies Ross who settled on the Cocos-Keeling Islands in 1827 and 'founded a tiny Malay kingdom'. Hannah's father, an evangelist, was born of farming stock in England; Hannah's mother came from the distressed Irish Protestant gentry and shared her husband's evangelism. Born in Australia, Hannah was a schoolteacher before her marriage. Her brother was W. H. Tilly.

In 1903 the family moved to Summer Hill, Sydney, and four years later to the outer suburb of Ashfield where Ian developed a keen interest in the plentiful local fauna. With his brother Rob, he devised an elaborate game based on the sale, at fanciful prices, of captured animals to zoos around the world. Educated at Newington College, Ian was an average student, and it was a surprise when he gained second-class honours in English in passing the Leaving certificate. His father's death in 1914 left the family in reduced circumstances. Rob and the elder brothers, Allan and Egerton, joined the Australian Imperial Force. In October 1918 news arrived that Egerton had died from pneumonic influenza and that Rob had been killed in action. It appears that Hannah exercised her legal right to prevent Ian from enlisting.
Copy to:-
Headqrs, A.I.F. Care H.Q, Fifth Army, R.E.F. (Your 187/1/992).

Captain H.K. CLUNIES-ROSS, Late A.I.F.

Advice has been received from the Colonial Office that the abovenameed Officer (who resigned his appointment in the A.I.F. in this country on 24th September 1917 to enable him to take up an appointment in the King's African Rifles) was recently invalided to England from East Africa and has since died at the Queen Alexander Military Hospital, Milbank on 27th September 1918.

[Signature]

 Brig. General.
 COMMANDANT.
UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.
UNIE VAN ZUID-AFRIKA.

OFFICE OF THE STAFF OFFICER FOR WAR RECORDS,
KANTOOR VAN DE STAFOFFICIER VOOR OORLOGSREGISTERS,
ARTILLERY BARRACKS.
PRETORIA.

20th October 1920.

The Officer i/o Base Records.
Australian Imperial Force.
Victoria Barracks.
Melbourne.
Australia.

In reply to your V.E.B. of 21st September 1920.
re British War and Victory Medals for Capt. H.E. Clunies Ross late "K.A.R."

Your minute under reference has been forwarded to The Officer i/o Records K.A. Rifles for the necessary action.

This being an Imperial unit the administration of decorations and Medals for members of the K.A.R. does not fall within the province of this Department.

Please inform this Officer accordingly.

[Signature]
Lieut. Colonel.

STAFF OFFICER = WAR RECORDS.
The Officer-in-Charge,
Base Records,
Victoria Barracks,
Melbourne.

Dear Sir,

As attorney for my mother, Mrs. H.E. Clunies Ross, I wish to make enquiry as to the whereabouts of the medals due to her in respect of the late Capt. H. E. Clunies Ross. This officer left Australia early in 1915 with the original 19th Battalion, was invalided from Egypt and left again about July in that year in command of the 3rd Cycle Company. After holding various positions with the Machine Gunners and the Cycle Corps, he was temporarily with the 39th Battalion during 1917 and transferred to the King's Own Rifles about September 1917. He went to East Africa and returned, dying in London on the 27th September 1918 of pneumonia supervening upon malaria.

I may mention that a memorial plaque reached me direct from the War Office, but no word has been received of the 1914/15 Star or the General Service and Victory Medals.

I find that in some records he has appeared under the letter "C" as Clunies-Ross, and others under "H".

Yours faithfully,

A. Clunies Ross
The Commonwealth War Graves Photographic Project, have been notified of their incorrect spelling of “Clunies” (now corrected.)