



22 January 1916 - Volunteers from the Watsonville and Herberton area
Image: Cairns Historical Society

"A shell has just burst in front of me; ten feet below two infantry chaps are cooking their breakfast. They were splattered with smoke and earth but refuse to leave their cooking. As I write, another shell has burst beneath them, but still the obstinate goats won't budge. Another has come and this time they grabbed their pots and ran. We all laughed. By Caesar!"

Quote from *The Desert Column* by Ion 'Jack' Llewellyn Idriess



Victory march in Wolfram 1918
Image: Mareeba Historical Society

1918

MAREEBA SHIRE Anzac Trail

*Commemorating the
First World War*



Ion 'Jack' Idriess
Image: *The Queenslander Pictorial*
19 December 1914

Ion Llewellyn Idriess

(1889-1979) also known as 'Jack' Idriess, was born in Sydney but spent much of his young adult life in North Queensland and Mount Molloy working as a miner searching for gold, tin and sandalwood.

When war was declared, Idriess was working 200 miles north of Cooktown—he walked to Cooktown and caught a boat to Cairns then Townsville to enlist. He was 27 when he enlisted and joined the 5th Light Horse.

He was wounded twice and returned home in March 1918. His war diaries

provided the basis for his book *The Desert Column*.

Idriess went on to become one of Australia's most prolific writers—writing 47 books.

Idriess' name appears on the original Mount Molloy honour board, now located at the Mareeba Heritage Centre. The honour board was recovered from the Mitchell River after the 1920 cyclone destroyed the town hall where it was displayed.

More information on our local Anzacs can be found at
www.msc.qld.gov.au/mapping-our-anzac-history

Mapping our Anzac History is a collaborative community project led by the Mareeba Shire with the Mareeba Historical Society, Mareeba Heritage Centre, and Loudoun House Museum.

Mareeba Shire Council gratefully acknowledges the assistance provided by individuals and community groups in the development of this heritage trail.

If you've enjoyed this trail, continue by exploring the Tablelands Anzac Trail.



Mareeba
SHIRE COUNCIL

This project is proudly supported by the Queensland Government.



Anzac
Trails
of the Tablelands



Lest we forget

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For The Fallen

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.

Laurence Binyon

Explore the Anzac Trail

The Mareeba Shire incorporates a range of war memorabilia from honour boards, memorials, cenotaphs, museum displays, buildings, and cemeteries and creates a fascinating tourism heritage trail that will allow visitors, and locals, to journey back in time and remember those who served and made sacrifices for our country.



Image: ABC.net.au

Volunteers travelled great distances to enlist—by horse and train, and some even walked to the nearest centre to catch the train to Cairns, which was the closest enlistment centre. Some even found their way to Townsville to enlist! For these volunteers, joining the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) gave them an opportunity to travel abroad and the promise of adventure—or so they thought—however, reality proved very different. Sadly over 100 of the Mareeba Shire soldiers never came home. Some died in action or from wounds they sustained, and some from illness such as influenza, tuberculosis, and pneumonia.

About 1,000 men from North Queensland, including many from the Rifle Clubs of Mareeba, Kuranda, Chillagoe, Irvinebank, Stannary Hills, Watsonville and other Tableland clubs, were among the first to depart our shores at Cairns on 14 August 1914 on board *SS Kanowna*. They headed to Thursday Island to strengthen the existing defence force, and to take part in the capture of German New Guinea. However they returned to Townsville after the ship's crew—who had not signed up for a war zone—refused to stoke the ship's boiler. Many of the men did re-enlist and served overseas. The ship later became a troop carrier and hospital ship before finally returning to Australia in 1919.

For those who were sent to Turkey, history was made, when the joint forces of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps landed on the shores of Gallipoli Peninsula on 25 April 1915. The term 'Anzac' was coined and has long conjured up feelings of pride for both Australians and New Zealanders, and is synonymous with courage, mateship, and heroism. Over 7,800 Australian soldiers lost their lives

Answering the call

When Britain declared war on Germany in August 1914, Australia was still a young nation, but volunteers in the Woothakata Shire (later Mareeba Shire) enthusiastically answered the call to enlist. Over 460 volunteers from this district formed part of the 57,700 Queensland service men and women who enlisted during the First World War. Mareeba's population at the time was 1,200. Across the Atherton Tablelands, a total of around 1,000 men and women volunteered to serve Australia.



Kuranda memorial
Image: Nettie Dunne

Chillagoe cenotaph
Image: Sue Colman



Stannary Hills Tramway Station c. 1914-1918
Image: Cairns Historical Society



Mareeba cenotaph
Image: Nettie Dunne



Woothakata honour board, Mareeba Heritage Centre
Image: Nettie Dunne

during the Gallipoli campaign. Eleven of our local soldiers died in Gallipoli—one of the bloodiest battles of the First World War. On the first anniversary of the landing of Gallipoli the tradition of Anzac Day was born.

At home, life continued. Dances were still held in town halls and School of Arts buildings, but they all too frequently involved the farewell of more volunteers who were off to battlefields. Economic hardship was experienced by families, with all available resources going towards the war effort. That, coupled with a drought in Queensland in 1915, resulted in shortages in grains, food, and other goods, which drove up prices. Women contributed more to the workforce—engaging in jobs that were previously in the male domain. Overall, the Australian economy was impacted negatively, and unemployment was high.

After the war

All Australians rejoiced at the announcement that the war was over in 1918. There were victory marches all over the country including in the Mareeba district. Whilst there was great jubilation that the Great War was over, it was tainted with the sadness at the countless casualties. There was a great toll on the physical and psychological well being of all involved. Australia had changed forever.

Upon the return home of the servicemen, there was a feeling of hope and renewal, but some found the readjustment to civilian life exceptionally hard. Many returned soldiers found that their 'promised' jobs were no longer there. Others suffered depression, ill-health, permanent incapacities, and alcoholism. If that wasn't bad enough, the hardships continued into the 1920s and 1930s with the Great Depression resulting in severe unemployment and poverty.

*I have a shrapnel bullet in right thigh,
but am mending rapidly; just a
fortnight yesterday since I got it. Can hop
about on crutches comfortably now, and
can even limp a little without them. Shall
be able to dispense with them altogether
soon. By jove, my usual bad luck stuck
to me, I caught one of the first shells to
burst over us....*

Trooper Frederick William Dodd from Kuranda.
Soldiers' Postbag, Cairns Post 11 July 1917

Mareeba Shire Anzac Trail



Chillagoe

Chillagoe Cenotaph and Gun - 10-12 Queen St
Chillagoe Hub Visitor Information Centre - 23 Queen St

Dimbulah

Memorial and Hall - Burke Development Rd
Dimbulah Railway Museum - Raleigh St

Irvinebank

Loudoun House Museum - 16 O'Callaghan St
School of Arts (Honour board) - 2 Jessie St
Henry Dalziel Oval - Herberton-Petford Rd
Irvinebank Cemetery - Cemetery Rd
Rifle Range - off Rubina Tce

Kuranda

Honour Boards - Kuranda Railway Station, Coondoo St
Kuranda Hotel - cnr Arara and Coondoo Sts
Memorial - Centenary Park, Rob Veivers Dr
Kuranda Visitor Information Centre - Centenary Park, Coondoo St

Mareeba

Mareeba Cenotaph - Byrnes St
Anzac Park - Byrnes St
Pioneer Cemetery - Costin St
Mareeba Heritage Centre and Visitor Information Centre - 345 Byrnes St
Mareeba Historical Society - Centenary Park, Mammino St
Mareeba RSL - 88 Byrnes St
The Beck Museum - Syd Beck Rd (weekends only)
Anglican Church - 53 Constance St

Uniting Church - 189-193 Walsh St
Mareeba Mosque - 108 Walsh St
Old Presbyterian/United Church - 133-137 Walsh St (by appointment only)
SECOND WORLD WAR
Mareeba Aerodrome - Vicary Rd
Mareeba Scout Hall - Kilpatrick St
Brewery Hole - Kilpatrick St

Mount Molloy

Memorial Cenotaph and Wall - Main St
Memorial Hall - Main St
Mount Molloy Cemetery - Bakers Rd

Watsonville

Memorial Tree and Honour Board - Ethel St

Chillagoe

A work of community dedication will greet you at the **Chillagoe cenotaph**. This impressive memorial features a sculpture of soldier Ferdinand Ahlers, from Maytown. It is believed that the German trench mortar at the base of the cenotaph was sent to Chillagoe around 1922 as a war trophy. It is similar to those at Irvinebank and Herberton, and is one of about sixteen Australia wide. The cenotaph includes all names from the two world wars, Korea, and Vietnam, as well as the names of all the locals who were part of the Second World War Militia ('civilian army').

Dimbulah

Originally known as Dimbulah Junction, the town's stunning white marble war memorial recognises and honours the town's Second World War volunteers. Take time to also visit the **Dimbulah Railway Museum** to discover more of the region's history.

Irvinebank

Irvinebank is not only steeped in mining history, but has a rich First World War heritage, being the birthplace of North Queensland's sole Victoria Cross recipient, Henry Dalziel. The town also had over 100 First World War volunteers. Visit the **School of Arts** building to admire the beautiful honour board, then onto the **Loudoun House Museum** to absorb some of this town's amazing history and memorabilia. See the German 7.58 cm Leichte minenwerfer (trench mortar) similar to those at Chillagoe and Herberton. The now abandoned rifle range, is another stop on your tour where the district's young men honed their shooting skills.

Kuranda

Stroll through the picturesque tropical gardens at the **Kuranda Railway**, once a busy stop on the journey to Cairns where war volunteers enlisted. The railway station is home to two honour boards near the ticket windows. Stroll up the road to the **Kuranda Hotel**, which was used during the Second World War as a medical centre and hospital by Army Field Ambulance Units. Continue on to the town's **Centenary Park** and the war memorial opposite the **Kuranda Visitor Information Centre**.

Mareeba

The **Mareeba cenotaph** and **Anzac Park** are the remembrance centrepieces of the town. The cenotaph was built through the fundraising work of the Soldier's Memorial Committee, and was unveiled on Anzac Day in 1923.

The **Mareeba Historical Society** is a must for anyone seeking local family links, information, photos, and war memorabilia. A wonderful historical display awaits visitors to the **Mareeba Heritage Centre and Visitor Information Centre** that showcases war photographs, the old Woothakata Shire honour board, the original Mount Molloy board, and the Shire's complete nominal roll. Many Mareeba churches have their own memorials honouring the fallen. The **Beck Museum** is home to a multitude of military history, machinery, and memorabilia and is a must see for war history enthusiasts.

Mount Molloy

Once a busy mining town, Mount Molloy is now a place to rest and enjoy the tranquillity. The newly completed war memorial with its **cenotaph** and **memorial wings** is located beside the **Memorial Hall**—a building full of character that houses some local war memorabilia.

Watsonville

Watsonville, another former mining town boasts an **Anzac memorial mango tree** which was planted in 1916. It is possibly the oldest memorial tree in the Mareeba Shire. Take a break in the shade and read the names of the First World War volunteers on the honour board.

Arthur Lewis Langborne MC

(1893-unknown) was an Englishman from the Isle of Wight, who came to Irvinebank as a prospector. He was one of the many North Queenslanders who sailed on the *SS Kanowna* as part of the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN & MEF). He subsequently enlisted in the AIF (Australian Imperial Force) with the 15th Infantry Battalion in September 1914, and was later promoted to Captain in the 4th Machine Gun Battalion.

Langborne was awarded the Military Cross (MC) in 1918 "For conspicuous gallantry and leadership during the attack on the Hindenburg Line on 18th September 1918 near Le Verguier north-west of St Quentin". Before returning to Australia, Langborne married Lottie Jolliffe from his hometown of Shanklin, Isle of Wight, in February 1919. His brother, Roy Langborne, of Irvinebank, received a cable announcing his imminent return to Australia (reported in the Northern Herald 20 February 1919). He disembarked in Melbourne 15 December that year and returned to Irvinebank in 1920.



23 July 1917 - La Carone, France. Officers of the 4th Australian Machine Gun Company enjoying a lunch break during a ten mile route march from their rest camp at Vieux Berquin to La Motte via Foret de Nieppe. The soldiers swam at a loch in the nearby Canal de Nieppe before lunch.

Back (l-r): Lt Alexander Pettit, Captain Arthur Lewis Langborne, Lt John H. Kennare, 2nd Lt Frederick Hicks. Front: Lt Hopkins and Lt Wright. Image: Australian War Memorial