

## ANZAC DAY, LONE PINE AND PAST GRAMMARIANS

One year from the centenary of the landing at Anzac Cove on 25 April, 1915 much is being written about the importance of the landing and its influence on Australian culture and history. Opinions are divided on the issue but one thing that is certain is that many young Australians gave their lives for what was, in the long run, a futile military exercise. Six young men associated with the Grammar School were to die on the Gallipoli Peninsula and it is important that their sacrifice, as with others, be remembered.

**D.N.MacGregor** [25 April], **J.F.Walsh** [28 April] and **H.D.Foot** [1 May] were all killed within six days of the conflict breaking out. **A.M.Foot**, brother of H.D.Foot was killed on 22 November. This From the Archives, however would like to concentrate on two Past Grammarians in **J.I.Smith** [8 August, 1915] and **H.W.Tillidge** [7 August, 1915] who were killed during the battle now known as the Battle of Lone Pine. The battle was fought from 6-10 August on a heavily fortified plateau of the Gallipoli Peninsula, upon which stood a solitary lone pine. It was from this pine tree that the legend of the Battle of Lone Pine is derived.

There are various stories of the origin in Australia of the lone pine but it seems certain that Private Thomas McDowell and Lance-Corporal Benjamin Smith were the two soldiers who brought back to Australia a pine cone from where the pine tree had stood before the battle. McDowell who suffered from tuberculosis and renal colic was sent back to Australia in 1916 bringing back with him one pine cone. His home was in Warrnambool and on arriving home he gave the pine to a Mrs Emma Gray. From the seeds of the pine Mrs Gray grew four pine trees: one planted in Warrnambool, one in Burwood [Melbourne], one at the Sister's Memorial Hall in Grasmere and the fourth at Melbourne's Shrine of Memorial. Benjamin Smith, sent his pine home to his mother who cultivated two trees from the seedlings. One of the trees is to be found in Inverell and the other at the Australia War Memorial in Canberra.

Smith, Tillidge, H.D. Foot and Walsh were all members of the Australian Imperial Force, 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion and their names are honoured on the Lone Pine Memorial at Gallipoli. The loss of life among the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion was horrendous. Four hundred and thirty-nine men were killed in action, one hundred and eleven died from wounds received, seven died from illness, eleven died while prisoners of war and five hundred and twenty were wounded. There are no known grave sites for the four soldiers named above.

Henry Tillidge was born on 1 January, 1891 and enrolled at Grammar in 1905. He came to the School as the Cleveland Masonic Lodge Scholar for 1905, a scholarship he had for two years. On leaving school he moved to Rockhampton where he worked as a shearer. He enlisted on 29 January, 1915 and became a member of the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment. He rose to the rank of Lance Corporal before he was killed in action on 7 August, 1915.

John Inglis Smith was born on 16 May, 1895 and enrolled at Grammar in 1909. He spent one year at the School before being educated at Scots College in Melbourne. On completing school he returned to Townsville where he worked as a draper. He enlisted on 15 March, 1915 and became a member of the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment. He rose to the rank of Corporal before he was killed in action on 8 August 1915.

Both Smith and Tillidge are commemorated on Panel 44 at the Lone Pine Memorial site. It is somewhat ironic that two young men who studied at Grammar could have their names on the same memorial and separated by one column. H.D.Foot, who was killed earlier, is also on the same panel and his name is just eleven names above that of Tillidge.

The intensity of the fighting at Lone Pine and the confusion that must have occurred during and after the battle is best reflected in attached articles from the military records of Smith and Tillidge. Note the telegram sent to the Tillidge family on 14 September stating that he had been wounded but reported as not serious. The Tillidge family were not to know until December 1915 that their son had been killed. Smith's military record has a letter from his father written on 18 November to the Base Records Office in Melbourne which, in part, reads: *"We received information from the Defence Department by wire on September 10th that our son Corporal John J Smith was killed in action at the Dardenelles on 8 August and we are much grieved that after waiting so long a time we have not got any further particulars. From one of his comrades we know that the body was found and received burial so there might be an official report somewhere, and we would also like to recover his personal effects."*

Townsville Grammar can be justifiably proud of all the past students who enlisted in World War I. One hundred and fifty-eight enlisted and twenty-two were killed in action, one in seven. During the war seven Past Grammarians won the MC, seven won the MM [one with a bar], three won the DSO, one the DFC and one the AFC. Five were MID and two received military OBE and MBE awards.

**Archival Note:** A Lone Pine tree can be found in the School grounds, the only one in North Queensland. A little worse for wear from Cyclone Yasi damage, it stands as a wonderful memorial for those six students killed at Gallipoli.

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