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THE NEWSLETTER

BERKSHIRE MILITARY MUSEUM

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THE STORY: REGINALD CLARKE WRIGHT

PRIVATE REGINALD CLARKE WRIGHT WAS A 36 YEAR OLD HORSE DRIVER FROM SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA, WHO DIED OF WOUNDS HE RECEIVED AT GALLIPOLI. REGINALD WAS BORN IN 1878 IN AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND TO HENRY CHARLES WRIGHT AND HIS WIFE MARY. PRIOR TO THE FIRST WORLD WAR REGINALD SERVED FOR WITH THE 4TH NEW ZEALAND ROUGH RIDERS IN SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE BOER WAR. AFTERWARDS, HE SERVED WITH THE AUCKLAND GARRISON ARTILLERY AND THE ROYAL WELLINGTON GUARDS.

WRIGHT ENLISTED IN THE AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE ON 19 AUGUST, 1914 IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA. HE LISTED HIMSELF AS SINGLE AND HIS NEXT OF KIN AS HIS FATHER HENRY WRIGHT WHO STILL LIVED IN NEW ZEALAND. WHEN REGINALD ENLISTED, HE WAS 39 YEARS 1 MONTH, 5 FEET 9 INCHES TALL, WEIGHED 14 STONE (196 lb), AND HAD BROWN HAIR AND BLUE EYES. HE ALSO HAD A TATTOO ON EACH FOREARM; A SAILOR'S FAREWELL ON HIS RIGHT, AND A MAORI TATTOO ON HIS LEFT. AFTER COMPLETING HIS BASIC TRAINING WRIGHT WAS ASSIGNED TO B COMPANY, 3RD BATTALION, 1ST INFANTRY BRIGADE, AND EMBARKED FROM SYDNEY ON 20 OCTOBER, 1914 ABOARD THE *HMAT EURIPIDES*.

THE AUSTRALIAN CAMPAIGN IN THE DARDANELLES BEGAN ON 25 APRIL, 1915 AND WAS PART OF A WIDER MISSION TO TAKE THE OTTOMAN CAPITAL OF CONSTANTINOPLE BY SEA AND GAIN ACCESS TO THE BLACK SEA AND RUSSIA. THE CAMPAIGN ENDED IN FAILURE AFTER MONTHS OF FIGHTING WITH FEW GAINS AND HEAVY CASUALTIES. DURING THE CAMPAIGN, WRIGHT RECEIVED A GUNSHOT WOUND TO THE FOOT ON 7 MAY, 1915. ON 14 MAY, HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO A FIELD HOSPITAL WHERE HE RECOVERED AND WAS ONCE AGAIN TRANSFERRED TO THE FRONT. WRIGHT WAS WOUNDED AGAIN ON 14 AUGUST BY SHRAPNEL WHICH HIT BOTH HIS FACE AND SIDE. HE WAS REPORTED AS SERIOUSLY INJURED AT THE 2ND AUSTRALIAN GENERAL HOSPITAL AT GEZIRAH PALACE, CAIRO. SADLY, HE DIED FROM HIS WOUNDS ON 21 AUGUST, 1915. HE IS BURIED IN THE CAIRO WAR MEMORIAL CEMETERY IN EGYPT.



AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS ABOARD A LANDING CRAFT AT GALLIPOLI. (c. 1915)



A FRENCH POSTCARD DEPICTING GEZIRAH PALACE. (c. LATE 1800S)

KEY DATES: DEC. - FEB.

PRE-WWI

FEBRUARY 8TH, 1904: THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR BEGINS WHEN THE JAPANESE ATTACK THE RUSSIAN FLEET AT PORT ARTHUR

WWI

DECEMBER 25TH, 1914: THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE BEGINS ON THE WESTERN FRONT

JANUARY 8TH, 1918: US PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON OUTLINES HIS 14-POINT PLAN FOR PEACE

WWII

DECEMBER 7TH, 1941: JAPAN BOMBS PEARL HARBOUR, KILLING 2,403 PEOPLE AND BEGINNING U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN WWII

FEBRUARY 19TH-25TH, 1943: US FORCES ARE DEFEATED AT THE BATTLE OF KASSERINE PASS

JANUARY 22ND, 1944: ALLIED FORCES BEGIN THE BATTLE OF ANZIO IN ITALY

DECEMBER 16TH, 1944: GERMAN FORCES LAUNCH A MASSIVE ATTACK ON ALLIED LINES IN THE ARDENNES FOREST, BEGINNING THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

FEBRUARY 9TH, 1945: *HMS VENTURER* SINKS *U-864* IN THE ONLY KNOWN BATTLE WHERE ONE SUBMERGED SUBMARINE SANK ANOTHER

FEBRUARY 19TH, 1945: US MARINES LAND ON IWO JIMA

VIETNAM WAR

JANUARY 21ST, 1968: NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES LAUNCH THE TET OFFENSIVE

JANUARY 27TH, 1973: THE PARIS PEACE ACCORDS ARE SIGNED, ENDING US INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM

POST VIETNAM WAR

DECEMBER 20TH, 1989-JANUARY 31ST, 1990: US FORCES INVADE PANAMA TO OUST DICTATOR MANUEL NORIEGA

JANUARY 17TH, 1991: OPERATION DESERT STORM BEGINS

DECEMBER 13TH, 2003: SADDAM HUSSEIN IS CAPTURED BY MEMBERS OF THE US 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION AND TASK FORCE 121



BRITISH AND GERMAN FORCES PAUSE FOR A PHOTO DURING THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE.
(UNKNOWN, 25 DECEMBER, 1914)



US BATTLESHIPS BURN AFTER THE JAPANESE SURPRISE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR.
(US NAVY, 7 DECEMBER, 1941)



AMERICAN SOLDIERS WAIT IN A SNOW-FILLED TRENCH DURING THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE.
(JOHN FLOREA, c.JANUARY, 1945)



US SOLDIERS RUN FOR COVER AFTER LANDING AT
A COMMAND POST LOYAL TO GENERAL NORIEGA
(GETTY IMAGES, DECEMBER 23, 1989)

NEW ITEM

ONE OF THE LATEST ACQUISITIONS OF THE BERKSHIRE MILITARY MUSEUM IS A WWII 4-PANEL MEDIC'S HELMET. IT IS BATTLE DAMAGED, WITH A CONCUSSION FRACTURE AND CRACK IN THE REAR. IT IS A LATE WAR VARIANT, MADE BETWEEN 1944-1945, WHICH WOULD INDICATE THAT IT WAS USED TOWARDS THE END OF THE WAR. MEDICS PLAYED A VITAL ROLE DURING WWII. IN A TYPICAL BATTALION OF SOME 400-500 MEN THERE WERE ROUGHLY 30 MEDICS, ALTHOUGH THESE NUMBERS VARIED DEPENDING ON CASUALTIES. A MEDIC'S GOAL WAS TO STABILISE WOUNDED SOLDIERS ALLOWING THEM TO BE TRANSPORTED BEHIND THE LINES TO RECEIVE MEDICAL ATTENTION AT A FIELD HOSPITAL. OFTEN WORKING UNDER DIRECT FIRE AND SOMETIMES WITH A SEVERE LACK OF SUPPLIES, THEY HAD TO ADAPT TO THE SITUATION THEY WERE IN AND ATTEMPT TO SAVE AS MANY LIVES AS POSSIBLE. MEDICS PAINTED THEIR HELMETS MOST COMMONLY WITH THE 4 PANEL RED CROSS ON A WHITE BACKGROUND, ALTHOUGH SOME VARIATIONS ARE PRESENT. IN ADDITION MEDICS WORE A WHITE ARMBAND WITH A RED CROSS. THESE SERVED AS IDENTIFICATION AS WELL AS, IN THEORY, A DETERRENT FOR ENEMIES, BUT ESPECIALLY IN THE PACIFIC THEATRE, MEDICS WERE TARGETED AND THEIR IDENTIFICATION MADE THEM STAND OUT AMONG ORDINARY SOLDIERS. IN COMBAT MEDICS PROVED THEMSELVES AS AN EXTREMELY VALUABLE PART OF THE MILITARY, AND WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR SAVING COUNTLESS LIVES, OFTEN PUTTING THEIR OWN IN HARM'S WAY. THEIR EXPLOITS HAVE BEEN MADE FAMOUS IN FILMS SUCH AS *HACKSAW RIDGE*, WHICH TELLS THE STORY OF DESMOND DOSS, A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR WHO SERVED AS A COMBAT MEDIC IN THE PACIFIC AND WON THE MEDAL OF HONOR FOR HIS BRAVERY.



QUICK FACTS

REVOLUTIONARY WAR: DURING THE CHAOS CREATED BY THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR, MANY SLAVES ESCAPED THEIR MASTERS. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 30% OF ALL SLAVES IN SOUTH CAROLINA ESCAPED, MIGRATED OR DIED DURING THE CONFLICT.

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR: LINCOLN'S FAMOUS GETTYSBURG ADDRESS, GIVEN AT THE DEDICATION OF THE SOLDIERS NATIONAL CEMETERY, WAS ONLY 269 WORDS LONG. IN CONTRAST, EDWARD EVERETT, WHO ALSO PRESENTED AT THE EVENT, SPOKE FOR NEARLY TWO HOURS.

WWI: THE YOUNGEST BRITISH SOLDIER TO SERVE WAS 12 YEAR OLD SIDNEY LEWIS. HE ENLISTED IN 1915 AND SERVED DURING THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME IN 1916 BEFORE HIS TRUE AGE WAS DISCOVERED.

WWII: THE SIEGE OF STALINGRAD RESULTED IN MORE RUSSIAN DEATHS (MILITARY AND CIVILIAN) THAN THE US AND BRITAIN SUSTAINED DURING WWII.

KOREAN WAR: NORTH KOREAN FORCES CAPTURED AMERICAN GENERAL WILLIAM DEAN. DEAN BECAME SEPARATED FROM HIS UNIT AFTER ATTEMPTING TO RESCUE WOUNDED SOLDIERS. HE ACCIDENTALLY FELL OFF OF A CLIFF, BADLY INJURING HIMSELF. DEAN WAS CAPTURED BY NORTH KOREAN FORCES ON 25 AUGUST, 1950, AFTER HIDING IN THE MOUNTAINS FOR 36 DAYS. HE SPENT THE REMAINDER OF THE WAR IN A POW CAMP.

VIETNAM WAR: TOWARDS THE END OF THE WAR, THE CREW OF THE *USS MIDWAY* PUSHED NEARLY \$10 MILLION WORTH OF HELICOPTERS OFF THE FLIGHT DECK TO ALLOW A CESSNA AIRCRAFT FULL OF EVACUEES TO LAND.



PORTRAIT OF SIDNEY LEWIS
(UNKNOWN, c. 1916)



CREW PUSH A HUEY HELICOPTER OFF THE DECK
OF THE *USS MIDWAY* DURING OPERATION
FREQUENT WIND, 29-30 APRIL, 1975
(US NAVY, 30 APRIL, 1975)

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