

VALE

LEGATEE WILLIAM DONOVAN JOYNT, V.C.

OUTER EASTERN BRANCH

Died 5.5.1986

We record with profound regret, shared by the whole community, the passing of Legatee Donovan Joynt, the Club's oldest member, a great soldier, a grand citizen, and the second most senior survivor of the original (1923) members of the Legacy movement in 1923. The funeral service was held at St. Mary's Anglican Church, Caulfield on Monday, 12th May 1986, with full Military Honours.

After joining Legacy Donovan Joynt immediately involved himself, as evidenced by his appointment to the Board of Management in 1924. In 1925, when Legacy decided to change course and render a new and vital community service, Donovan was a member of the Committee that instituted the newly accepted policy that the real legacy from war comprised the widows and children. When the first gathering of war widows was invited to ANZAC House to ascertain their willingness to permit their young sons to join a club, it was the late Sir Stanley Savige and Donovan who addressed them. Junior Legacy thus began. He remained on that vital Committee until the new development was fully launched, and also linked himself with the first boys' gymnasium classes.

In 1926 when the concept of the Shrine of Remembrance as the approved Victorian War Memorial came under public attack, Joynt led the Legacy defence of the Shrine. A Committee of Legacy was formed to advocate adherence to the Shrine proposal and Joynt campaigned, with his colleagues, with such vigor that in due course the battle was won, but only after several years of public campaigning. Victoria owes him a debt for his consistent support of the Shrine and all it represents.

In other Legacy efforts he was identified with the Public affairs Committee, the Boys' Literary and Debating Class, the inauguration of the Intermediate Legacy Club, ANZAC and Armistice Days' Observance Committees, Finance Committee, the Probation Committee, and the annual production of the members' diary. Thus it is obvious that Donovan Joynt's contribution to Melbourne Legacy has been immense and has the eternal gratitude of all Legatees.

His military career began with the Victorian Rifles in 1911. He enlisted for active service early in 1915. Almost immediately he was selected for training for a commission which delayed his departure for overseas, but he was commissioned on 24.12.15 and reached Egypt as a 2nd Lieutenant with reinforcements for the 8th Infantry Battalion. He remained with that Battalion throughout, and was first wounded in a night raid on 30th September 1916. He is specially mentioned in the official history for conspicuous service in connection with four separate famous battles; Polygon Wood, before Passchendaele in September 1917; at Guerdécourt, before Bapaume, at Christmas 1917; at the River Lys defending Hazebrouck in April 1918; and on the occasion of the award of the Victoria Cross at Chuignes beyond Villers-Bretonneux on 23rd August, 1918. Attached is the official citation and

official history of this action, but many who served beside him at the Battle of Lys have claimed that his exploits on that occasion, which had such influence in stopping the enemy's advance towards the Channel ports, also warranted a V.C.

He was wounded again three days after the action in which he earned the V.C. Promoted to Captain in October 1918, he was discharged in June 1920.

Prior to his return home, he was greatly honoured by being appointed leader of a selected party of Australians to visit Cardiff Agricultural Show and to march through that City to receive the acclaim of the Welsh people. It was the last formal parade of the A.I.F. overseas.

From 1926 to 1933 he served with the 6th Battalion Royal Melbourne Regiment as second in command and was promoted Major in February 1930.

During the Second World War he formed and commanded the 3rd Garrison Battalion and was Camp Commandant at Puckapunyal in 1941; from 1942 to 1944 he had a similar post at Seymour. He was finally admitted to the Retired List on 10.10.44.

He went to London in 1956 to be at the V.C. celebrations and was chosen to broadcast to Australia during the Lord Mayor's ceremonial dinner.

Born of poor but very loyal British parents on 19th March, 1889 at Elsternwick, his parental and school upbringing enthused him with deep family loyalty, determination to honour the Crown and Empire, and to defend truth, justice and tradition. We all know how steadfastly he remained loyal to these teachings.

He was first educated at the Grange School in South Yarra, then at Melbourne Grammar School and many years later was a member of the Council of the Old Melburnians Society, and President in 1959/60.

His first employment was with a firm of Melbourne accountants but in time he felt the urge of adventure, and having been persuaded there were good prospects for cotton growing near Cairns he set out for there at the age of 21. As he helped his parents with his accountancy earnings, he only had his steerage fare to Rockhampton and, with a mate, he "humped his swag" to MacKay, then obtained a passage to Cairns as "deck cargo". The cotton idea was a myth. A precarious week by week existence in various ways ended in a paid return home by ship.

For the next year he sought farming experience in Victoria's Mallee, living most frugally but trying his hand at any and every experience. His next adventure was to go to West Australia and he accepted advice to take up some land at Yarloop, but again misfortune rather than mismanagement defeated several trials. Finally, after living alone in a hut, and on scanty food, blood poisoning put him in hospital. Whilst there, news of his mother's impending death reached him and he had further ill fortune in reaching home in Melbourne just too late. His father had died previously. The next year was spent with doctors in an endeavour to cure his illnesses, but with such unsatisfactory results that he decided to cure himself and went to Flinders Island in Bass Strait to try his hand, first with cattle, and then potatoes. Everything he touched in all these ventures was frustrated by unforeseeable events - bad seasons, stock disease, frosts, drought and the like. On the outbreak of the First World War he sold up his meagre possessions on Flinders Island and returned to Melbourne to enlist.

Before returning home from his war service, he took advantage of the pre-embarkation education scheme and in 1919 was placed in charge of a party of farmers who toured U.K. and Denmark studying all aspects of English and Danish methods. With this knowledge, on his return to Melbourne and discharge, he took up land at Berwick under the Soldiers' Settlement Scheme. The dairy farm was a

success under a manager, whilst Donovan conducted a city business. Later, however, new disasters came, the land becoming flooded one year, followed by drought the next and finally the great depression. The Commission resumed the land because of arrears of repayments, so ten years of hard work resulted in lost capital and war savings.

His city business had been a partnership, obtaining photographs and information of war graves for relatives. In 1923 this partnership was absorbed into a printing company entitled Colart Studios, and in 1929 Joynt became Managing Director of the Company. By great skill and determination, Joynt gradually built up this Company which he proudly reconstructed in 1934 as W.D. Joynt & Co. Pty. Ltd. later becoming Dominion Press. As the years and the business advanced, the Company successfully absorbed other printing establishments. Donovan lived to see Dominion Press in its own premises on substantial land at Blackburn North, with most modern equipment and one of the largest privately-owned printing companies in the country employing over 150. It is appropriate to pay tribute to his Managing Director and colleague, Mr. Ken Sparks, for his many years of loyal and skilled service in this exceptional achievement.

During Donovan's overseas tours in 1962 and 1968 he visited Russia. Anyone knowing him well would have little doubt as to the reason, or incidentally the risk to which one of his fearless and independent spirit exposed himself in that area. After the latter visit, he decided to record his impressions, and his book, "To Russia", published in 1971 provides tangible evidence of his studious and observant mind.

He was one of the Founders of the Constitutional Club and remained a member to the end. He was an honorary member of the Royal Society of St. George, and a prominent Freemason. He was one of the longest serving members of the Naval and Military Club, and a Life Member.

He was frequently invited to give addresses at returned soldier gatherings, ANZAC Days and loyal societies. He had the honour of opening the War Graves Cemetery at Springvale and of unveiling the memorial at Myrtleford to A.W. Lowerson, V.C. In 1964 he was proud to lead all his comrades of the 1st Australian Division in the ANZAC Day Parade, and his devotion to the 8th Infantry Battalion never slackened.

In 1932 he married Edith Garrett and to her must be given immense praise and gratitude. Her devotion, nursing skill, wisdom and pride in him and his achievements were ever an inspiration to him and the admiration of all who have been privileged to know her. After a very long illness she died on 30th May 1978.

Donovan's elder brother, Gerald, was a Captain with the 59th Battalion and was killed during the Passchendaele operations (Belgium) in 1917. His younger brother was a missionary with the Northern Territory aborigines and was ordained there; during the Second World War had a parish at Plymouth (England) where he died from overstrain from his work in the bombed areas.

And so Legacy mourns the passing of a truly great Australian - a man devoted to service to his Sovereign and country - "who never turned his back but marched breast forward" in war and in peace; who overcame many misfortunes and became a Phoenix - possessing comradeship as a fundamental virtue - a lover and connoisseur of art - an accomplished and successful businessman - a Legatee of renown.

CITATION:

JOYNT, Lieutenant William Donovan
8th Australian Infantry Battalion, A.I.F.

23rd August, 1918, at Herleville Wood, near Chuignes, Peronne, France.

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty during the attack on Herleville Wood, near Chuignes, Peronne, on the 23rd August, 1918. His Company Commander having been killed early in the advance, he immediately took charge of the company, which he led with courage and skill. On approaching Herleville Wood the troops of the leading battalion, which his battalion was supporting, suffered very heavy casualties and were much shaken. Lieutenant Joynt, grasping the situation, rushed forward under very heavy machine-gun and artillery fire, collected and re-organised the remnant of the battalion, and kept them under cover pending the arrival of his own company. He then made a personal reconnaissance, and found that the fire from the Wood was checking the whole advance and causing heavy casualties to the troops on his flanks. Dashing out in front of his men, he inspired and led a magnificent frontal bayonet attack on the Wood. The enemy were staggered by this sudden onslaught, and a very critical situation was saved. Later, at Plateau Wood, this very gallant officer again with a small party of volunteers, rendered invaluable service and after severe hand-to-hand fighting turned a stubborn defence into an abject surrender.

"His valour and determination was conspicuous throughout, and he continued to do magnificent work until badly wounded by a shell."

(London Gazette: 27th November, 1918.)

On 23rd August the 32nd British Division on the right and the 1st Australian Division on the left launched a fresh attack on a 4½-mile front.

The attacking Australian battalion was the 6th, supported some 500 yards behind by the 8th. The 6th, however, suffered severely, and many were killed in the 8th before the attack had proceeded far. Joynt, with his batman, Private T. Newman, went forward to ascertain the position and found some of the 6th sheltering in a sunken road, hesitating to cross because of the intense fire which had already caused heavy losses.

Extract from 'THEY DARED MIGHTILY' Pages 141,142 & 143

JOYNT, Lieutenant William Donovan -

8th Australian Infantry Battalion, A.I.F.

Joynt spoke to the men and advised them to proceed "anyhow - by rushes of 25 yards." They responded, but were pinned down again on top of the opposite slope by fire from a nearby strong-post, Plateau Wood. Joynt was now joined by Lieutenant L.C. McGinn, also of the 8th, with fifteen men. A German machine-gun spraying the area with bullets was put out of action by McGinn's Lewis gunner.

Joynt and his party then crossed the road safely, capturing an enemy aid-post and fifty prisoners en route, and decided to attack Plateau Wood, as being the main danger point to the main attack.

He obtained covering fire from the left of the 6th, his instructions to his comrades being to open fire on Plateau Wood "like blazes." Joynt and McGinn waited for a while, then worked through a trench filled with abandoned machine-guns, dead Germans, and live ones who had lost interest in the war. Joynt was endeavouring to round up some of these when he was faced with a party of twenty advancing with rifles at the ready. The Australian at once covered their leader with his revolver, and the whole party surrendered.

Joynt then spread his men along the trench which faced the wood, intending to attack from there; but having discovered another enemy gun which would undoubtedly swing round on to them he scouted until he found a trench leading directly into the wood - and to the machine-gun. Up this trench Joynt and his men then attacked, and were almost upon the enemy when somebody yelled: "They're running!" The enemy had broken, and were pursued by the shouting Australians. A dozen more prisoners were taken, Joynt soon linked up with the 5th on one flank and the 6th on the other, and an unbroken line was established east of both Plateau and Herleville Woods.

They were a very scared crew (wrote Joynt of the Germans, in his diary.) One of them was on the point of howling and looked so miserable - McGinn noticing him suddenly and putting his face close to the Hun made a noise ...

viz. "Boo!" The Hun collapsed completely ...

From then until wounded three days later, in another attack, Joynt was always in the fight as the advance continued.

Colonel William Donovan JOYNT, V.C.

Born at Elsternwick, Melbourne, in 1889, of humble parents who made every sacrifice within their means to provide for his education.

His first schooling was at a private but select school in South Yarra named 'The Grange.' Whilst there some others who became notable were to become Lord Casey, Lord Baillieu, General Smart, General Sturdee and Lord Mayor - Sir Harold Gengoult-Smith.

Next he was enrolled at Melbourne Grammar School and he has been justifiably proud that his parents were able to do that. In due course he became a member of the Council of The Old Melburnians Society and President in 1959/60. In 1977 he was honoured by the Society by his appointment as a Life Member.

His first employment was with Densham & Sherlock, Chartered Accountants, whose members were renowned for upholding British traditions and had associations with the Royal Empire Society and Royal Commonwealth Society. Obviously these British links greatly influenced Donovan's life because later on he in turn joined into the same loyal societies. Mr. Densham permitted Joynt to read reports about methods of growing cotton in North Queensland and this fired his adventurous mind because he had not felt that the sedentary life was for him.

He learned that a man named Broughton had given away his office job in Melbourne and gone to Cairns to grow cotton. When he became 21 Donovan made up his mind to follow Broughton's example and with the goodwill of his mother (but to the disappointment of his father), he used the money he had saved to pay his fare by ship to Rockhampton. He travelled steerage, met another young man with similar ideas, and they joined together on their new venture. They worked their way to Cairns as "deck cargo." His mate secured a job and gave Joynt enough money to pay for his train fare to Cairns. Joynt managed to make contact with the German who had inspired the cotton growing idea but to his despair the venture had failed.

Joynt tried various odd jobs for a while without accumulating any money and in a short while he returned home in despair.

He then found several jobs in the Mallee on varying types of farms but after months of changing experiences he returned home for a

month and then, with a letter of introduction to a Victorian who had an appointment with the Western Australian Agricultural Department, he set off for Perth. This man encouraged Joynt to take advantage of new land developments in the south-west that were available at Ten Shillings an acre near Yarloop, close to the railway. He acquired an abandoned 250 acres and with an old mate from his days in the Mallee, they decided to grow peas. They also tried clover and to earn money meantime he worked for a timber company in the township.

Receiving news that his father was ill he set off for home and arrived just in time before his father died. His neighbour in Western Australia had planted potatoes, so after helping his mother to clear up the family affairs, Donovan returned to Yarloop to see a big crop but it was infected with a disease! A bushfire burned the pea stack! He abandoned that land, acquired another area and tried breeding cattle. Living alone in a humpy, bitten by leeches and developing blood poisoning, he was taken to hospital. Whilst there he received news of his mother's serious illness and calling him home. Everything went wrong as he set out for Freemantle to catch a ship, only to see it already a mile out at sea. A ship four days later reached Melbourne too late - his mother had died.

Nothing daunting, he set off at once on return to Western Australia to sell up such as there was left. An English emigrant took over with the promise of eventual payment but he was never heard from.

Once more he returned to Melbourne to be best man at his eldest brother's wedding and to spend that year in medical hands with general debility.

The spirit of adventure seemed ever present. He followed a recommendation to go to King Island in Bass Strait but a friend diverted him to Flinders Island where land was being opened up for farming. He set up with a tent, horses and equipment - planted potatoes and secured a crop of 60 tons - the cold wind blew for three weeks blackening the crop through frost.

The war started and he had waited for the benefits of the crop and then intended to enlist. No buyers were about. He set off to catch a ketch for Melbourne, selling his crop and possessions on the jetty for Two Pounds.

Arriving in Melbourne he went directly to the recruiting depot in South Melbourne and enlisted. He was sent to Broadmeadows Camp and next day the Adjutant asked the recruits if anyone wished to go for commissions. Having been a corporal in the Militia with the Victorian Rifles when at school he volunteered and was admitted to the officer training school.

In due course he was commissioned in December 1915 and arrived in Egypt just as Gallipoli was being evacuated. He was posted after five months training to the 8th Infantry Battalion as a reinforcement officer and left for France in May 1916. He remained with that Battalion for the rest of the war.

His initial fighting experience was at the awful battle at Pozieres in July 1916 where the casualties were frightening. He was wounded in a night raid against the enemy on 30th September 1916. The official history records that he was mentioned in despatches in four separate battles (Polygon Wood, Guedecourt, Armentieres and at Chuignes). It was at the last of these at which he was awarded the Victoria Cross on 23rd August 1918. Three days later his wounds were such as to cause his evacuation to England for hospitalization and the war ended before he could be returned to his unit. He was promoted Captain in October.

The attached citation of his V.C. tells its own story. Those who served with him in the Battle of the River Lys near Armentieres claimed that he earned a V.C. there also.

On recovery from his serious wounds he was honoured in 1919 by being appointed leader of a selected party to visit Cardiff Agricultural Show and to march through that City to receive the plaudits of Welsh people. It was the last formal parade of the A.I.F. overseas in that war.

Perhaps the proudest moment of a soldier of such loyalties and sense of community responsibility was the 11th July 1919 when King George V. presented him with the Victoria Cross.

Before returning home from his war service he took advantage of the education scheme and in 1919 was placed in charge of a party of farmers who toured the United Kingdom and Denmark studying all aspects of English and Danish methods. With this knowledge, on returning he took up land at Berwick under the Soldier Settlement Scheme. Initially the dairy farm was a success, under a manager,

whilst Joynt conducted a city business. However, new disaster still came his way. The land became flooded, followed by drought and, finally, the unforgettable great depression. The Closer Settlement Commission resumed the property because of arrears of repayments. Ten years of hard work resulted in lost capital and war savings.

Whilst this Berwick venture proceeded he also set up a city business in a partnership, obtaining photographs and information of war graves for relatives and others. In 1923 this was absorbed into a company associated with printing, named Colarts Studios of which he became Managing Director in 1929.

By hardly acquired skill and with struggling determination he built this company until in 1934 he proudly reconstructed it as W.D.Joynt & Co. Pty. Ltd. trading in due course as The Dominion Press. As the years and the business advanced the company successfully absorbed other printing establishments. He lived to see The Dominion Press in its own premises, first in Box Hill and finally in North Blackburn; with modern equipment it became one of the largest privately-owned book printing companies in Australia, at its maximum employing 150.

Donovan Joynt was an original member of the Melbourne Legacy Club that commenced in 1923 with the object of mutual development of business between ex-servicemen. A year later he was a member of the Board of Management. In 1925 the Club decided to change course and render a new and vital community service. He was a member of the Committee that instituted this change in the conviction that the real legacy of war comprised the widows and children. When the first gathering of war widows were invited to Anzac House to ascertain their willingness to permit their young sons to join a club, Joynt was with Colonel Savige (as he then was) to address them. Thus began the Junior Legacy Club. He remained on that vital committee until the new development was fully launched and he also linked himself with the boys' gymnasium classes.

In 1926, when public criticism developed against the Shrine of Remembrance as the approved Victorian War Memorial, Joynt and Kemsley moved at a Legacy meeting a resolution against the critics. A Committee of Legacy was formed to advocate adherence to the Shrine proposal and they campaigned, with their colleagues, with such vigour that in due course the battle was won, but only after several years of public campaigning. Victoria owes Legacy a debt for their consistent support of the Shrine and all it represents.

In other Legacy efforts Donovan was identified with the Public Affairs Committee, the Boys' Literary and Debating Class, the inauguration of the Intermediate Legacy Club, Anzac and Armistice Day Observance Committees, the Finance Committee, the Probation Committee and the annual production of the diary for members. He initiated the production and sale of Christmas cards as a means of augmenting Junior Legacy funds and this resulted in receipts of over \$4,200.. Thus, it is obvious that Donovan Joynt's contribution to Melbourne Legacy has been immense and has the eternal gratitude of all Legatees.

From 1926 to 1933 he served with the 6th Battalion Royal Melbourne Regiment as second in command, was promoted Major in February 1930 and finally granted the rank of honorary Lieut-Colonel.

During the Second World War he formed and commanded the 3rd Garrison Battalion at Queenscliff. He was Camp Commandant at Puckapunyal in 1941 and from 1942 to 1944 had a similar post at Seymour whilst American troops were trained there. He was finally admitted to the Retired List on 10th October 1944.

He went to London in 1956 to be at the V.C. celebrations and was chosen to broadcast to Australia during the Lord Mayor's ceremonial dinner.

During Donovan's overseas tours in 1962 and 1968 he visited Russia. Anyone knowing him well would have little doubt as to the reason or, incidentally, the risk to which one of his fearless and independent spirit exposed himself in that area. After the latter visit he decided to record his impressions and his book 'To Russia' published in 1971 provided tangible evidence of his studious and observant mind.

Because a series of books were published over the years reporting versions of the advance in 1918 of the German Army towards the English Channel and not acknowledging the significant defence made by Australian troops, Joynt set about 'telling the story as I saw it.' His book 'Saving the Channel Ports in 1918' - written after four years of research and reference to his own daily diaries - does that effectively.

The diversity of his interests and loyalties is evidenced by a few pithy references. In 1924 when the Constitutional Club was formed he was an original member. He was one of the longest serving members of the Naval and Military Club and in 1956 was made a Life Member. In 1959 he was appointed Life Governor of the Corps of Commissionaires.

In 1964 The Anzac Day Committee did him the honour of being leader of the Parade to the Shrine. For 21 years he was a member of the Royal Commonwealth Society. In 1976 he was made an honorary member of the Royal Society of St. George. He was a member of the Royal Historical Society for many years. He had the honour of opening the war graves cemetery at Springvale and of unveiling the memorial at Myrtleford in remembrance of A.W. Lowerson, V.C..

In 1978 he published his life story, after much persuasion, but his modesty was such that his writings omitted much that should have been included. The title he selected was from Kipling - 'Breaking the Road - for the rest.' How apt!

In 1932 he married Edith Garrett and to her must be given immense praise and gratitude. Her devotion, nursing skill, wisdom and pride in him and his achievements, were ever an inspiration to him and the admiration of all who have been privileged to know her. After a very long illness of paralysis, she died on 30th May, 1978. Donovan dedicated his published life story in her honour.

Donovan's eldest brother, Gerald, was a Captain with the 59th Battalion and was killed during the Passchendaele operations (Belgium) in 1917. His other brother, Rex, was a missionary with the Northern Territory aborigines and was ordained there. During the Second World War he was on leave in England and was given a church at Elburton, near Plymouth. He later died there as a result of overstrain from his work in the bombed areas.

As a Freemason of long standing, Donovan has spent the last years as a patient at Centennial House, Windsor, where he has enjoyed the loving care of the staff.