

SONS, BROTHERS AND FRIENDS

telling the story of the Laverton honour board

Laverton was a small farming community when war was declared in 1914. Men were eager to enlist and 26 local men volunteered for active service overseas. For its population, a greater percentage of men claimed Laverton as their home or enlisted from there than any place the same size,

**“the whole Shire had responded splendidly
to the call of the mother country”**

(Werribee Shire Banner, Thursday 20 December 1917).

The Old Laverton School (then known as the Laverton State School) was the hub of this close-knit community. It was central to the war effort; serving as a centre for recruitment, Red Cross fundraisers, a venue to welcome home returning soldiers and for celebrations when the war ended. The dedication and sacrifice of these men is commemorated by this honour board which was unveiled at the school in 1922.

Honour boards recording the names of men who enlisted can be found in many public buildings across Victoria and were important to post-war society. Not only did they serve as a reminder of sacrifices made, they were also a permanent memorial on home soil.

This honour board was made by F.K. Cox & Co. and was unveiled on 24 October 1922 by the Director of Education, Mr F Tate. The unveiling was marked with some ceremony and was attended by many influential people of the time. A musical program, including performances by local school children, along with refreshments, helped celebrate the occasion.

Sons, brothers and friends: telling the story of the Laverton honour board highlights some of the personal stories of the men listed. Research has uncovered stories of courage and sacrifice and how the war effort was supported at home.

*This project has been supported by the Victorian Government,
the Victorian Veterans Council and Hobsons Bay City Council.*



Left: Ernest Peacock, Alfred (Lin) Newland, William Cameron, 1914.
Right: Ernest Peacock, Alfred (Lin) Newland, Redvers Cecil (Buller) Newland, William Cameron.

Images supplied by Robert J Newland



Clockwise from left: Herbert Leslie (Bert) Newland, Captain James Ernest Newland, VC, William Andrew Newland being welcomed home by Governor of Victoria 1915 and 2nd Lieutenant Alfred Lindsay (Lin) Newland.

Images supplied by Robert J Newland

The Newland Brothers

Four of the Newland brothers served during the First World War. All are named on this honour board.

Alfred Lindsay Newland, is the only man listed who did not return home from war. Affectionately known as Lin, he enlisted alongside his good friends Ernest Peacock and William Cameron and all three boarded HMAT Ulysses in May 1915 bound for Gallipoli. Lin was a popular local, known for being a gifted athlete; as a prize winning road and track cyclist and a talented footballer.

Lin earned recognition for his efforts in Gallipoli, Egypt and France and in 1916 was sent to the School of Instruction, the first step towards promotion to Officer. As Sergeant he was sent to France and transferred to the 6th Australian Machine Gun Company. For the following three months he was either involved in training or serving on the front line in the Somme region. On 8 November 1916, Lin along with another officer was killed by enemy shellfire. By the time of his death he had been promoted in the field to 2nd Lieutenant. He is buried in the AIF Burial Grounds, just north of Fiers in the Somme.

James Ernest Newland, had also served in the Boer War, was awarded the Victoria Cross in April 1917 for three separate acts of bravery and courage. The Victoria Cross was the highest military decoration in the British Empire awarded for valour in the face of the enemy. He received the award from King George VI at a ceremony at Buckingham Palace on 21 July 1917. Later that day, he boarded a ship to Australia where he retained the rank of Captain and returned to permanent army service until 1941. Sadly, his first wife Florence passed away from tuberculosis. He later married Heather Broughton and had a daughter. He worked briefly with the Australian Red Cross Society in the Northern Territory before joining the inspection staff at Footscray Ammunition Factory until his unexpected death in 1949. He was given a funeral with full military honours and his daughter Dawn donated his medals to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. His tunic is on display at Fort Queenscliff Museum.

Herbert Leslie Newland (Bert) left Melbourne on the first convoy in 1914 and rose through the ranks with various field artillery units. On his return Bert rejoined the Victorian Police Force becoming Sergeant of both Queenscliff and Geelong police stations before moving to St Kilda. Here he took up position as Sergeant of the first shrine guard at the new Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance and fought to wear the Light Horse uniform instead of the police uniform.

William Andrew Newland had already served in the Boer War and at the time of enlisting was working as a mechanical engineer in Gippsland, married with two children. He enlisted only eleven days after war was declared. His experience as a cavalryman was immediately appreciated and he was quickly transferred to the 8th Light Horse Regiment. However, he never had the chance to serve as a cavalryman in combat again as he received a gunshot wound to the chest after landing at Gallipoli in May 1915. His injury resulted in his repatriation to Australia and discharge from the army in December 1915.

Albert Victor Hyde

Albert Victor Hyde and his brother **Edward Ernest Hyde** were Laverton residents when they enlisted. The single, young men were part of a large family, Albert was a carpenter and Edward a labourer. Both were fortunate to return home from war.

Albert was sent first to the trenches of Gallipoli in 1915 and later to Belgium where he experienced a miraculous escape. While walking across no-man's land, a shell exploded in front of him. Twenty-six pieces of shrapnel caused significant injuries, including shattering his right leg. Fortunately, Albert had a lucky talisman which he credited with saving his life. His fiancé, Irene Newland had given him a locket which he was wearing around his neck on this day. A piece of shrapnel shattered the locket and Albert credited this with saving his life and ensuring that he returned home. He went on to marry Irene, who would unfortunately succumb to tuberculosis. He later married Doreen Kelly.



The locket credited with saving the life of Albert Victor Hyde during First World War.

Images supplied by Glen Hyde

George Norman Grant

At 19 years of age **George Norman Grant** applied to enlist at the Victoria Barracks. As he was under 21, his father, who was superintendent of the government explosive reserve in Laverton, gave his consent and his occupation at the time was recorded as being a journalist. Unfortunately he became ill during his military training and was discharged as being medically unfit. He served with the Home Service as a Staff Sergeant until November 1917 when he passed the medical examination for active service abroad.

He was assigned to the Tunnelling Companies and departed Melbourne in February 1918. Tunnelling Companies were specialist units formed to dig attacking tunnels under enemy lines. He was with his company when peace was declared and remained at the front as part of the army of occupation assisting with rehabilitation of the country by clearing roads and bridges. He returned to Australia in November 1919 and was shortly discharged from the army. He went on to marry Adele Gibson Taylor and worked as a Newsagent in Werribee. He would enlist for service during the Second World War and remained on active service in Australia until 1946.

The Red Cross in Laverton

Newly formed at the outbreak of war, the Red Cross focused Australian women's efforts on the home front to support the nation during the First World War. Red Cross branches were quickly formed in each state and women worked tirelessly for the cause during the war and beyond.

Red Cross enabled women to do something tangible for the war effort. As well as raising money they also sent a large amount of goods overseas to servicemen, much of which was knitted or sewn by volunteers across the country.

In June 1915, a meeting in Laverton decided to form a locally-based sub-committee of the Werribee branch of the Red Cross. The aim was to help soldiers through raising funds and donating provisions such as pyjamas, socks, towels, pillow cases, shirts, tobacco and cigarettes which were sent to the front. In April and May 1916, the Laverton branch collected,

**“35 flannel shirts, 38 pairs socks, 13 pairs bed socks,
24 washers, 9 eye bandages, 2 pillows, 1 tin cocoa,
3 tins milk and a roll of old linen”**

(Werribee Shire Banner, Thursday 8 June 1916).

Different events such as a copper collection, social evenings, a jumble fair and an auction were held to raise funds for the work of the Red Cross. Many of these activities were held in this schoolhouse and were organised by families of men serving overseas.

Hobsons Bay City Council would like to thank friends and relatives of men listed on this honour board as well as the local community for their support of this project.