



A Queensland Rifle Club member who made the supreme sacrifice
1914-1919

The Story Behind the Name



Major Hugh QUINN MID
6 May 1888 - 29 May 1915



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PRE-ENLISTMENT:

- Hugh was born on 6th May 1888 in Charters Towers, Qld and was the son of John and Mary Jane Quinn, who at the time of his enlistment lived in 14 Robert Street, Spring Hill, Brisbane.
- He attended Millchester State School and Southport High School.
- He started out his working life by taking up a position in Messrs. Cummins and Campbell's office and worked himself up to head clerk.
- He followed his interest in accountancy by qualifying for membership in the North Queensland Institute of Accountants, and shortly afterwards opened up a business of his own in Townsville as accountant, auditor, and commission agent, and was on the high road of commercial success when war broke out.
- He became a prominent athlete and proved himself one of the best amateur boxers in North Queensland. He won the heavyweight amateur boxing championship in North Queensland two years running, and acted as manager of the team which visited Victoria and Tasmania, in 1912, representing the heavy weight division. He was full of energy, perseverance and initiative, and had a host of admirers among the Charters Towers youth. He had moved to Townsville by the time war was declared.
- All who came in contact with Hughie as a boy and a young man fully appreciated his worth.

MILITARY SERVICE BEFORE AIF ENLISTMENT:

- Quinn joined the Kennedy Infantry Regiment (Charters Towers), Queensland, as a Private in 1907, being then 19 years of age.
- He quickly worked his way through the non-commissioned ranks to sergeant, receiving his commission as 2nd Lieutenant when he was only 20.
- Holding a lieutenancy in the Kennedy Regiment, he closed his business and was ready for mobilisation.
- When he was about 23, he was promoted Captain in the Kennedy Regiment and received the command of the 2nd Section of the Australian Expeditionary Force.
- Quinn mobilised for War Service in August 1914. He embarked at Carins, Qld, on 8 August 1914 for Thursday Island (War Station) Garrison Duty.
- He enlisted on 14 August for service outside Australia and re-embarked at Thursday Island on 16 August 1914 on the troopship "Kanowna" to take part in the capture of German New Guinea.
- He returned to Townsville on 18 September due to the trouble caused by the firemen on the troopship without taking part in the capture of German New Guinea.



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SERVICE

- Hugh QUINN enlisted on the 16 September 1914 in the AIF as a Captain.
- On 22 December 1914 he embarked with his Unit, the 15th Infantry Battalion on HMAT Ceramic, from Melbourne.
- He joined the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (MEF) Gallipoli on 12 April 1915. The MEF was part of the British Army during World War I, that commanded all Allied forces at Gallipoli.
- He landed at Gallipoli late in the afternoon of 25 April 1915 and his abilities in establishing and defending the ANZAC front line saw his promotion to Major on 1 May 1915.
- Quinn and his men were ordered to hold a position which initially was a communications trench and eventually became a heavily contested position. Over a period of a week Quinn and his men held off repeated attacks. On 29th May the Turks detonated a mine under or near the Australian position killing many of Quinn's men. The Turks took advantage of the confusion that followed and rushed Quinn's position over-running it. Quinn led a counter attack which forced most but not all of the Turks to retreat. Quinn was further ordered to launch an attack over open ground to clear the position of the remaining Turks.
- Major Hugh Victor QUINN was 'Killed in Action' on 29 May 1915 at Quinn's Post, Gallipoli, one of the most contested position in the Anzac line.
- His war service was in Egypt and Gallipoli

CEMETERY &/OR MEMORIAL:

- Shrapnel Valley Cemetery, Gallipoli, Plot 3 Row C 21
- Memorials: Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour
- Boys Central School Great War Honour Board
- Townsville Cenotaph

MILITARY HONOURS & AWARDS:

- Mentioned in Despatches (MiD) British Award/Decoration.
- 1914-15 Star
- British War Medal
- Victory Medal



RIFLE SHOOTING:

- Hugh Quinn was a member of the North Queensland Kennedy Regiment Rifle Club (KRRC) .
- At one time he was the club handicapper.

ARMISTICE CENTENARY WAR MEMORIAL

Commemoration Service

- ACWM Keynote Address: ANZAC Day 2019: Bruce Scott
- ACWM Keynote Address: ANZAC Day 2021: Ian Errington



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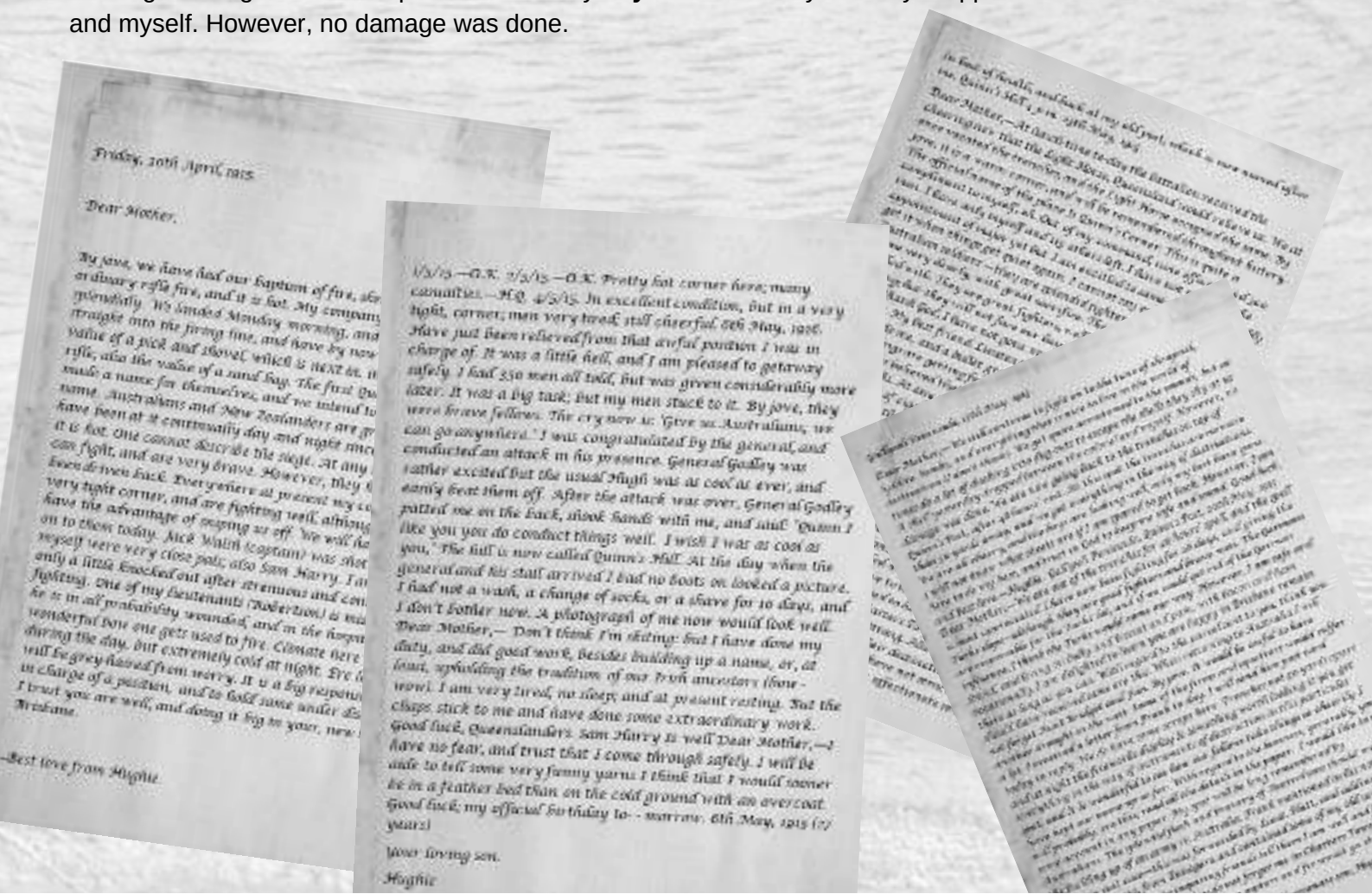
LETTERS HOME

Excerpts from letters Quinn wrote to his Mother from his trench on the Gallipoli Peninsula:

30 April 1915: By jove, we have had our baptism of fire, shrapnel, shells, and ordinary rifle fire, and it is hot. My company have behaved splendidly. We landed Monday morning, and just pushed straight into the firing line....I think I will be grey-haired from worry. It is a big responsibility to be in charge of a position, and to hold same under disadvantages.

1 May 1915: I have just been relieved from that awful position I was in charge of. It was a little hell, and I am pleased to get away safely. I had 350 men all told but was given considerably more later. It was a big task; but my men stuck to it. By jove, they were brave fellows. The cry now is: 'Give us Australians, we can go anywhere' I was congratulated by the General, and conducted an attack in his presence. General Godley was rather excited but the usual Hugh was as cool as ever, and easily beat them off. After the attack was over, General Godley patted me on the back, shook hands with me, and said: "Quinn, I like you, you do conduct things well. I wish I was as cool as you."

17 May 1915: We still continue to fight on to the tune of shrapnel, lyddite bombs, and everything that is nice to live in a world of destruction (I don't think). We get quite accustomed to the sounds, but at times do a lot of ducking into dug-outs to escape the shells they **shy** at us. A shell yesterday dropped between the colonel and myself. However, no damage was done.



Friday, 30th April, 1915

Dear Mother,

By jove, we have had our baptism of fire, shrapnel, shells, and ordinary rifle fire, and it is hot. My company have behaved splendidly. We landed Monday morning, and just pushed straight into the firing line, and have by now made a name for themselves, and we intend to have been at it continuously day and night since it is hot. One cannot describe the noise. At any rate, the Australians and New Zealanders are going very hard. Every one is at present very hot. I have the advantage of seeing us off. We will be myself were very close pals, also Sam Harry. I'm only a little knocked out after strenuous and can be in all probability wounded, and in the hope of a wonderful day, but extremely cool at night. It is in charge of a position, and to hold same under disadvantages.

Best love from Hughie

1/3/15 - O.K. 2/3/15 - O.K. Pretty hot corner here, many casualties. - HQ. 4/3/15. In excellent condition, but in a very tight corner, men very tired still cheerful. 5th May, 1915. Have just been relieved from that awful position I was in charge of. It was a little hell, and I am pleased to get away safely. I had 350 men all told, but was given considerably more later. It was a big task, but my men stuck to it. By jove, they were brave fellows. The cry now is: 'Give us Australians, we can go anywhere.' I was congratulated by the general, and conducted an attack in his presence. General Godley was rather excited but the usual Hugh was as cool as ever, and easily beat them off. After the attack was over, General Godley patted me on the back, shook hands with me, and said: "Quinn, I like you, you do conduct things well. I wish I was as cool as you." The hill is now called Quinn's Hill. At the day when the general and his staff arrived I had no boots on, looked a picture. I had not a wash, a change of socks, or a shave for 10 days, and I don't bother now. A photograph of me now would look well. Dear Mother, - Don't think I'm skating. But I have done my duty, and did good work, besides building up a name, or, at least, upholding the traditions of our Devon ancestors (don't worry). I am very tired, no sleep, and at present resting. But the chips stick to me and have done some extraordinary work. Good luck, Queenslanders. Sam Harry is well. Dear Mother, - I have no fear, and trust that I come through safely. I will be able to tell some very funny yarns. I think that I would sooner be in a feather bed than on the cold ground with an overcoat. Good luck, my affectional but busy to - Warren. 6th May, 1915 (70 years)

Your loving son,
Hughie

In line of shells, and back at my old post, which is now named after me. Quinn's Hill. 2/3/15. O.K. 4/3/15. In excellent condition, but in a very tight corner, men very tired still cheerful. 5th May, 1915. Have just been relieved from that awful position I was in charge of. It was a little hell, and I am pleased to get away safely. I had 350 men all told, but was given considerably more later. It was a big task, but my men stuck to it. By jove, they were brave fellows. The cry now is: 'Give us Australians, we can go anywhere.' I was congratulated by the general, and conducted an attack in his presence. General Godley was rather excited but the usual Hugh was as cool as ever, and easily beat them off. After the attack was over, General Godley patted me on the back, shook hands with me, and said: "Quinn, I like you, you do conduct things well. I wish I was as cool as you." The hill is now called Quinn's Hill. At the day when the general and his staff arrived I had no boots on, looked a picture. I had not a wash, a change of socks, or a shave for 10 days, and I don't bother now. A photograph of me now would look well. Dear Mother, - Don't think I'm skating. But I have done my duty, and did good work, besides building up a name, or, at least, upholding the traditions of our Devon ancestors (don't worry). I am very tired, no sleep, and at present resting. But the chips stick to me and have done some extraordinary work. Good luck, Queenslanders. Sam Harry is well. Dear Mother, - I have no fear, and trust that I come through safely. I will be able to tell some very funny yarns. I think that I would sooner be in a feather bed than on the cold ground with an overcoat. Good luck, my affectional but busy to - Warren. 6th May, 1915 (70 years)

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KILLED IN ACTION -29 MAY 1915

- DEATH OF MAJOR HUGH QUINN

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Flags were at half mast throughout
the city of Charters Towers



"Major Quinn fell with his face to the
foe across the very trenches that bear
his name, with the men of the
15th. Battalion behind him."