

John Stewart TUCKER

18-8-1891 to 2-5-1915

Biography as published in 1985 & 1995

John Stewart was the thirteenth child and ninth son of Annie and John Tucker and was born at *Lake View*. He was the only grandchild of Rachel and Ewen McDonald born that year. His great-grandparents were Christina and Donald McLean.

Current events included the beginning of the Trans-Siberian Railway and Arthur Conan Doyle published *The Adventures of Sherlock Homes*. The population in Australia reached three million and the big shearers' strike began in Queensland.

Stewart attended Sandergrove school until it closed in 1898 and then went to Strathalbyn Primary School. When his mother died in 1902 he had just turned 11 years. His father Walter John made a note in his diary.

20-11-1902 Placed Mum's money to Rachel's and Stuart's Savings Bank A/cs.

During 1903, Stewart boarded with a Mrs Allan in Strathalbyn to attend school. By October of the same year he was living at home and riding his horse to Strathalbyn and back each day. In June of 1905 he was absent from school for two weeks to help on the farm. From 1909 onwards the diary mentions weekly rifle practice on Saturdays and work on the farm during the week. During 1911, Stewart attended race meetings at Meningie, Langhorne Creek and Adelaide.

When World War One started on August 4, 1914, Stewart was among the first volunteers. Sixteen days later, on August 20, he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces at Morphettville, South Australia and became Number 292 Private John Stewart Tucker. Further entries in his father's diary continue his story.

5-9-1914 Stewart came home from the camp.

13-9-1914 Syd, Lucey, Mam and Effie motored down to the military camp.

Early in 1915 Russia asked Britain to relieve Russian troops fighting the Turks in the Caucasus by attacking Turkey elsewhere. Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, suggested a naval attack on the Dardanelles with Constantinople, capital of Turkey, as the objective. The Dardanelles is a Turkish strait that joins the Sea of Marmara with the Aegean Sea and is about forty-seven miles long and three to four miles wide. Its shores are formed by the Gallipoli Peninsula on the north-west and the mainland of Asiatic Turkey on the south-east.

The first of the Australian and New Zealand troops to be sent overseas had disembarked in Egypt where they underwent months of intensive training in the desert around Cairo. In January the forces in Egypt were put on the alert. On February 19 the British naval forces captured the outer forts at the entrance to the Dardanelles and in the following weeks encountered increasing Turkish resistance. On March 22 it was decided to mount a combined naval and military offensive on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The troops from Egypt were assembled on the island of Lemnos, near the peninsula, and on the night of April 24 they embarked in transports and warships from Mudros harbour. The Australians and New Zealanders landed on a small beach nearly a mile north of their objective, due to the confusion of moving at night. This beach, later called Anzac Cove, was the only landing ground, and the men were faced with steep cliffs and deep scrub covered gorges, overlooked by the enemy.

Seven days later, on May 2, 1915, Stewart was killed in action on Gallipoli while serving with the 10th Australian infantry Battalion. According to family hearsay a survivor of the same action said he had seen Stewart once as they landed but not again. Stewart is commemorated at the Lone Pine Memorial, Gallipoli, Australian and New Zealand Section, Panel 33. An inscription is carved in the centre of the screen wall before the memorial.

To the glory of God and in everlasting memory of 3,268 Australian soldiers who fought on Gallipoli in 1915 and have no known graves, and 456 New Zealand soldiers whose names are not recorded in other areas of the Peninsula but who fell in the Anzac Area and have no known graves; and also of 960 Australians and 252 New Zealanders who, fighting on Gallipoli in 1915, incurred mortal wounds or sickness and found burial at sea.

The Anzac Area, as defined by the Treaty of Lausanne, is about 2¹/₂ square miles, permanently ceded by the Turkish government in its entirety on account of the number of cemeteries and unlocated graves that it contains. Six weeks after Stewart's death his father's diary made the first mention of his loss.

19-6-1915 A Cable to say Stewart was missing from the Dardanelles.

18-8-1915 Stewart's birthday age 24 yrs

The final entries concerning Stewart were written in the diary the following year.

10-6-1916 Got Stewart's disc from Egypt today.

3-8-1916 Received Stewart's pocket book and cards from Egypt. Thos Cook and Son Melbourne.

30-10-1916 Mr Love out this morning with his wife, from Major Hardy informing us of Stewart's death was killed in action 22nd May 1915 at the Dardanelles. [Author's note. Military records state 2nd May]

31-10-1916 To Strath fixed up will concerning Stewart and Arthur.

Stewart was posthumously awarded medals: 1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal and the Anzac Commemorative Medallion. The last-named medal was struck in 1965 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli in 1915, but was not ready for distribution until 1967. Those eligible for the medal were members of the Australian and New Zealand armies, navies and merchant navies, who had served on Gallipoli or who had come under fire while landing troops or delivering supplies. Also eligible was the nearest surviving relative.

An inquiry to central army records in Melbourne for information on those family members who served in World War One revealed that Stewart's Anzac Commemorative Medallion had never been claimed. The name and address of his closest surviving relative was requested. The medal was subsequently issued to Lionel Rex Tucker, Stewart's oldest surviving nephew who, at the time, was a patient in the Naracoorte hospital. The medal arrived just before Anzac Day 1983 on which day the hospital staff took Rex in a wheelchair to watch the march in the main street of the town. With great pride he wore his uncle's medal beside his own decorations from World War Two.

- SOURCE : This biography was from page 96 of "History of Ewen & Rachel McDonald & Descendants" by Jill McDonald which was originally published in 1985. It was republished as part of "The History of Donald & Christina McLean and Their Descendants" in 1995.
- COLONIALISTS : Christina and Donald McLean and their ten children migrated from Argyllshire to South Australia in 1837. This was in the earliest years of the colony. The McLeans initially settled near Adelaide where they grew the first wheat crop in SA. Then in about 1840 they pioneered the Strathalbyn area. There are now well over 20,000 descendants spread across Australia and elsewhere.
- CHANGES : Please contact us with additions, corrections or suggestions about any part of this family tree.
- CONTACT : Visit our website www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com or Strathalbyn Museum phone 08 8536 2656 to discover more about your family – and about privacy and copyright.