



- **Acton Drill Hall** Courtesy of the ACT Heritage Library, Department of the Capital Territory Collection.
- **Woden Cemetery** Courtesy of the ACT Heritage Library, Department of the Capital Territory Collection.
- **Duntroon** Courtesy of the ACT Heritage Library, Department of the Capital Territory Collection.

LISTED PLACES IN
MILITARY HERITAGE

- Air Disaster Memorial
- Duntroon
- National Prisoner of War Memorial (Changi Chapel)
- General Bridges' Grave
- Summit of Mount Pleasant
- Calthorpes' House
- Aboriginal Memorial Plaque – Mount Ainslie
- Canberra Services Club
- Hill Station Homestead
- Tuggeranong Homestead
- Acton Drill Hall
- 'The Dugout' – West Block
- Woden Cemetery

A tour of Canberra's
MILITARY HERITAGE

A SELF-GUIDED TOUR



This tour has been developed by the
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Canberra has a long military history that spans over one hundred years; from the outbreak of WWI with men from the district volunteering to fight in that conflict, to being home for several thousand defence personnel and major defence families.

There are many sites in Canberra that have military historical significance. Some of those sites have long since disappeared from the landscape, and others have been significantly altered from their wartime use.

Many of the sites listed in this tour are heritage listed.

AIR DISASTER MEMORIAL

[GREGORY'S] MAP **65; C4**
*Entrance off Pialligo Avenue (Fairbairn Avenue).
Look for the signs.*

This has a significant place in Canberra's wartime history. This accident occurred at a height of great national insecurity period when WWII had commenced in Europe but prior to Japan commencing hostilities in the Pacific.

On 13 August 1940 an RAAF Hudson aircraft carrying senior members of the Australian War Cabinet crashed and burst into flames killing all passengers into a hill near Canberra Airfield.

The disaster assumed national proportions in view of the loss of the chief administrators of Australia's war effort and a major cabinet reshuffle was needed to fill the vital positions of those killed.

In August 1960, to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the disaster a memorial ceremony was held at the site of the memorial with memorial services being held at St Paul's (Melbourne), St John's (Canberra) and Westminster Abbey (London).

DUNTROON

[GREGORY'S] MAP **53; A8**
Entrance off Fairbairn Avenue or Morsehead Drive.

In 1902, soon after Australian federation, the first commander of the Australian Military Forces, Major-General Sir Edward Hutton, recommended that a military college be established to for the training of officers for the permanent military forces. Brigadier General William Bridges was given the task of founding the new college. He chose the former sheep station of Duntroon as the site.

By 1911 the Royal Military College of Australia opened with an intake of 32 Australians and 10 New Zealanders junior officers. The college has a long and distinguished history of training Army officers, many of whom have served in world and regional conflicts.

Adjacent to Duntroon is the Australian Defence Forces Academy. While Duntroon trained officers for the Army, this college was opened in 1986 to train officers for the navy and air force, as well as the army.

NATIONAL PRISONER OF WAR MEMORIAL (CHANGI CHAPEL)

[GREGORY'S] MAP **53; A10**
Robert Campbell Drive, RMC Duntroon, Campbell.

This simple structure was originally the Roman Catholic Our Lady of Christians Chapel in the Changi prisoner of war camp Singapore.

Constructed in 1944 by Australian war prisoners from scraps of wood and corrugated iron that the prisoners scrounged from many sources. Lt Hamish Cameron-Smith, an architect in civilian life who was serving in the Engineer Corp of the British Army and assisted by Lt Hugh Simon-Thwaites, who after the war became a priest, designed the structure.

After the In 1945 the Australian War Graves Registration Unit was sent to Changi to help dismantle the prisoner of war camp. It was decided that the chapel should be saved and so drew plans, took measurements and carefully dismantled the chapel. It was packed into gun boxes and sent to Australia.

The chapel has been reassembled and located at Duntroon as a memorial to all Australian POWs.

GENERAL BRIDGES' GRAVE

[GREGORY'S] MAP 52; J9

General Bridges Drive,
Mount Pleasant,
RMC Duntroon, Campbell.

Major-General William Throsby Bridges KCB CMG (1861-1915) was the first commandant of the Military College Duntroon and the first commander of the Australian Imperial Forces.

On 15 May 1915 at Monash Valley (Gallipoli, Turkey) he was fatally wounded by a sniper. He was evacuated but later died on a hospital ship en-route to Egypt.

His remains were interred at Alexandria but it was decided to return his body to Australia for burial. He is one of only two soldiers killed in action during the First World War to be returned home. This memorial grave was designed by Walter Burley Griffin.

Two Aleppo pine trees reputedly from the famous pine tree of Lone Pine, Gallipoli, have been planted on the slope below the grave to commemorate Royal Military College cadets who served at Gallipoli.

The Bridges Anzac Grove, a small grove of Eucalypts, located near the grave, commemorates the 75th anniversary of the landing by the Australian Imperial

ABORIGINAL MEMORIAL PLAQUE – MT AINSLIE

[GREGORY'S] MAP 42; G14

From the end of Remembrance Drive behind the Australian War Memorial take the path to Remembrance Nature Park, which leads up Mount Ainslie. Follow the metalled track sign posted, Mt Ainslie Walking Trail. Look for a sign, which directs you to the Aboriginal plaque.

This site consists of a small plaque set into the face of a naturally occurring rock outcrop. Its message acknowledges the contribution made by all those Aboriginal Australians who served in the armed forces.

Set in the bush landscape of Mt Ainslie the site links the close association Aboriginal people have with the land to the duty they saw in defending their country. On the way to the memorial look for the small plaque on the walking path commemorating the Kokoda Track.

CANBERRA SERVICES CLUB

[GREGORY'S] MAP 61; G2

Corner of Canberra Avenue and Empire Circuit, Manuka.

The Canberra Services Club, also known as 'The Hut' was established in 1941 to provide hospitality to service men and women during World War II. It was built as a result of a major fund-raising effort by Lady Gowrie, the wife of the then Governor-General.

Originally named the Lady Gowrie Service Club, it rapidly became the nucleus of the Canberra defence force community during the War. Every day during the war years, recreation and meals were provided for the service personnel of Australia, the British Commonwealth and allied forces.

TUGGERANONG HOMESTEAD

[GREGORY'S] MAP 91; A6

Entrance is off Johnson Drive, Richardson. Look for the signs.

Tuggeranong homestead was the home of the official history team who was commissioned to write the history of Australia's involvement in the World War I. Charles Bean and the team began at Tuggeranong in 1919 after moving from Melbourne and remained there till 1925.

The team then moved to Sydney. During their stay at Tuggeranong much of the twelve volumes of official war history were written. It is largely to Bean, who was the official war correspondent during the conflicts on the battlefields at Gallipoli and Europe that we owe the ANZAC legend, which in many ways forged our national identity after federation and continues to do so today.

Bean was also instrumental in the founding and building of the Australian War Memorial. The volumes of the *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18* can be accessed in full online through the Australian War Memorial website.

ACTON DRILL HALL

[GREGORY'S] MAP 41; E16

'THE DUGOUT' – WEST BLOCK

[GREGORY'S] MAP 3; K7

Queen Victoria Tce, Parkes.

West Block has a strong place in Canberra's early history. With the opening of the provisional Parliament House in 1927, West Block was the location for many government departments that had been transferred from Melbourne in the preceding year with the formal transfer of parliament from Melbourne to Canberra.

During World War II, the small building to the east of West Block was constructed as a bomb shelter and called 'the Dugout'. But it was more than just a bomb shelter. The building was used to encrypt and decrypt cables for the Prime Minister's Department. The communications facility in the "Dugout" was the main non-defence communications link with Australia's allies and countries that Australia had diplomatic representatives in.

The Prime Minister's Department occupied the first floor of West Block during the war, undertook this critical work. An external metal staircase was constructed to give access from a window on the first floor of West Block to ground level and The Dugout.

Today the Dugout building is structurally unchanged other than a change in roofing material. It is now

by the Australian Imperial Force on the Gallipoli Peninsula and the 1990 Remembrance Pilgrimage.

SUMMIT OF MT PLEASANT

[GREGORY'S] MAP 52; G10

General Bridges Drive, Mount Pleasant, RMC Duntroon, Campbell.

After visiting General Bridges' grave it is worth the short drive to the summit of Mt Pleasant. The memorial of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery occupies the summit and overlooks the city and Lake Burley Griffin. It consists of a low parapet inset with concrete panels on which are inscribed campaigns in which the Regiment took part, and an obelisk flanked by two cannons.

This Australian regiment was granted the two battle mottos of the Royal Regiment of Artillery in 1950 by King George VI: *Ubique* (Everywhere) and *Quo Fas Et Gloria Ducunt* (Where right and glory lead). The battle honour "Everywhere" is unique to the Gunners. It simply means that wherever there is a battle the Gunners are there, serving and supporting, and on Mt Pleasant it succinctly emphasises that this regiment has fought in all the major conflicts in which Australia has been involved.

It also has links to both World Wars. John Henry (Harry) Calthorpe, the owner and occupant, had enlisted on the outbreak of war in 1914. He sailed to Egypt and was among the first reinforcements for the landing at Gallipoli. After being wounded by an explosion he returned to Australia where he became a successful recruiting officer for the AIF. Reminders of his wartime experience are reflected in a framed montage of 13 photographs in the house.

By visiting the air-raid shelter, which still exists in the grounds, you can experience a link to World War II. Following Japan's entry into the war, many Canberrans were concerned about possible air raids targeted on the city. As a result government departments and schools constructed air-raid shelters and many citizens dug small shelters within their own back yards.

Another reminder that the threat of attack was taken seriously can be seen in the surviving blackout blinds in the breakfast room and the main bedroom. In the maid's room is a suitcase containing a gas mask and other equipment kept by Harry Calthorpe in his role as an air raid warden.

More than one million meals were served during this time. Following the end of the war there was little opportunity for returning ex-service men and women to meet and socialise so the building underwent alterations and in 1948 was reopened as the Canberra Services Club, the name it bears today.

It has operated continuously since then as a club for returned services personnel and their guests and is the only surviving, purpose-built, wartime services recreation facility in Canberra.

HILL STATION HOMESTEAD

[GREGORY'S] MAP 82; J4

Sheppard Street, Hume. Look for the signs.

The main homestead building of Hill station dates back to c.1909 but the property was part of the 1830s rural expansion in the district.

The homestead has a literary connection to World War I and a tragic connection to World War II. Sir Henry Somer Gullett KCMG was once of the owners of Hill Station. In 1915 Gullett was appointed Australian official war correspondent with the British and French armies on the Western Front. The following year he enlisted in the Australian Field Artillery, receiving his commission in 1917. Shortly afterwards he was transferred to the War Records Section in Palestine and in 1918 appointed official A.I.F. correspondent in that area.

After the war he joined Charles Bean's official history team and wrote *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine, 1914-1918*, (1923), volume 7 of the *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18*. Bean, who supervised the team, considered it the best of the 12 volumes written; Gullett thought that it was "a dog of a job" writing the volume. He briefly held the position of Director of the Australian War Museum and in 1925 Gullett won the Victorian seat of Henty in the House of Representatives as a Nationalist (later United Australia Party) candidate. He held the seat and senior positions in the Cabinet until his death in an aircraft crash on 13th August 1940 (see entry for the Air Disaster Memorial).

Kingsley Street, Acton.
ANU Campus.

The Drill Hall on the edge of the Australian National University (ANU) is now an art gallery but as its name implies it was originally constructed for military training.

During the early years of World War II drill halls were constructed across the Australia for the training and administration of locally raised military units.

The Acton Drill Hall was constructed in 1939. It has had a strong association with Canberra life during and after World War II. It has served as a drill hall for the activities and training of the 3 Battalion Royal New South Wales Regiment, the 7th Australian Light Horse, a supply depot platoon, school cadets, Air Training Corps, and after the war the Returned Sailors' Soldiers' and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia, the Sydney University Regiment and the Young Men's Christian Association.

The building stayed the property of the army until it was sold to the ANU in 1968 and became known as the Kingsley St Hall used by a number of local organisations.

It was later adapted as a community public radio station, where Radio 2XX had broadcast studios. The building has now been successfully adapted into a gallery space.

rooming material. It is now used as an electrical sub-station. A brick screen wall with three arches has been added to it and the area behind the brick was to park bicycles.

WODEN CEMETERY

[GREGORY'S] MAP 60; C13

Entrance via Justinian Street off Yamba Drive, Phillip.

Originally located in the farming district of Woden, Woden Cemetery has been the final resting place for several generations of residents in Canberra since the first burial in January 1936.

The original Cemetery was divided into nine burial areas covering general, denominational, including Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist, Baptist, Salvation Army, and Returned Servicemen. Since the mid-1930's additional burial areas have been added to include Jewish, Lutheran, Churches of Christ and Seventh Day Adventists.

The Returned Servicemen's portion is of particular significance in that it forms a prominent and ceremonial aspect to the Cemetery's formal layout and design.

There are graves of many prominent figures in Canberra history at Woden.