

Privates Ina and Clement Moore

The twins

As he passed the wriggling bundle to the midwife to clean and clothe, the doctor turned to the mother and said, 'You have to keep pushing Mrs Moore, there's another one'.

The mother cuddled the two little bundles against her body while her proud husband studied his new family. In a voice choked with emotion he asked, 'What will we call them?'



Clipping from The Ballarat Courier.

The mother nodded to the baby nestled in the crook of her right arm. 'This one we'll call Ina.' Shifting her focus to the child on her left, she said, 'And this one will be Clement'.¹

As the babies grew older, they developed an inseparable bond. They were a mischievous pair—no cupboard was safe, and anything left within reach was fair game for these two tiny larrikins.

When the boys reached school age, they attended Dana Street Public School.² The other lads soon learned that the special bond shared by the Moore twins meant that, in a school yard scuffle, to take on one meant taking on both. The twins were a familiar sight, scampering barefoot around the streets of Ballarat.

In their teenage years, the boys developed into keen sportsmen. They were both well known members of the Soldiers' Hill Football Club, with Clement on the wing and Ina dominant around the ruck.³ On the field, the brothers seemed to have the ability to anticipate the other's next move and know where and when to be in position to receive a pass or mark a kick from the other.

On leaving school, the pair went to work at the local Ballarat Brewing Company.³ On Saturday nights, the lads were regulars at the local dance, wooing the young ladies of the district with their dash, wit and charm.

The boys developed into fine young men. They were trustworthy and dependable, always ready to roll up their sleeves to lend a hand or to help a mate.

As the 19th century drew to a close, insurrection in South Africa found the British Empire at war with the Boer farmers. The Moore twins decided that a stint of military training might be in order—an opportunity to learn new skills and better prepare them for the future. The lads presented themselves for enlistment at the local militia unit, the 3rd Battalion.⁴ Clement was accepted but by some bizarre twist of fate, Ina was rejected because of his height. (Author's note: I found this strange as the records show that both were 5 foot 6 inches [165 cm] tall).⁴

It is not surprising that love and marriage influenced the boys' lives in a similar manner. Clement met, then married, the love of his life, Caroline, the union producing three children, a girl and two boys—one named Clement.⁴ Ina met and married Alice and had three boys—one christened Ina.⁵

After a long period with the brewing company, Clement decided on a change of employment and started work as a carpenter.⁴ Ina continued to work at the brewery in a position that he held for some twenty years.⁵

In 1914, when Australia responded in support of the Motherland and committed troops and equipment to defeat the rampaging German forces, the Moore twins looked on as their mates clambered to enlist for the 'great adventure'. Ina and Clement did not get caught up in the euphoric patriotism that was spreading across the country. They were committed family men and felt their

responsibilities lay with their wives and children. Furthermore, as Ina said to his brother, 'Don't worry mate, it'll be over by Christmas'.

By the end of April 1915, the newspaper headlines were full of the Australian and New Zealand landings at some place called Gallipoli. Soon regional papers began listing the names of local boys and men—including many known to the twins—who had been wounded or killed fighting the Turks.

The brothers sat in the local pub, reading the latest list of casualties. 'Well mate, what are we going to do?' Ina said.

'The only thing we can do: join up', his brother replied.

In July 1915, the Moore brothers stood before the recruiting officer with bible in hand, swearing the oath of allegiance to serve their country. Both men were allocated to the 13th Reinforcements of the 14th Battalion. Ina was assigned the regimental number 4256 and Clement 4257.

As he stood before his workmates, his boss spoke of Ina's courage and fine standing within the Ballarat community. 'Ina, we'd like you to accept this small token of our esteem and we wish you a safe return. By the way, get one for me, will you?' the older gentleman said with a nudge and a wink. Ina opened the small box and smiled appreciatively as he gazed on the splendid wristwatch his workmates had presented to him.³

The brothers were sent off to commence their training, initially in Ballarat, then Williamstown and finally at the Broadmeadows Army Camp. On 29 December 1915, the brothers paused at the foot of the gangway of the troopship *Demosthenes* and amid much hugging and tears, they bid an emotional farewell to their wives and children.⁶

They joined their unit at Serapeum, Egypt. Both were allocated to the 14th Battalion's 'A' Company—destined for the trenches of France. At the Egyptian seaport of Alexandria, the battalion boarded the *Transylvania*, the ship that would take them across the Mediterranean to the French port of Marseilles—running the gauntlet of marauding German submarines.⁷

As the troop train wound its way north, the members of the 14th enjoyed the scenery of the French countryside, so vastly different from the Australian landscape and especially refreshing after the monotony of the Egyptian desert. They laughed and joked, sang songs and waved at the French civilians as they passed by the quaint little villages.

The Diggers were sent to the rear area of Bailleul for a brief orientation period. They were issued with gas respirators and shrapnel helmets—tangible reminders that they were about to take part in the war for which they had been training so long and so hard. They were self-assured and spoiling for a fight; in their minds, they were invincible. Little did they realise the horrifying experiences that lay ahead of them.



EZ0051. Standing in a trench, an unidentified Australian soldier models the type of gas mask used in the trenches. The wraparound cloth mask featured a carbon filter (in a unit in the bag attached to the soldier's uniform) that removed impurities from the air. Note the fob watch on the soldier's wrist.

They had yet to face the appalling conditions of trench warfare: running the gauntlet of rows of pillboxes, each one bristling with machine-guns; negotiating belt upon belt of barbed wire entanglements, which stretched in a continual line from the English Channel to the Swiss border; and enduring the relentless bombardment and noise of artillery fire—not to mention having to confront death every waking moment.

By mid-June 1916, their preliminary introduction to war on the Western Front had been completed and the battalion was moved into the Bois Grenier sector on the front line.⁷

Like others in the battalion, the Moore twins were unprepared for the dreadful conditions of trench warfare, but were quietly confident that they could look after themselves and look out for each other. The 14th established a routine of active patrolling by night and sniping by day. Companies were rotated into and out of the forward trenches, to allow everyone short periods of rest in the support trenches.

When it was decided that the AIF should flex its muscles and carry the fight to the enemy, the 14th was chosen to launch the first Australian-led trench raid on the enemy. 'A' Company was to conduct the raid and, when volunteers were called for, to a man they stepped forward. The company was withdrawn to the rear to train and rehearse for the upcoming mission. As men were allotted tasks, the Moore twins were ordered to cover the exit and entry of the raiding party. The raid scheduled for the night of 2 July.⁷

AWM EZ0007. Unidentified members of the 2nd Australian Division in the trenches in the Bois Grenier sector. The soldier in the foreground is looking through a periscope; the man to his left is holding a Lewis gun.



Keeping noise to an absolute minimum, the tide of blackened-faced raiders crept forward towards the unsuspecting enemy. Suddenly they sprang into action, launching themselves into the trenches, coming face to face with soldiers of the elite 50th (Prussian) *Reserve Division*.

The trenches soon became the scene of absolute mayhem. Bombs were exploding in every direction and the Diggers were locked in a do or die battle, much of it hand to hand. The rally signal was given and the Diggers withdrew across no man's land as the Germans retaliated with a torrent of withering rifle, machine-gun and artillery fire. The remainder of the 1st Battalion opened up with rifle and machine-gun fire to cover their mates' withdrawal.

As the last of the raiders dropped into the trench, Clement peered over the parapet and asked, 'Where's the rest of them?'

'They didn't make it, mate', came the reply.

Although the company suffered heavy casualties, the raid was deemed an outstanding success.

The next morning, 'A' Company was withdrawn to the support trenches. A couple of hours later, company members were given the task of forming a carrying party to ferry stores to the forward trenches. The party would work under the supposed protection of darkness. It was decided to rest the men from the previous night and those who had not participated in the raid—including the Moore twins—would form the bulk of the carrying party.⁷

The German commanders were furious that the brash Australians would dare raid their trenches, so planned a retaliatory raid for that night. The German artillery sent over a few ranging shots during the day but by dusk the front was uncomfortably quiet.

The 14-man carrying party moved through the stores dump and picked up its load. As the Diggers groped their way along the rough track in the pitch-black

darkness, they passed a detachment of pioneers working on improving the roadway. 'Watch out up there boys, I think the square-heads are up to something', one of the pioneers warned.

It was around 10.23 pm when they heard it, the unmistakable screech of incoming artillery. 'Take cover', the corporal yelled, but his warning came too late as the rounds landed amid the party. Ina turned to check the whereabouts of his brother as a shell exploded between them.

The bombardment continued for over an hour with rounds of every calibre slamming into the forward positions of the 14th. As the barrage lifted, the Diggers scrambled back to the parapet to fend off the attack that they were sure was to follow. They didn't have to wait long. The Germans surged forward and almost succeeded in dislodging the Australians from their trenches. In a seesawing battle the Diggers held onto their position, the Germans ultimately withdrawing to their own lines to lick their wounds.

The moans of the wounded men of the carrying party brought the pioneers forward to assist. Two men searched the smoke and cordite-filled area, horrified by the carnage as they looked for survivors. 'We might as well pick up what's left of these blokes', one said, reaching down to retrieve a severed arm. The other bent down and removed a letter from the pocket of the dismembered torso nearby.⁸

'Addressed to a fella named Moore', he said.

'I've got something else of his too, mate. Here's his notebook', the other said. On comparing the items, they realized the initials were different.

'Wonder if they were related?' one asked.

At the Australian War Memorial on 10 March 2001, the Australian Army celebrated its 100th birthday. In a final act of remembrance, floral tributes of native flowers were laid at the base of selected plates bearing the names of Australians who had fallen in battle. Those honoured were the youngest to die, the oldest to die and the only set of twins to die simultaneously, Ina and Clement Moore.⁹

Notes

- 1 Registry of Birth, Deaths and Marriages, Victoria.
- 2 AWM 131, Roll of Honour Circular 1914–1918 War
- 3 Story reporting the death of the twins, *The Ballarat Courier*, 5 August 1916, p7
- 4 National Archives of Australia: B2455, WW1 Service Records, 4257 Private C Moore
- 5 National Archives of Australia: B2455, WW1 Service Records, 4256 Private I Moore
- 6 AWM 8, Unit Embarkation Nominal Rolls, 14th Battalion AIF, 1914–1918 War
- 7 Rule, EJ, *Jacka's Mob*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1933 & 2000
- 8 Wanliss, N, *The History of the Fourteenth Battalion AIF*, Arrow Printery, Melbourne 1927
- 9 Australian Red Cross No 4 ADBD, Estaples, 31 August 1916