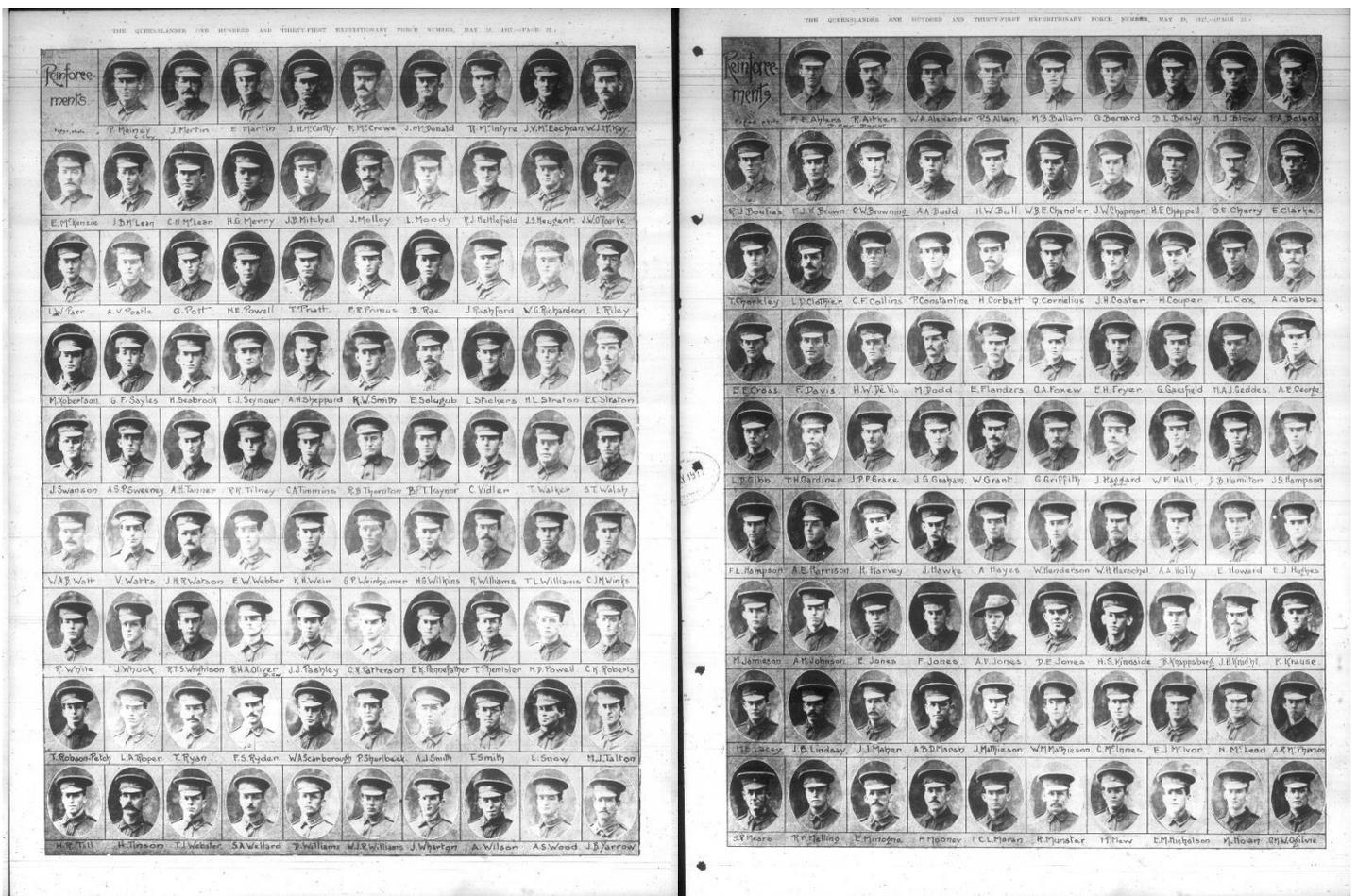


# Queensland Architects who died in World War 1

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We are working on the next volume of our biographical dictionary, to cover the first half of the C20. Overshadowing this period are two world wars. Commemoration of World War 1 is well advanced and soon the centenary of the Gallipoli landing will be observed. Tonight, we want to pay our respects to Queensland architects who died in the War.

It is impossible to research this period and not be aware of disturbing photos of soldiers published every week in the *Queenslander* newspaper. Randomly selected as an example, is the 19th May 1917 when Australians were fighting on the Western Front. It was during the 'Second Battle of Bullecourt' which cost the AIF 7,482 casualties. Casualties covered various circumstances: including killed, wounded and missing.



We thought the photographs were of the deceased, but they are reinforcements being sent to Europe to replace the casualties. The Roll of Honour – the casualty lists – were printed elsewhere in this newspaper. Every couple of days, the Censor's office would release the latest list. Published weekly, the *Queenslander* of 19th May 1917 includes 4 casualty lists Nos 294-7; occupying 2½ pages in small type. The total casualties for this week were 3,616, of whom 653 were killed but a further 344 were missing.

No Australian families were spared grief, including many architects whose sons served. HW Atkinson was President of the Queensland Institute of Architects from 1917. Atkinson's eldest son and his son-in-law were both killed on the same day – 5<sup>th</sup> April 1918.

Military records are not searchable by occupation, but to date, we know of 8 Queensland architects who died.

Alphabetically, they were:

**William Charles Belson** who was articled to the Townsville architect CD Lynch in 1908. After he completed his articles, he unsuccessfully applied for a position with the Works Department in 1912. How he spent the next 18 months or so is not known, but after war was declared, he enlisted immediately with the 9th Battalion. He was killed at the landing at Gallipoli on 25th April 1915.

**Frederick Boddington** had already made his mark as a talented architect. To gain experience abroad, he left Brisbane in August 1914 for London. By the time his ship reached Western Australia, war had been declared. He enlisted immediately. As a member of WA's 11th Battalion Boddington sailed in the first AIF convoy which left Albany in November 1914. In April 1915 he took part in the Gallipoli landing. Two years later at Bullecourt, on the Western Front, he was killed in action.

His body was not found. A month later his younger brother George also died at Bullecourt.

CW Chambers was President of the Queensland Institute of Architects in the early years of the war. His son **Robert Chambers** trained as an architect in his father's firm, Chambers & Powell, and later worked in Sydney. On the outbreak of war he enlisted in Queensland's famous 9th Battalion and, like Boddington, fought at Gallipoli. In August 1916, soon after arriving in France, he was killed at Pozieres where Australians succeeded in breaking the German defences. But within seven weeks, 6,800 Australians were killed, the worst loss of Australian life during any battle of this or any other war.

**Lewis Dolman's** story is sad in a different way. He worked as an architect in England before migrating to Australia. Joining the Queensland Works Department in 1914, he also enlisted soon after war was declared. But in December 1914, while at a military camp in Melbourne, Dolman was admitted to a mental asylum, suffering from 'acute delirious mania', a malaise which could be said then to have afflicted almost the entire Western World. Ten days later Dolman was dead, officially from pneumonia. A cousin, his only relative in Australia, sought to conceal the circumstances – whatever they may have been – from his parents in England.

**Francis Kay** was a New Zealand trained architect. He joined the Queensland Works Department in 1913 as 'a promising youngster'. Probably suffering from tuberculosis, he was posted to the drier climate of central Queensland where it was hoped that he would recover while also improving the standard of local brickwork. At least the first of these intentions was realized but, after enlisting in 1915, he was killed in June 1916 at Messines just as Australians commenced fighting on the Western Front.

**Christian Nommensen**, was working for the Works Department when he enlisted in 1916. In March 1918, as a lieutenant of the 47th Battalion, he was killed leading his platoon in an attack at Dernancourt to repel the enemy who had secured a foothold on the Allies' line. His sergeant Stanley McDougall won a VC in the same action.

**Louis O'Doherty**, another employee of the Works Department, also enlisted in 1916. He too was killed at Dernancourt, a month after Nommensen. O'Doherty was an orphan without siblings and official advice even after the war was that he had been wounded and was missing. In 1919, his aunt contacted the Red Cross and returned servicemen in O'Doherty's battalion to establish the circumstances of his death. Neither his body nor his effects were recovered.

**Lionel Wood**, yet another employee of the Works Department who enlisted in 1916, was killed at Ypres in October 1917, in the third battle in this bitterly-contested area. His service record has no information about the circumstances of his death and his effects comprised only two letters and a notebook.

Six of these eight architects worked for the Queensland Works Department. Before someone suggests that serving in the trenches was preferable to working for the Department – this merely reflects that the staff records of the Department survive. It is probable that twice as many young men who trained and worked in private practice before they enlisted, also **died** before they made an enduring mark on the architectural profession, or before they were aged twenty-one and old enough to have a vote, when their occupation (as draftsmen or architect) would have been listed in electoral rolls.

Their names of those men who died will liveth for evermore but their identification as aspiring architects is not easily discovered.

The war, despite the suffering it inflicted, created an opportunity for women to enter the architectural profession. With many men absent, women filled their places in offices. In the Works Department, three women were employed during the war: Juanita Pye (the daughter of Deputy Govt Architect Thomas Pye), Dorothy Brennan and Isabella Kerr. Also in Brisbane, in the office of GHM Addison, Addison's daughter Lily [X] took over from her brothers George & Edward when they enlisted —they, like Lily, had trained in the office.

In Rockhampton, Beatrice Hutton [X] had a similar experience. In 1913 she entered the office of E.M. Hockings as an articled pupil. But when Hockings departed on war service, she became the firm's chief draftsman. In 1916 Beatrice was the first woman to become a member of an Australian Institute of Architects.

Also in Rockhampton, Clarice Kingel, who worked for Beresford and Dibdin, joined the Queensland Institute as a student member in 1917.



These are only some of the women to be included in our forthcoming Biographical Dictionary 1900-1950. In the first volume there were no women among its 800 entries, but that will not be the case with this volume.

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