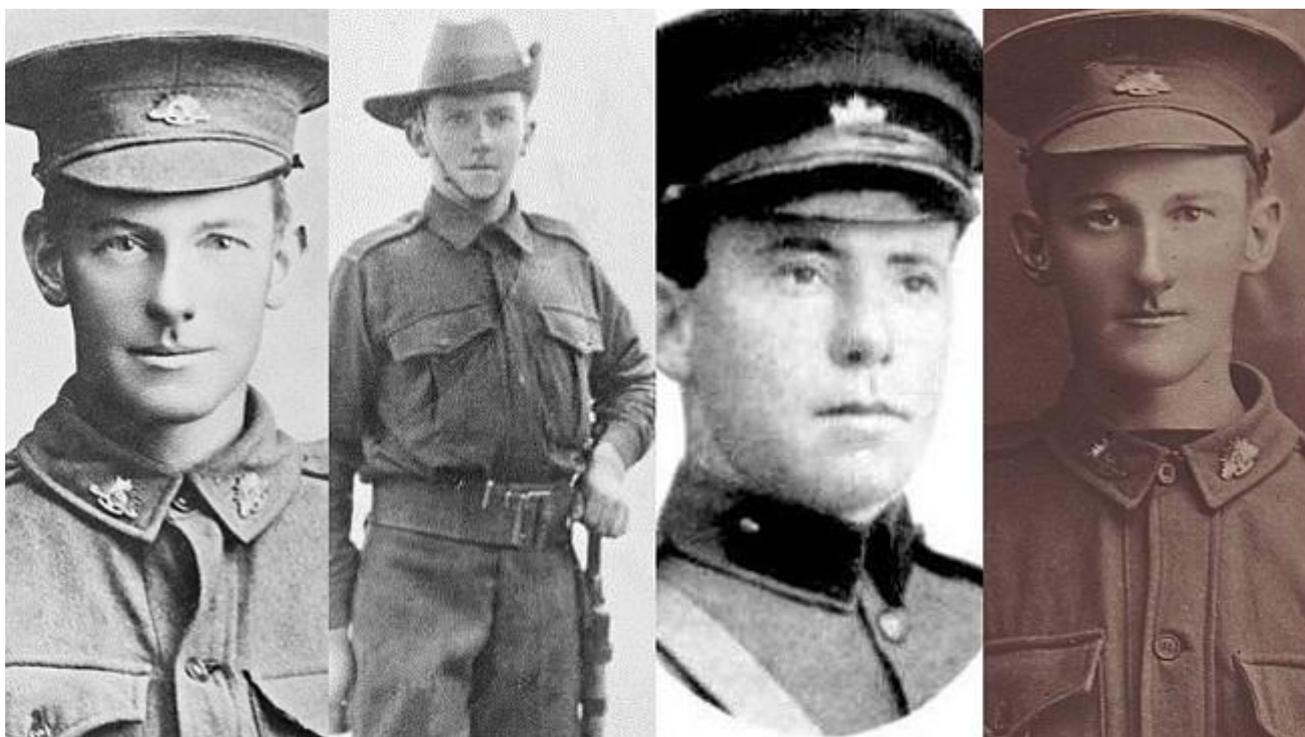


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Anzac Day: Three Curlewis brothers killed during the Gallipoli campaign

- by: *Peter Begg*
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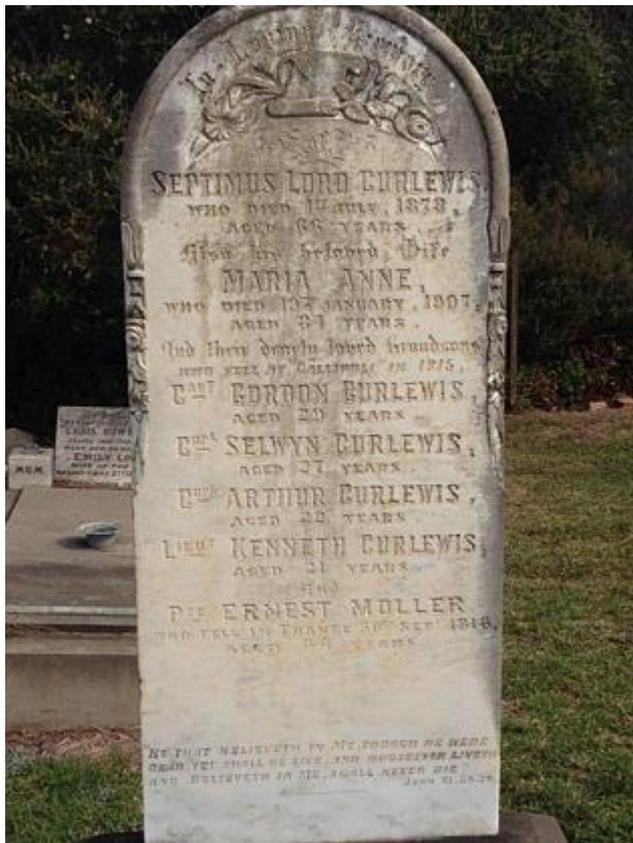


Selwyn Lord Curlewis, Arthur Grenville Curlewis, Gordon Levason Curlewis and George Campbell Curlewis. *Source:* GeelongAdvertiser

IN a story reminiscent of the film *Saving Private Ryan*, three of four brothers born in Geelong and the Bellarine Peninsula were killed during the Gallipoli campaign.

Selwyn Lord Curlewis and Gordon Levason Curlewis were killed at Gallipoli, and Arthur Grenville Curlewis died at Alexandria in Egypt from wounds received at Lone Pine.

The fourth brother, George Campbell Curlewis, survived the conflict. He was wounded and returned to Australia in November, 1915.



The Curlewis brothers are remembered at the Queenscliff cemetery on the headstone of their grandfather. *Source:* Supplied

Family member Megan Curlewis, of Canberra, said there was a suggestion that the surviving brother was never sent back to the war because his three brothers had been killed.

Ms Curlewis said she had in her possession a heartbreaking letter sent by Lila May Curlewis, the mother of the four boys, to another member of the Curlewis family, the well known Australian children's author Ethel Turner, who was actually Ethel Curlewis but wrote under her maiden name.

In the letter Lila was thanking Ethel for her earlier letter of sympathy after the deaths of two of Lila's sons, but a third son, Arthur, had also died in the meantime.

"It was in the terrible battle of the 7th of August that he was mortally wounded, shot through both lungs," Lila wrote.

"He lingered for eight days. It took six to get him from the battlefield to the hospitals of Alexandria but he only lived two days after reaching there.

"His last conscious words to the Matron, were, 'you will write and tell my Mother. I did want to come home again, but I did my duty to the end'."

The Curlewis family had given the area on the Bellarine Peninsula known as Curlewis its name.

Two members of the Curlewis family are still in the area, Doug and Gillian Curlewis, of Ocean Grove, although Mr Curlewis said he had originally come from Sydney.

Mr Curlewis said the property that had contained the original family homestead, Hermsley, had recently been on the market. The original Hermsley homestead was demolished in the 1950s and a more modern home is now on the site.



George Campbell Curlewis (second from left) and Lila May Curlewis (second from right) pictured with extended family. Three of the couple's four sons died at Gallipoli.
Source: Supplied

“It was for sale — it’s a beautiful property,” he said.

“The main part of the family was in Sydney, where I came from, but there are some in South Africa and Western Australia.”

The Curlewis area was originally referred to as Point Henry, but was renamed Curlewis after squatter George Campbell Curlewis purchased land there in 1845.

After George Curlewis died two years later, his stepbrother and trustee, Septimus Lord Curlewis, built Hermsley homestead. Septimus looked after the family and property until George's sons were old enough to take over in 1866.

Septimus died in 1878, and it was his second son, George Campbell Curlewis, who fathered the four Gallipoli soldiers.

The four boys never lived at Hermsley, but spent their early years at Carlyle in Marcus Hill before they went to Geraldton in WA, where George became a wheat farmer.

All four brothers took part in the Gallipoli landings on April 25, 1915.



Doug Curlewis stands outside the site of the original Curlewis family home, Hermsley at Curlewis. *Source:* News Limited

Gordon Curlewis enlisted on October 1, 1914, as a lieutenant in the 15th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force. He was promoted to captain on the day after the Gallipoli landings on April 26, 1915, and was killed in action two weeks later on May 9.

He was buried in the field by the Reverend CWG Moore. His grave is now in the Beach Cemetery at Gallipoli.

Selwyn Curlewis enlisted on September 18, 1914, as a lieutenant in the 16th Battalion, AIF, and was killed in action at Quinn's Post on May 2, 1915. He has no known grave and is commemorated at the Lone Pine Memorial.

Arthur Curlewis had enlisted in the 12th Battalion AIF and was severely wounded at Gallipoli. He was sent to hospital in Alexandria in Egypt but died of his wounds on August 15, 1915, at age 23 year. He was buried at Chatby Cemetery in Egypt.

The surviving brother, George Curlewis, enlisted on September 8, 1914, in the 16th Battalion, AIF, and was promoted to 2nd lieutenant. He served in Gallipoli but he was wounded and returned to Australia on November 7, 1915.

George Curlewis later farmed with his father, George, at Brookton, north of Perth.

The Anzacs evacuated Gallipoli in December, 1915, and surprisingly there were no casualties during the withdrawal.