

Lance Corporal

C.A. Wilkey

Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize 2023



Figure 1: Lance Corporal C.A. Wilkey.

Fullston C (c. 1916) *Claude Ashby Wilkey at Warminster, England (cut from group photo)* [photograph], Virtual War Memorial Australia, accessed 4 April 2023.

Grace Collins

Year 9

Loreto College Marryatville

Part A:

During World War I, 416 809 Australians enlisted to serve their nation¹. Everyday men – sons, fathers, uncles, and brothers – who risked their very existence, physical and emotional health, in service. Tragically, of those brave soldiers, 59 357 lost their lives between August 4th, 1914, and November 11th 1918², while approximately 155 000 were wounded³. Additionally, 4044 Australian soldiers were captured and interned as Prisoners of War (P.O.W.s)⁴. One such everyday man was Lance Corporal C.A. Wilkey.

On May 20th, 1891, in Millbrook, South Australia⁵, Walter and Margaret Wilkey (nee Barnett) welcomed their fourth child – Claude Ashby Wilkey – into the household. The Wilkeys of “Ellis’s Flat” (Figure 2), were a family of “nine girls and six boys”⁶, 15 children in total. Claude attended Millbrook Primary School and is not known to have completed a secondary education⁷. His daughter, Colleen Fullston, stated in her memoirs that “later he spent much of his time wood-cutting in the area of his parent’s home, with his father and brothers.”⁸

An article titled “SUDDEN DEATH NEAR WILLIAMSTOWN.” appeared

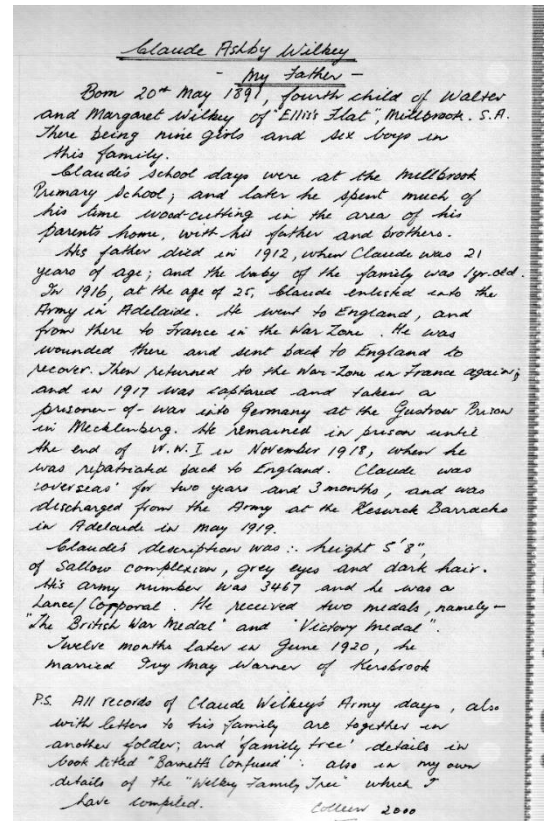


Figure 2: A page from Colleen Fullston's memoirs, titled “Claude Ashby Wilkey”.

SUDDEN DEATH NEAR WILLIAMSTOWN.

GAWLER, August 17.—With reference to the sudden death of Mr. Walter Wilkey, of Millbrook, reported in The Register on Saturday, enquiries were made yesterday by M.C. Weidenhofer, of Gawler. The deceased, two sons, and two other men were camped in a hut three miles from Williamstown, as they were engaged in road work during the day. Wilkey was in good health according to all appearances when he went to bed on Thursday evening, but was found to be dead the next morning. He had previously complained of a pain in the chest and shortness of breath. The facts were reported to Mr. W. T. Collins, of Williamstown, who decided not to hold an inquest. The deceased, who was 33 years of age, has left a widow and grown-up family.

Figure 3: Article in the Evening Journal, August 19th, 1912, “SUDDEN DEATH NEAR WILLIAMSTOWN.”

in the Evening Journal (Figure 3) on the 19th of August 1912. At 53 years of age⁹, the deceased in question was Claude's father, Walter Wilkey. Walter's son was 21 years old at the time¹⁰. Nothing else is known of Claude's early years. Four years later, on the 18th of October 1916, Claude signed the ‘Attestation Paper’, thus enlisting in the Australian Imperial Forces (AIF)¹¹. This document listed his age as “25 $\frac{3}{12}$ Years”, occupation “Woodcutter”, and next of kin as “(Mother) Margaret B A Wilkey”, (Figure 12). It is recorded that Claude was declared fit to undertake the duties of a soldier by the

¹ Australian War Memorial (18 March 2022) [Enlistment statistics, First World War](#), Australian War Memorial, accessed 15 May 2023.

² Ibid.

³ Australian Government (14 March 2023) [Overview of Australia's involvement in the First World War](#), Department of Veteran's Affairs, accessed 17 May 2023.

⁴ Op. cit.

⁵ Virtual War Memorial (n.d.) [WILKEY, Claude Ashby](#), Virtual War Memorial Australia, accessed 3 May 2023.

⁶ Figure 2: Fullston C (2000) *Claude Ashby Wilkey* [memoir], Colleen Fullston.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Figure 3: Evening Journal (19 August 1912) [‘SUDDEN DEATH NEAR WILLIAMSTOWN’](#), Evening Journal, accessed 5 June 2023.

¹⁰ Op. cit.

¹¹ Figure 12: Australian Imperial Force (1916) [Wilkey Claude Ashby Attestation Paper Pg. 1](#) [document], National Archives of Australia, accessed 24 May 2023.

examining medical officer¹², and subsequently directed to attend basic training at Mitcham Army Camp¹³ (located in what is now Colonel Light Gardens¹⁴) until the 7th of December 1916¹⁵ (Figure 14). Private C.A. Wilkey was then assigned to the 9th Reinforcement of the 48th Battalion, embarking the *Seang Bee* from Adelaide to Devonport on February 10th¹⁶, 1917; a 3-month journey that would conclude on May 2nd of that year. In a letter to his mother, dated May 4th, 1917, Claude wrote:

“...the Captain of the boat told us we were lucky to get through safe so we got into port about 2 o'clock in the morning Deven-Port was were we landed. We were always grumbling about our food on the boat meat and murphy's every meal and bad bread...”¹⁷

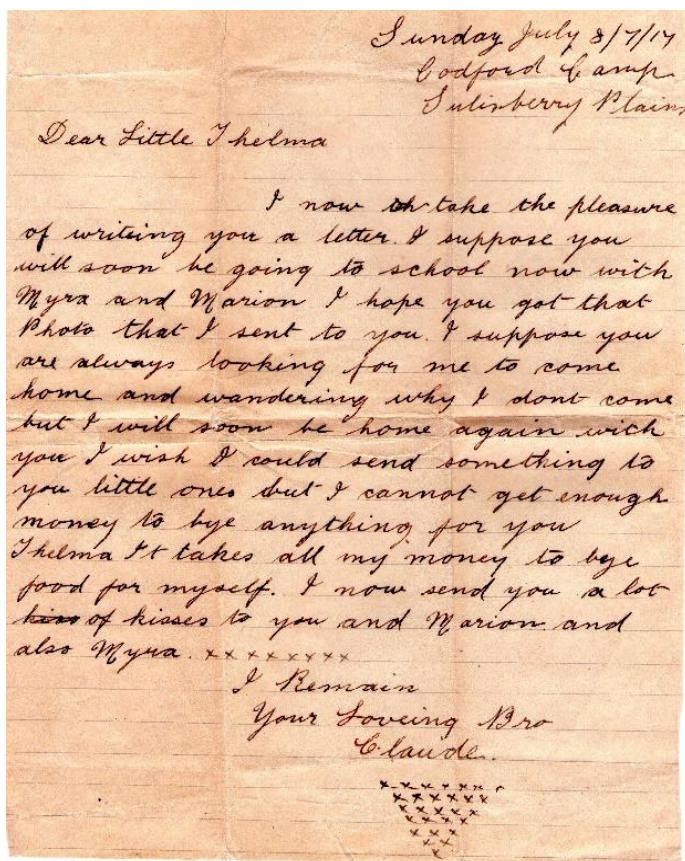


Figure 4: A letter from Claude addressed to ‘Dear Little Thelma’ – dated July 8th, 1917.

Claude was then sent to Codford Training Camp in Wiltshire, England¹⁸ – a location he would remain at, until being ‘...Taken on strength’ to join the 48th Battalion in France¹⁹. At Codford, Claude penned a letter to his youngest sister, Thelma, the contents of which demonstrate a caring nature. (Figure 4).

Upon arrival in France, Claude reported to his mother (Figure 19) that he had been ‘running up and down to the dentist’ on account of having lost his teeth overboard while crossing the English Channel²⁰. He entered the field on August 3rd, engaging in combat at Third Ypres²¹.

Commencing on July 31st²², Third Ypres is synonymous with mud, rain, and exhaustion²³. Devised by General Sir Douglas Haig in 1917²⁴, the objective of the Third Ypres offensive was to ‘break out of the Ypres salient’²⁵, aiming to capture the surrounding high ground occupied by the opposing German forces. It was envisioned that a northern advance to the Belgian coast could then occur – attacking enemy-occupied ports²⁶. As stated by the VWMA, although it ‘relieved the salient of direct German pressure’²⁷,

¹² Figure 13: Australian Imperial Force (1916) [Wilkey Claude Ashby Attestation Paper Pg. 3](#) [document], National Archives of Australia, accessed 24 May 2023.

¹³ Figure 14: Australian Imperial Force (1916) [Wilkey Claude Ashby Attestation Paper Pg. 4](#) [document], National Archives of Australia, accessed 24 May 2023.

¹⁴ Mitcham Local History Service and Heritage Research Centre (2009) [Colonel Light Gardens Chronology](#), City of Mitcham, accessed 2 June 2023.

¹⁵ Op. cit.

¹⁶ Virtual War Memorial (n.d.) [WILKEY, Claude Ashby](#), Virtual War Memorial Australia, accessed 3 May 2023.

¹⁷ Wilkey C.A. (4 May 1917) [letter].

¹⁸ Figure 14: Australian Imperial Force (1916) [Wilkey Claude Ashby Attestation Paper Pg. 4](#) [document], National Archives of Australia, accessed 24 May 2023.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Figure 19: Wilkey C.A. (20 July 1917) (Page 2) [letter], Wilkey C.A., France.

²¹ Virtual War Memorial (n.d.) [WILKEY, Claude Ashby](#), Virtual War Memorial Australia, accessed 3 May 2023.

²² Imperial War Museums (2023) [What You Need to Know About the Third Battle of Ypres](#), Imperial War Museums, accessed 29 May 2023.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Virtual War Memorial (n.d.) [Third Ypres](#), Virtual War Memorial Australia, accessed 4 May 2023.

²⁷ Ibid.

the battle's intention 'was not achieved.'²⁸ The conflict concluded on November 10th²⁹, with estimates numbering Allied casualties at over 250 000³⁰.

On the 11th of August, during Third Ypres, Claude sustained gunshot wounds to the left hip and right arm. Consequently, on August 18th, Private Claude Wilkey was invalided to England aboard the *HMHS Princess Elizabeth*, and ensuing disembarkation, admitted to Northampton War Hospital. Writing home (Figure 5), Claude attests that his hip was 'healing up very nicely'³¹.

Following his recovery and during a subsequent furlough in London³², on the 20th of October 1917, Claude was charged with the offence of 'failing to salute' a British officer, and thus condemned to forfeiting 3 day's pay³³.

After reporting to Sandhill Camp, Claude was shipped to France once more, rejoining the 48th Battalion on November 29th, 1917, as per official records³⁴. Writing to his mother on

CHAIN OF PONDS, June 12.—A welcome-home social, arranged by the local soldiers' committee, was held in the institute hall last night. The guests were Sgt. M. Houlahan, M.M., Cpl. Claude Wilkey, and Bbdr. A. Burton. Sgt. Houlahan, M.M., had a remarkable career. He and his brother James were among the first to enlist from this district, being members of the famous 10th Battalion. The brothers had many narrow escapes, and each saw the first shot fired at Gallipoli. Both were wounded on three occasions. The sergeant once had his revolver blown to atoms while it was fastened to his belt, but he escaped with a slight wound. James Houlahan was once shot near the eye, but the sight was uninjured, and on the last occasion a bullet went through the right side of his neck and passed out through the left shoulder. Sgt. M. Houlahan and Cpl. James Houlahan were both recommended for the Military Medal the same day, and both were awarded the distinction. The two brothers were never apart except when in hospitals. Michael had been on active service for four and a half years, while James was also away over four years. Cpl. Claude Wilkey was a prisoner of war, and was released from Germany on the signing of the armistice. While a prisoner he was made to work at loading timber on trucks for the German dugouts. Bbdr. A. Burton was the third son of Mr. and Mrs. R. Burton, of this town, to enlist.

Figure 6: Excerpt from a news article detailing a welcome-home social in Chain of Ponds, 21st of June 1919.

Saturday November 24th, after traversing the English Channel the previous night (Southampton to Le Havre)³⁵, Claude described the voyage as 'good', and noted a 'big' difference in the camp since last being present there, namely in terms of men 'for there were very few knocking about' then³⁶.

The following year, on April 11th, Claude was appointed to the rank of Lance Corporal³⁷, and whilst the promotion was recorded, no comments were made detailing the 'why' (i.e., 'Wilkey was promoted because...'). Less than a month later, on May 3rd, Lance Corporal Claude Ashby Wilkey was reported

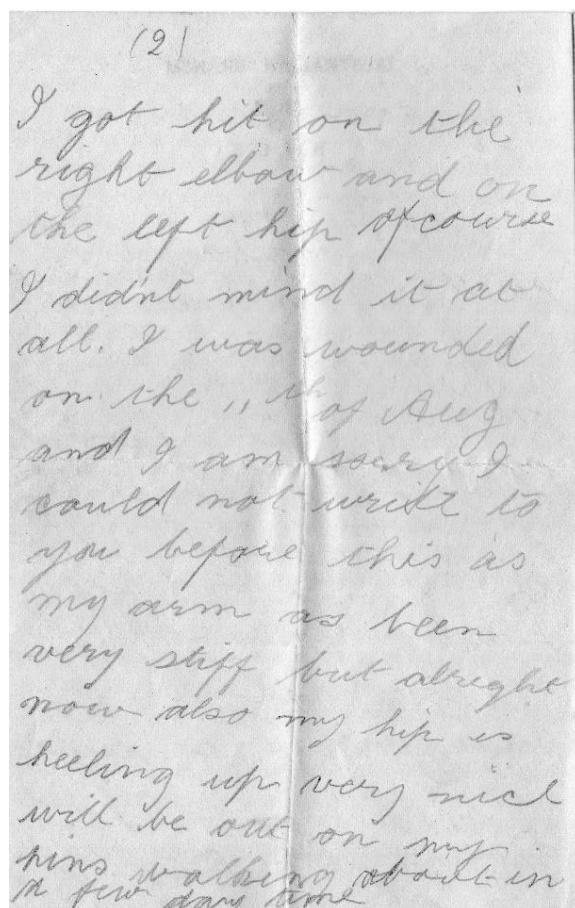
A photograph of a handwritten letter on aged paper. The text is written in cursive and matches the transcription provided in the text block. At the top left, the number '(2)' is written in the margin. The handwriting is clear and legible.

Figure 5: The second page of a letter written by Claude to his mother from Northampton War Hospital on September 4th, 1917.

²⁸ Virtual War Memorial (n.d.) *Third Ypres*, Virtual War Memorial Australia, accessed 4 May 2023.

²⁹ Australian Government | Department of Veterans' Affairs (10 March 2023) [Third Battle of Ypres 31 July to 10 November 1917](#), ANZAC Portal, accessed 23 May 2023.

³⁰ Imperial War Museums (2023) [What You Need to Know About the Third Battle of Ypres](#), Imperial War Museums, accessed 29 May 2023.

³¹ Wilkey C.A. (September 1917) [letter].

³² Swincer P (15 May) [interview].

³³ Figure 14: Australian Imperial Force (1916) [Wilkey Claude Ashby Attestation Paper Pg. 4](#) [document], National Archives of Australia, accessed 24 May 2023.

³⁴ Figure 15: Australian Imperial Force (1916) [Wilkey Claude Ashby Attestation Paper Pg. 5](#) [document], National Archives of Australia, accessed 24 May 2023.

³⁵ Figure 17: Wilkey C.A. (24 November 1917) *Page 1* [letter], Wilkey C.A., France.

³⁶ Figure 18: Wilkey C.A. (24 November 1917) *Page 2* [letter], Wilkey C.A., France.

³⁷ Figure 15: Australian Imperial Force (1916) [Wilkey Claude Ashby Attestation Paper Pg. 5](#) [document], National Archives of Australia, accessed 24 May 2023.

Missing in Action³⁸. His mother, Margaret Wilkey, made an enquiry to the Red Cross Information Bureau regarding this in June (Figure 16)³⁹. It was later discovered that Claude was in fact a Prisoner of War (P.O.W) in German Hands⁴⁰.

During his time in captivity, Claude was interned in Güstrow Prisoner of War Camp, Mecklenburg, Germany. According to a newspaper article concerning a soldiers' welcome-home social in Chain of Ponds (Figure 6), Claude was forced '...to work at loading timber on trucks for the German dugouts.'

In a letter home to 'mother and all' (Figure 8) Claude detailed some aspects of his captivity; writing that 'we get no news over here.' He also expressed his wishes to 'sit down to a good feed now...' and also mentioned that 'we are all looking for parcels from the Red Cross and hope we will soon get them.' This indicates that during his internment, Claude was not provided with sufficient rations for his sustenance – something not uncommon for prisoners of war⁴¹.

As stated in the aforementioned newspaper article, Claude was '...released from Germany on the signing of the armistice.' He was repatriated to England on November 28th 1918⁴², before being discharged from war service on April 26, 1919⁴³. He returned to Australia via the *Nevasa*⁴⁴; his service number 3467.

In 1920⁴⁵, Claude married Ivy May Warner. The pair would go on to have 6 children together: 'Iris, John, Colin, Colleen, Ross & Peter'⁴⁶.

On April 10th, 1942,⁴⁷ Claude enlisted in the Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC), commonly referred to as the 'Home Guard'. Specifically, he was a member of the 2nd (SA) Battalion⁴⁸. His daughter, Colleen, wrote that she recalled 'when these men would assemble and do training at Chain of Ponds Oval.' Colleen also reported of Claude that 'In 1939 he purchased a 'wireless' set (radio); and of course, there was always reports on the situations of the war.' During these war years Claude was a 'very quiet person.' Like many soldiers, he never spoke of his experiences in service⁴⁹ - although the memory was preserved on a roll of honour at Millbrook Primary School⁵⁰ (Figure 11). Unfortunately, due to the effects of a bushfire in February 1983⁵¹, this has since been destroyed.

Perseverance and mateship are two defining markers of the ANZAC Spirit. According to the Oxford Languages



Figure 7: Claude Ashby and Ivy May Wilkey on their veranda, Chain of Ponds.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Figure 16: Wilkey M. (11 June 1918) [letter].

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Imperial War Museums (2023) [Life As A Prisoner of War During WW1](#), Imperial War Museums, accessed 1 June 2023.

⁴² Virtual War Memorial (n.d.) [WILKEY, Claude Ashby](#), Virtual War Memorial Australia, accessed 3 May 2023.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ [Claude Ashby Wilkey \(1891 - 1975\)](#) (n.d.), Find a Grave, accessed 2 June 2023.

⁴⁶ Figure 10: Collins G (2023) *Claude & Ivy Wilkey - Grave Kersbrook General Cemetery* [photograph], accessed 6 May 2023.

⁴⁷ Virtual War Memorial (n.d.) [WILKEY, Claude Ashby](#), Virtual War Memorial Australia, accessed 3 May 2023.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Swincer P (15 May) [interview].

⁵⁰ Figure 9: Fullston C (2000) *My Father* [memoir], Colleen Fullston.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Dictionary, these qualities are defined as ‘persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success’⁵² and ‘companionship or friendship’⁵³ respectively. Lance Corporal C.A. Wilkey demonstrated both these characteristics throughout his service.

Perseverance, in that he endured an injury significant enough to require hospitalization – returning to the front lines in the same year he recovered. Moreover, as a Prisoner of War, Claude was an exemplar of perseverance – enduring the conditions of his captivity for over 6 months.

In his letters, Claude constantly referenced his companions’ welfare, and furthermore, in an aforementioned letter to his mother from Güstrow Prisoner of War Camp, Claude continually referred to himself and his fellow prisoners as ‘we’ – ‘we get no news over here’, ‘we are all looking for parcels’. In itself, this also demonstrates Claude’s sense of mateship. Furthermore, his enlistment in the VDC in 1942 is evidence of a commitment to ensuring the welfare of his fellow Australians was protected – the embodiment of mateship.

Claude died on November 27th, 1975 (attributed to natural causes)⁵⁴, aged 84, and was buried in the Kersbrook General Cemetery⁵⁵ (Figure 10), - from all reports, a ‘very kind’ man⁵⁶. A man who persevered through conflict and internment – continually demonstrating a sense of mateship – in order to serve his country. He was an ANZAC.

In the words of his daughter Colleen Fullston (nee Wilkey), “He wanted to forget, but I daresay – it must be very hard for a fighting soldier to forget the horrific tragedies of war.”⁵⁷

Part A Word Count: 1499

*This count does not include footnotes or captions.

⁵² Oxford Languages (n.d.) [Dictionary | Perseverance](#), Dictionary | Oxford Languages, accessed 7 June 2023.

⁵³ Oxford Languages (n.d.) [Dictionary | Mateship](#), Dictionary | Oxford Languages, accessed 7 June 2023.

⁵⁴ Virtual War Memorial (n.d.) [WILKEY, Claude Ashby](#), Virtual War Memorial Australia, accessed 3 May 2023.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Collins L.M.A. (24 May) [interview].

⁵⁷ Figure 9: Fullston C (2000) *My Father* [memoir], Colleen Fullston.

Appendix:

Seulement nommer le camp principal — Ecrire lisiblement.

Name Headcamp only — Write distinctly.

Адресуйте только въ главный Лагерь. Пишите четко и разборчиво.

Alleenlijk het stamleger aangeven — Duidelijk schrijven.

Se scrie numai numele lagărilor principale — Scriți vizibil.

Solamente indicare il campo principale — Scrivere distintamente

Güstrow ГЮСТРОВЪ June 23rd 1918

Dear Mother and all

I now have a chance
of writing a few lines to you
all tonight and I hope you
will get it alright and I
hope you are all well at
home as it leaves me as well
as can be expected on this
side of the world. I wrote a
letter too some of you the
night before I got captured
that was on the second of May.
Well I don't know what to
fill this in with as we get
no news over here. I had a
letter from Mr H Parnell and
will you send me his address
as he didn't give it to me.
He wrote a very nice letter and
also invited me to go and see
them when on leave ^{in England} but here
I am worst luck. It would
be nice too sit down to a
good feed now and we are
all looking for parcels from
the Red Cross and hope we
will soon get them. My address
is on the out side of this
letter so here it is again No 3467

Figure 8: A letter addressed to 'Mother and all'. Written by Claude A. Wilkey on June 23rd, 1918, from Güstrow Prisoner of War Camp, Germany.

My Father.

Now, I understand the reason why that during the very early stages of W.W.II (1939-45), my father was a very quiet person. In 1939 he purchased a 'wireless' set (radio); and of course there was always reports on the situations of the war. When the 'wireless' was switched on for the news items, we were all very quiet as father listened to what was happening in the war zones overseas. For he knew what it was like during W.W.I (1914-18).

He didn't tell us anything about the fighting, or his war wounds, or of being a prisoner-of-war. We all respected him dearly for this later in our lives, because, as children, we didn't realize then what traumas he had encountered during those terrible war years. He wanted to forget but I don't say - it must be very hard for a fighting soldier to forget the horrific tragedies of war.

Claude Wilkey, my father, attended the Mullbrook School and my sister and brothers, we all attended that school too.

Upon a wall, there was a large white marble 'Honour Roll', and inscribed upon it was my father's name, together with many other names of the men who enlisted in the Services from the district.

We were very proud seeing his name on this 'Honour Roll'.

I, Colleen, attended the Centenary Celebration of the Mullbrook School, together with my sister and brothers in 1979. There in the large classroom was that white marble Honour Roll, situated, as always, above

the fire-place. I took a photo of that 'Honour Roll'; but sadly in February 1983, bushfires raged through the area and the 'Honour Roll' was destroyed along with the whole school building and its adjoining house.

During the years of W.W.II (1939-1945). Claude was a member of the V.D.C. This was the Voluntary Defence Corps, or commonly known as the 'Home Guard'.

I remember that period, when these men would assemble and do training at the Chain of Ponds Oval. As a very young person it was really hard to understand exactly what was happening.

My brother John enlisted in the C.M.F. (Citizens Military Forces) in 1943 aged 18 years; and was discharged in 1946.

Figure 9: Pages from Colleen Fullston's memoirs, entitled 'My Father'.



Figure 10: The grave of Claude Ashby and Ivy May Wilkey, Kersbrook General Cemetery, South Australia.

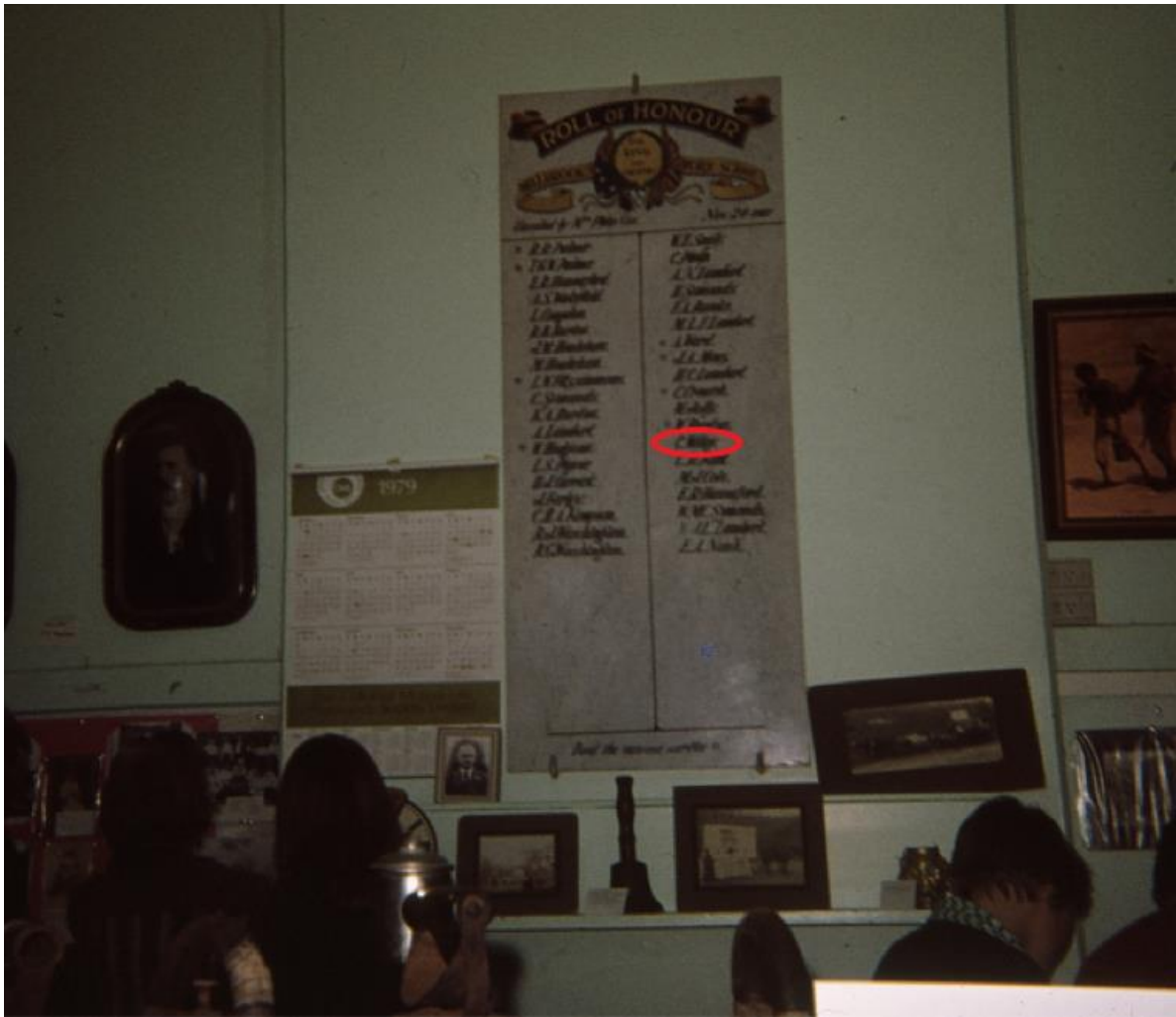



Figure 11: Millbrook Primary School Roll of Honour, 1979.

DENTAL "C" CLASS
MILITARY FORCES.

AUSTRALIAN

A 116602
ALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

ATTESTATION PAPER OF PERSONS ENLISTED FOR SERVICE ABROAD.

3467 Name WILKEY, Claude Ashby
 Unit 9th AS Infy. 9th REFTS 48 BATTN
 Joined on OCT 18 1916

Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

1. What is your name? Claude Ashby Wilkey

2. In the Parish of _____ in or
 near the Town of Milbrook
 in the County of South Australia

3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a
 Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter,
 papers to be shown) Natural Born

4. What is your age? 25³/₁₂ Years

5. What is your trade or calling? Woodcutter

6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so,
 where, to whom, and for what period? No

7. Are you married? No

8. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) ...
 The answer to this question shall not be construed as in the
 nature of a Will. (Mother) Margaret Wilkey
Milbrook
South Australia

9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? No

10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His
 Majesty's Forces with Ignominy, or as Incorrigible
 and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of
 Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have
 you been dismissed with disgrace from the Navy? No

11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His
 Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the
 Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy
 or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not
 now serving, state cause of discharge. No

12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous
 service? Yes

13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His
 Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? No

14. ~~For married men, widowers with children, and soldiers who are the
 sole support of widowed mother) —~~
 Do you understand that no Separation Allowance will be issued
 to you in respect of your service beyond an amount which
 together with pay would reach 8/- per day? No

15. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against
 smallpox and enteric fever? Yes

Claude Ashby Wilkey do solemnly declare that the above answers made
 by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces
 of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to allot not less than two-fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during my
 service for the support of my wife †
wife and children

Date 18/10/16 C. A. Wilkey
 Signature of Person Enlisted.

* This clause should be struck out in the case of unmarried men or widowers without children under 18 years of age.
 † Two-fifths must be allotted to the wife, and if there are children three-fifths must be allotted.

wo 59602

Figure 12: Lance Corporal C.A. Wilkey, Australian Imperial Force Attestation Papers, 1916, page 1 (National Archives of Australia).

Claude Ashby Wilkey

Description of Claude Ashby Wilkey Remarks.Age 25 years 4 monthsHeight 5 feet 7 inchesWeight 161 lbs.Chest Measurement 36 1/2 inchesComplexion FairEyes Grey Both 6/6Hair BrownReligious Denomination Methodist

DISTINCTIVE MARKS.

Vris. R⁶ L⁶

Vacc. Nil

CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

I HAVE examined the above-named person, and find that he does not present any of the following conditions, viz.:-

Scrofula; phthisis; syphilis; impaired constitution; defective intelligence; defects of vision, voice, or hearing; hernia; hæmorrhoids; varicose veins, beyond a limited extent; marked varicocele with unusually pendent testicle; inveterate cutaneous disease; chronic ulcers; traces of corporal punishment, or evidence of having been marked with the letters D. or B.C.; contracted or deformed chest; abnormal curvature of spine; or any other disease or physical defect calculated to unfit him for the duties of a soldier.

He can see the required distance with either eye; his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his joints and limbs; and he declares he is not subject to fits of any description.

I consider him fit for active service.

Date 18. 10. 16Place Adelaide

[Signature]
Signature of Examining Medical Officer.

CERTIFICATE OF COMMANDING OFFICER.

I CERTIFY that this Attestation of the above-named person is correct, and that the required forms have been complied with. I accordingly approve, and

appoint him to 9th/48th Infy.

Date 16. 12. 16.Place Mitcham. D.A.

[Signature]
O. Commanding 9th/48th Infy.

Figure 13: Lance Corporal C.A. Wilkey, Australian Imperial Force Attestation Papers, 1916, page 3 (National Archives of Australia).

4

Service No. 3467 Name Wilkey. C.A.

Rank	Company	Promotions, Reductions, Casualties, &c.	Period of Service in each Rank		Remarks
			From	To	
<u>Coy.</u>	<u>Plc.</u>		<u>OCT 18 1916</u>	<u>7-11-16</u>	<u>8018</u>
<u>2ND DEPOT BATTALION A.I.F.</u>					
<u>F. Coy</u>			<u>8-11-16</u>	<u>6-12-16</u>	
<u>2ND DEPOT BATTALION A.I.F.</u>			<u>7-12-16</u>	<u>7/12/16</u>	
<u>Receiving Base Mitcham</u>					
<u>B. COY.</u>		<u>PRIVATE</u>	<u>DEC 15 1916</u>		<u>815-2</u>
<u>9-48</u>		<u>PRIVATE</u>	<u>16 DEC 1916</u>		<u>826-2</u>
<u>9th REPT</u>	<u>48 LATTIN</u>				
<u>SEEANG BEE</u>		<u>Emarked Adelaide</u>	<u>10-2-17</u>		
<u>A48</u>		<u>Disembarked Devonport</u>	<u>2-5-17</u>		<u>L.R. 2173</u>
<u>Plc. Proceeded of sea to France</u>					
<u>via 12th Long Bn Bedford. Southampton 16/7/17</u>					
<u>Plc. Taken on strength 48th Batta. A.I.F. from 7th Reinf 48th Batta. A.I.F.</u>					
			<u>3-8-17</u>		<u>D/O 3574195 16/7/17</u>
<u>Pte. Adm. No. 4643 SE</u>					
<u>War Hospital 3.3.17. Disston 12-8-17.</u>					
<u>Wip at Adm. W 525. H R 1042.</u>					
<u>Pte. Wounded in Action.</u>					
			<u>17/7/17</u>		<u>D/O 374416 37/7/17</u>
<u>Pte. Embarked per H.S. Princess Elizabeth at France for England.</u>					
			<u>18/8/17</u>		<u>D/O 374417 37/8/17</u>
<u>J.W. Hoops & Firm.</u>					
<u>Plc. Disemb. Sailing to salute London 20.10.17.</u>					
<u>a Staff Officer A.M. Forcel Award forfeit 3 days pay by Major G.H. Howard 20.10.17.</u>					
					<u>D/O 805585 E 8/11/17</u>
<u>Plc. Proceeded of sea to France via of sea Greening Bx. Sandhill temp.</u>					
<u>I have examined the above details and find them correct in every respect.</u>					
<u>London 23.11.17. D/O 865805 29/11/17</u>					

Figure 14: Lance Corporal C.A. Wilkey, Australian Imperial Force Attestation Papers, 1916, page 4 (National Archives of Australia).

STATEMENT OF SERVICE OF NO 3467 NAME Wilkey, Claude Ashby

Unit.	Promotions, Reductions, Casualties, etc.	Place.	Date.	Remarks.
	Rejoined unit from abandoned in England.	France.	29.11.17.	D/o 53/6490. 17/2/17.
48 th Bn	Pa app: L/Cpl.	France.	11. 4. 18.	D/o 19/2046. 3/5/18
48 th Bn	L/Cpl reported missing	France.	3. 5. 18	CIB No 2551. 24/5/18 D/o 22/22647.
	Ref 3rd Ech. France D/o 22/ S.P. 2677 which reads: Missing etc. Non rep: Prisoners of War in German hands.			P.C. from self 5/5/18 W/B No 2620. 14/6/18 D/o 49/493E. 20/6/18
	RETURN TO AUSTRALIA Per <u>Nevasa</u> Pop.....	England.	5. 3. 19	V.L. 442. V.L. 714. C.P.O.L. 3012. 9/13/19 657/1116602 2X3493 12-3-19
	Emb for Eng From Emb Camp	Calais	28.11.18	Ax 20002 2/11/18

Figure 15: Lance Corporal C.A. Wilkey, Australian Imperial Force Attestation Papers, 1916, page 5 (National Archives of Australia).

X
M Hillbrook,
11th June, 1918.

Red Cross Information Bureau,
Verco Buildings,
Nth. Terrace.

Madam,
I would be very grateful if
you could find any news concerning
my son, reported missing, by the Military
Authority since 25th May. We haven't
had any further word of him from
Headquarters since reported missing.
His address —

No 3467.
Pte. C. A. Wilkey,
(9th Reinforcement) 48th Battalion,
Australian Imperial Forces,
Abroad. "O.A.S."

I remain,
Yours very truly,
(Mrs) M. B. A. Wilkey.

M Hillbrook.
Stk. Aust.

Figure 16: Margaret Wilkey (nee Barnett)'s letter to the Red Cross Information Bureau – dated 11th of June 1918 – regarding Claude being reported as 'missing'.



Saturday 24/11
France

[Handwritten signature]

Dear Mother

Just a few lines
to let you know that I have
arrived over here again and
I will be joining up my
Batt in a few days time
We had a good trip across
the channel last night, we
came over from South
Hampton to Le Harve, and
the march to the camp is
about seven miles and it
is a fair brute of a
march with a pack up
We have a job to get
matches over here and
when we get a chance

Figure 17: Page 1 of a letter from Claude to his mother upon arrival in France (after recovery from his injury). Dated 24th November 1917 (Saturday).



AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

we can only get one box at the time, there is a big difference in this camp since I was here in July especially with men for there is very few knocking about now. It will hurt a bit living in tents again after being used to a good bed for a good while and again having no lights in them and getting up at halfpast five in the mornings to be ready to answer the roll call and get breakfast at halfpast six

P.T.O.

Figure 18: Page 2 of a letter from Claude to his mother upon arrival in France (after recovery from his injury). Dated 24th November 1917 (Saturday).

121

and plenty of it too so
we are not starved here
like we were in the
camp we just left, well
there is nothing much
to write about. Poor
Freddie is out in the
bull ring as we call
it that is the training
ground and I am
menning up and down
to the dentist getting
a new set of teeth
lost mine over board
on Monday night
when we were com-
ing across.

Figure 19: Page 2 of a letter written by Claude after arrival in France (addressed to his mother), on the 20th of July.

References:

Primary Sources:

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL:

- Figure 12: Australian Imperial Force (1916) [Wilkey Claude Ashby Attestation Paper Pg. 1](#) [document], National Archives of Australia, accessed 24 May 2023.
- Figure 13: Australian Imperial Force (1916) [Wilkey Claude Ashby Attestation Paper Pg. 3](#) [document], National Archives of Australia, accessed 24 May 2023.
- Figure 14: Australian Imperial Force (1916) [Wilkey Claude Ashby Attestation Paper Pg. 4](#) [document], National Archives of Australia, accessed 24 May 2023.
- Figure 15: Australian Imperial Force (1916) [Wilkey Claude Ashby Attestation Paper Pg. 5](#) [document], National Archives of Australia, accessed 24 May 2023.

DIGITIZED NEWSPAPER EXCERPTS:

- Figure 3: Evening Journal (19 August 1912) 'SUDDEN DEATH NEAR WILLIAMSTOWN' *Evening Journal*, accessed 5 June 2023. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/203476466>.
- Figure 6: Adelaide Observer (21 June 1919) 'Chain of Ponds - Welcome Home Social', *Observer*.

INTERVIEWS:

- Collins L.M.A. (24 May) [interview].
- Swincer P (15 May) [interview].

MEMOIRS:

- Figure 2: Fullston C (2000) *Claude Ashby Wilkey* [memoir], Colleen Fullston.
- Figure 9: Fullston C (2000) *My Father* [memoir], Colleen Fullston.

PHOTOS:

- Figure 10: Collins G (2023) *Claude & Ivy Wilkey - Grave Kersbrook General Cemetery* [photograph], accessed 6 May 2023.
- Figure 1: Fullston C (c. 1916) *Claude Ashby Wilkey at Warminster, England (cut from group photo)* [photograph], Virtual War Memorial Australia, accessed 4 April 2023. <https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/549030>
- Figure 7: Fullston C (n.d.) *Claude Ashby Wilkey with his wife Ivy on the front veranda of their Chain of Ponds home.* [photograph], Virtual War Memorial Australia, accessed 3 June 2023. <https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/549030>
- Figure 11: Fullston C (1979) *Millbrook Primary School Roll of Honour* [photograph].

LETTERS:

- Wilkey C.A. (4 May 1917) [letter].
- Figure 4: Wilkey C.A. (8 July 1917) [letter].
- Figure 5: Wilkey C.A. (4 September 1917) [letter].

- Figure 19: Wilkey C.A. (20 July 1917) (*Page 2*) [letter], Wilkey C.A., France.
- Figure 17: Wilkey C.A. (24 November 1917) *Page 1* [letter], Wilkey C.A., France.
- Figure 18: Figure 18: Wilkey C.A. (24 November 1917) *Page 2* [letter], Wilkey C.A., France.
- Figure 8: Wilkey C.A. (23 June 1918) [letter].
- Figure 16: Wilkey M. (11 June 1918) [letter].

Collection of scanned photographs (incl. letters, memoirs etc.,) received from Patricia Swincer [May 18th]

- Figure 2: A page from Colleen Fullston's memoirs, titled "Claude Ashby Wilkey".
- Figure 4: A letter from Claude addressed to 'Dear Little Thelma' – dated July 8th, 1917.
- Figure 5: The second page of a letter written by Claude to his mother from Northampton War Hospital on September 4th, 1917.
- Figure 6: Excerpt from a news article detailing a welcome-home social in Chain of Ponds, 21st of June 1919.
- Figure 8: A letter addressed to 'Mother and all'. Written by Claude A. Wilkey on June 23rd, 1918, from Güstrow Prisoner of War Camp, Germany.
- Figure 9: Pages from Colleen Fullston's memoirs, entitled 'My Father'.
- Figure 11: Millbrook Primary School Roll of Honour, 1979.
- Figure 17: Page 1 of a letter from Claude to his mother upon arrival in France (after recovery from his injury). Dated 24th November 1917 (Saturday).
- Figure 18: Page 2 of a letter from Claude to his mother upon arrival in France (after recovery from his injury). Dated 24th November 1917 (Saturday).
- Figure 19: Page 2 of a letter written by Claude after arrival in France (addressed to his mother), on the 20th of July.

Secondary Sources:

WEBSITES:

- Australian Government (14 March 2023) *Overview of Australia's involvement in the First World War*, Department of Veteran's Affairs, accessed 17 May 2023. <https://www.dva.gov.au/newsroom/media-centre/media-backgrounders/overview-australias-involvement-first-world-war>
- Australian Government | Department of Veterans' Affairs (10 March 2023) *Third Battle of Ypres 31 July to 10 November 1917*, ANZAC Portal, accessed 23 May 2023. <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/ww1/where-australians-served/western-front/third-battle-of-ypres>
- Australian War Memorial (18 March 2022) *Enlistment statistics, First World War*, Australian War Memorial, accessed 15 May 2023. <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/enlistment/ww1#:~:text=416%2C809%20Australians%20enlisted%20for%20service,population%20aged%2018%20to%2044.&text=E>.

- Find a Grave (n.d.) *Claude Ashby Wilkey (1891 - 1975)*, accessed 2 June 2023. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/196643188/claude-ashby-wilkey>
- Imperial War Museums (2023) *Life As A Prisoner of War During WW1*, Imperial War Museums, accessed 1 June 2023. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/voices-of-the-first-world-war-prisoners-of-war>
- Imperial War Museums (2023) *What You Need to Know About the Third Battle of Ypres*, Imperial War Museums, accessed 29 May 2023. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-third-battle-of-ypres-passchendaele>
- Oxford Languages (n.d.) *Dictionary | Mateship*, Dictionary | Oxford Languages, accessed 7 June 2023. https://www.google.com/search?q=mateship+definition&rlz=1C1YTUH_en-GBAU1057AU1057&ei=3veBZOWnNKCz2roP1JyDkA8&ved=0ahUKEwjijtHDqrT_AhWgmVYBHVTOAPIQ4dUDCBE&uact=5&oq=mateship+definition&gs_lcp=Cgxnd3Mtd2l6LXNlcnAQAzIKCAAQgAQQRhD5ATIFCAAQgAQyBggAEBYQHjIICAAQFhAeEA8yCAgAEBYQHhAPMggIABAWEB4QDzIIICAAQFhAeEA8yCAgAEBYQHhAPMgYIABAWEB4yBggAEBYQHjIlgCAAQgAQQRhD5ARCXBRCMBRDdBBBGEPQDEP
- Oxford Languages (n.d.) *Dictionary | Perseverance*, Dictionary | Oxford Languages, accessed 7 June 2023. https://www.google.com/search?q=perserverance+definiton&rlz=1C1YTUH_en-GBAU1057AU1057&oq=perserverance+definiton&aqs=chrome.69i57j0i10i512l9.6171j1j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

PDFs:

- Mitcham Local History Service and Heritage Research Centre (2009) *Colonel Light Gardens Chronology*, City of Mitcham, accessed 2 June 2023. https://www.mitchamcouncil.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/90175/colonel_light_gardens_chronology.pdf

BOOKS:

- Collins C (2022) *Deserving of Special Mention World War One Soldiers of Kersbrook District*, Chris Collins.

Part B:

My initial thoughts when presented with the opportunity to enter the Premier's Spirit of ANZAC School Prize were, rather unsurprisingly, concerned with the subject matter of my entry. In essence, *who would I research?* Subsequently, I commenced my exploration of the VWMA's website, and be it a twist of fate or sheer fortune, I stumbled upon the name '*Claude Ashby Wilkey*'. This unintentional discovery aroused my interest – little did I know hitherto, my great-great grandfather had served in World War I.

I then attempted to glean as much information as I could about Claude's service from the National Archives of Australia and the VWMA's records. Yet there were still voids in my research (e.g., Where was Claude held as a Prisoner of War? Were any letters he sent home preserved?) Although he was able to share with me memories of Claude as a person, my grandfather hadn't known of his grandfather's service. So, in the hopes of shedding light onto these topics, I rang my great-aunt, Judy. She provided great assistance in helping me contact another of Claude's grandchildren, my grandfather's first cousin, Patricia Swincer who was able to provide me with valuable primary sources, such as the letters Claude sent home and extracts from her mother Colleen's memoirs – resources that proved exceedingly useful throughout the course of this research project. Moreover, it was wonderful to have something that provided a tangible connection to my great-great grandfather.

I was fortunate enough to call into Kersbrook while conducting research for my entry, and as the VWMA listed Claude's burial site as the Kersbrook General Cemetery, my family and I went to lay some flowers on his grave. While there, I took a picture of Claude's grave (Figure 10) Coincidentally, while in Kersbrook, we stumbled across a local history display at the Kersbrook public hall. Here, I met Chris Collins and bought a copy of his book *Deserving of Special Mention World War One Soldiers of Kersbrook District*, which contained extremely useful information about Claude's service.

I then created a timeline of Claude's life, containing events as per the requirements of this essay. From there, utilizing a variety of secondary sources (e.g., the VWMA's website), I conducted some of my own research into the battles Claude fought in. After ensuring that I had the information required to proceed (I made a checklist), I began to type up my essay. I thoroughly enjoyed the writing process – in particular, I loved being able write about my great-great grandfather's life. I used the SLASA reference generator for my bibliography, citing sources via footnoting as I wrote.

Everything considered, completing this project has been an extremely rewarding experience. It has enlightened my perception of World War 1, providing me with an exciting opportunity to improve my historical analysis and research skills, and moreover, a valuable connection to my great-great grandfather; Claude Ashby Wilkey. It taught me once again, that every person, regardless of when they lived, has a story to tell.

Part B Word Count: 495