

“Great Dash and Initiative”: Ernie Meyers, 9 BN AIF

AMANDA WILDIE AND ROGER SAK

In March 1974, Ernie Meyers was interviewed by the *Queensland Times* at his home in Ipswich. The newspaper’s reporter “felt the urge to tell some of our newer residents [in Ipswich] of a rather famous personage in our midst.”¹ The seventy-eight year old WW1 veteran was very well known locally: his interests in golf, bowls and hockey had seen him, at one time or another, serve as President of the Ipswich Golf Club, President and Trustee of the Ipswich Bowls Club, a Trustee of the United Services Bowls Club, and Patron of both the Ipswich Hockey Association and TPI Bowls Club. His community involvement extended to roles as Trustee of Ipswich Girls’ Grammar School, Vice President of the Ipswich Sub-Branch of the Returned & Services League as well as the Legacy Club, President of the Ipswich Model Band Association and Past Master, King Edward Masonic Lodge.²

But most local readers would have been drawn to his military service in the Great War of 1914-18 and the circumstances surrounding his Military Cross and two bars, the only Queenslanders to have been so honoured and one of only four in the AIF.³ Beyond this, Meyers’ service extended into the Second World War when he commanded Queensland’s Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC), itself a notable achievement. But while the words were forthcoming, the reporter noted that, “Like a true hero, he was reluctant.”

Early Years

Ernest Henry William Meyers was born in 1896, in Riverstone via Cairns in the colony of Queensland. Like many middle-class families of the era, his father was the breadwinner, an engineer by profession; his mother managed the household and his nine siblings (seven surviving beyond infancy) rounded out the family. Ernest was to be referred to throughout his life, by family, friend, colleague and casual contact alike, by the informal moniker of “Ernie”. His family moved from the Cairns area to Ipswich, in south-east Queensland, prior to 1900, and after completing his education at North Ipswich State School, at age fourteen, Ernie commenced work as a clerk. A family

record indicates that he worked for Hancock Bros. Ltd., Born & Hayes, solicitors, and the Royal Bank of Queensland. Declared a city in 1904, Ipswich was the place Ernie called home for significant portions of his life.

The Boer War of 1899-1902 and Australia's Federation in January 1901 were two key events that occurred in Ernie's early childhood. With the military presence of British forces ending in the 1870s it was up to the colonies to organise their own militia; in this endeavour the colony of Queensland went through a few phases. The Queensland *Defence Act* of 1884 allowed the establishment of a partially paid force in metropolitan areas, volunteer units in rural areas, and conscription of males between certain ages, if required. A permanent Queensland artillery battery would come later, its size and scale dependent on the health of the economy at any given point in time. All the while, there was increasing concern in Queensland about its vulnerability to attack by foreign powers. An 1889 report by the British Major General Sir J. Bevan Edwards in fact concluded the Australian colonies had neither sufficient personnel nor weapons to be able to adequately defend themselves against invasion.

In the early stages of the Boer War, recruits for the first contingents of soldiers – from the yet-to-be-formed Commonwealth of Australia – were thus partially drawn from the small militia in each colony. War was not an abstract concept but rather a reality in these times. Soldiers would leave, but not all would return. It is little wonder, with this background to his youth, that Ernie was to find his adult life converging with the security interests of his country. From a young cadet to a highly decorated WW1 veteran, and later a WW2 brigadier in the Volunteer Defence Corps (Qld.), Ernie was, undoubtedly, a product of his time.

Gallipoli

Two years before the declaration of war in August 1914, Ernie was already a second lieutenant. Although this was in the capacity of an officer in the Cadet Corps, not in the theatre of war, its importance ought not be diminished. Whether or not he set out to achieve rank – and the incumbent responsibilities it demands – after his eventual enlistment is unknown, but it is certain that rank and responsibility found him to be a natural fit from this early age.

With the letter of permission from his father in hand, Ernie enlisted as a private in the 9th Infantry Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Division, Brisbane on 13 January 1915, aged eighteen. Those of the 9th Battalion who were to become the first ashore at Gallipoli had already departed. Pte Meyers embarked the HMAT *Kyarra* on 16 April 1915. Along with approximately 150 others, he did not reach Gallipoli until

22 June 1915, where they undertook further training before being assigned duties.

The challenges and conditions at Gallipoli have been well documented, so it should surprise no one that Meyers, like so many others when not actively engaging the enemy, expended much energy digging. There were improvements needing to be made to the forward positions and saps, and tunnels to be formed or reformed. The smooth hands of a clerk were soon a thing of the past, even if blisters were a trifle in the spectrum of physical ails which plagued the soldiers of the AIF. Ernie Meyers was fortunate not to be wounded or ravaged by sickness. His good fortune, however, meant lengthy periods of unbroken frontline duty.

After months living with the constant sound of gun and shell fire, witnessing injury, death and illness, and managing the extremes in temperature, Meyers left Gallipoli with the rest of the survivors of the 9th Battalion on 16 November 1915. It was their turn for a period of rest at Lemnos, but with the withdrawal from the peninsula underway they were not to return. While in Gallipoli Ernie crafted his own unique souvenir, turning one of the items in his initial ration pack – an Australian army biscuit – into a keepsake. He carved the words, “Gallipoli Peninsula 1915” into one side, and later, when training at Armieteres in France, he embedded onto the other side of the biscuit a cigarette card with an image of a *mademoiselle*. A ribbon was threaded through the biscuit so that it could be hung on display. He sent this home to his sister Evelyn, and it survives to this day, quite a testament to its robustness as a food source – even if well beyond its ‘best by’ date.

Figure 1: AIF biscuit, issued to Ernie Meyers in 1915 (*private collection*).



After leaving Gallipoli in November 1915, it was not until mid-May 1916 that Meyers and his battalion moved to the front line in France. In the meantime, they were in Lemnos for rest, training in Egypt and then the south of France for acclimatisation and further training. The calendar would also turn over to 25 April 1916; the first ANZAC Day anniversary.

During his stay in Egypt, a few hundred of the 9th Battalion soldiers were transferred to the daughter battalion, the 49th. Meyers was not one of them. Many of those transferred did so reluctantly, such was their strength of affiliation and affection for the 9th. When eventually back on home soil, his business storefront in Ipswich displayed both the 9th and 49th insignia – one for Ernie and the other for his business partner, Len Jackson.

The Western Front

Unlike his time in Gallipoli, the conflict in the Western Front saw Meyers sustaining multiple injuries in action. Records indicate these included a slight wound on 25 May 1916, a “severe bomb wound in the neck” on 1 July 1916, being “blown up” on 20 September 1917, “gassed” on 6 March the following year, and finally “blown up by a gas shell” on 14 August 1918. These injuries were sustained as Meyers fought in the 9th Battalion battles on the Western Front, including Pozieres, Lagnicourt, Bullecourt II, Menin Road (Polygon

Figure 2: Lieutenant Ernest Meyers, 1918
(private collection).



Wood), Meteren, Le Waton, Lihons (Crepey Wood), Froissy Beacon (Chuignes), and Villeret.

For much of his time in the trenches, along with the rest of his battalion Meyers engaged in one of three main activities: keeping watch for enemy movements, undertaking fatigue duty, and resting. Much of the fatigue work was carried out at night due to the shellfire by daylight. One fatigue duty included a delivery of rations to the front line. Fatigue duty was not without its perils – wound number one for Ernie would be on his official record within a handful of days of his arrival. It was followed just over a month later by his second, sustained while raiding an enemy bunker. The injury in question saw him hospitalised until he returned to his battalion on 6 September 1916.

Months passed with little respite, characterised by snipers, periscopes, mine-fields, gas attacks, rifle-grenades, barbed wire, bombardments, rats, rain, mud and heavy frosts; along with sickness, trench foot, scarcity of drinking-water, substandard accommodation and hours of marching. There was attack and counter-attack. Ground was gained, ground was lost. Another Christmas and another New Year would come and go, along with a second anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli. German *flammenwerfers* – a new menace – were introduced to the conflict, providing a true test of mettle. Meyers was promoted to lance corporal, to sergeant, and then to lieutenant.

The 9th Battalion was eventually relieved of duty in May 1917 and had four months to rest, recover and undertake further training. Meyers enjoyed the additional benefit of spending 7-21 July 1917 on leave in the United Kingdom, but was back on the front line in late September 1917. This return coincided with the final preparations for a military operation – the Battle of the Menin Road (Polygon Wood). During this battle, four days later, Ernie Meyer’s actions would result in his first Military Cross. The citation printed in the *London Gazette* read:

Lieut. Meyers showed gallant courage and marked Infantry Brigade devotion to duty. He led his platoon into the attack with great dash and initiative, proving himself a leader of high qualities. After the capture of the last objective, he carried out special patrols in front of the position and worked untiringly to make the position safe from counter attacks. Finally, all officers of his company became casualties and Lieut. Meyers assumed command and under severe conditions and enemy artillery fire held on till the Battalion was relieved.⁴

His medal is of particular interest in this instance as the words “Polygon Wood” – the location at which he earned his MC – are

engraved on the back. From all accounts this only occurred if the award was presented directly by the British monarch. A subsequent letter from General Birdwood, the British officer in command of the ANZAC force, confirmed that he “fully earned [his commendation by his] conspicuous courage and devotion to duty”, and that Meyers had displayed “great dash and initiative in command of your platoon, and on the capture of the final objective, you carried out special patrols in front of the position, and worked untiringly in its consolidation.” On this date, interestingly, Meyers’ casualty record shows that he received a wound due to being “blown up”. As he wasn’t evacuated it can be presumed any injuries were superficial.

The 9th Battalion continued its months until the end of 1917 alternating between the front line during the ferocious Passchendaele offensive, in reserve or support duty and periods of rest and recovery. Ernie had another 14-day furlough in England at the beginning of 1918, when he commenced writing a war diary. The record of his furlough is scant in detail but wonderfully enlightening all the same. Twelve of the first fourteen entries consisted of the same two words, “on leave”. The two variations included his entry of 4 January 1918: “From this date to the 18th I spent a joyous life of freedom. Cannot remember details now.” The other entry, on Wednesday 9 January 1918, provided the barest details of a truly momentous occasion: “Attended investiture at Buckingham Palace at 11 a.m. and received my MC from the King.”

An equally laconic entry came on 6 March 1918, back in the trenches: “Front line. Gassed by Huns.” He had only been back for a couple of weeks when this occurred, and it would take him two months to recover before once again returning to his battalion. On his return, Meyers was promoted to Platoon 1 Company Commander and in the period of less than a month was recommended twice for a bar to his MC. The first (not awarded) came on 19 July, and read:

At Meteran on 19 July 1918, Lieut. Meyers was in command of a Platoon operation on the right flank. He led his men with a skill and determination most commendable and set an example of a very high standard. He penetrated the enemy front line, notwithstanding withering machine gun fire and was responsible for mopping up a number of enemy posts – capturing many prisoners. The soldierly qualities and tactful command of this Officer aided greatly in the success of the operation.

His diary entry on this date was characteristically brief: “Proceeded forward at 3 a.m. and did a stint at 8:30 capturing Hun prisoners. Bombarded us very heavily afterwards.” The second recommendation

came shortly thereafter, and was awarded:

Near Lihons on the morning of 10 August 1918, Lieut. Meyers display [*sic*] marked ability in organising the sections of various companies and thinning out the line where it was essential. This act was the means of saving many casualties. By this time the senior officers had become casualties and he assumed command of that portion of the Line which concerned him. As the Bois De Crepey was the strongest enemy defensive position from which terrific machine gun fire was directed on our advance, Lieut. Meyers in conjunction with Lt. Cork patrolled the southern portion of the Bois De Crepey and there located a strong point which was temporarily holding up the advance. This information was most valuable to the Battalion Commander and enemy strong point was at once dealt with. When the line again advanced this officer was continually making a reconnaissance to safeguard his flank and it was through his tactical handling that liaison between the flank units was maintained. On the morning of the 11th August, when the Blue Line had been captured, a gap was found to be between the 10th Battalion and the unit on its right flank. Lieut. Meyers at once filled the gap and doing so had to pass through Auger Wood which had not been mopped up.⁵

Ernie’s diary entries capture his own sense of what had been achieved:

- 10 August 1918: Advanced at 6:00 and after a few hours rest pushed through front line and advanced – very hot work.
- 11 August 1918: [?] day – advanced and after hot fights dug in on another front and retired.
- 12 August 1918: Btn in reserve – very tired – went to sleep when halfway through my dinner.

In a subsequent letter, General Birdwood wrote to congratulate Ernie

...most heartily, for you have fully deserved this distinction in recognition of your marked bravery and devotion to duty You display [*sic*] great ability and initiative in organizing sections of various companies, and in reducing a strong point which had been holding up the advance... your work throughout was of a high order for which I thank you.

Such are the vagaries of war that later that very week, on 14 August 1918, Meyers found himself once more on the casualty list. “I was blown up by a gas shell”, he wrote, “and was considerably shaken.” He was not hospitalised straight away but remained on the front line for another two days before being sent on special leave to

England. This provided him with the opportunity to spend time in London with one of his brothers, Charlie, the first family member he had seen since leaving Australia in 1915.

Ernie wasn't long back from leave when he fought in his battalion's last major engagement with the enemy. By September 1918 the end of the war was thought to be in sight. Preparations for demobilisation were already underway, and schemes for the educational training of officers and men awaiting their repatriation had been drawn up. But there were battles still to be fought. For the 9th, it was to be Villeret, where Meyers added a second bar to his Military Cross. His recommendation reads as follows:

At Villeret on 18th September 1918 Lieut. Meyers as Officer Commanding left line company showed dash and brilliance of leadership coupled with the finest personal courage. Throughout the whole of the operation by his cool judgment and careful appreciation of events he maintained a superiority over the enemy which culminated in the complete loss of morale and the free surrendering of the enemy troops opposing this advance. On the barrage lifting at the second objective, he advanced with great boldness to the line of exploitation thus enabling the troops on either flank of him to come up. The reports submitted by this officer were of extreme value to his Commanding Officer and on the line of exploitation being captured, the defensive positions chosen showed aptitude and a thorough knowledge of the tactical situation.⁶

In contrast, Ernie Meyers' diary on the day in question reads: "We attacked at 5:20 a.m. and advanced three miles. All my officers' casualties." One final time a letter from General Birdwood, dated 10 April 1919, would be received:

I write now to send you my heartiest congratulations on this recognition of your particularly good and courageous work in our operations... [You] displayed great dash and determination in overcoming enemy opposition.

The result of the operation was an advance all along the line of the three armies involved. None knew it at the time, but this was to be his – and the 9th Battalion's – final battle of the war. The diary entry on 21 September notes: "Front line – Relieved by 11th Battalion at 8:25 p.m." His long fighting career came to an honourable end, with his 9th Battalion the only one in the AIF to fight its way to the "line of exploitation."⁷

While battle was over, official duties were not. A select number of the 9th BN AIF were deployed as a King's Guard for King George V

and the two royal princes accompanying him. Ernie brought back two photographs of the occasion, which appear to have been taken by him. Then, on 11 November 1918 while in England undertaking officer training, Ernie recorded in his diary: “Armistice declared – went to London to celebrate it – wonderful spectacle.” The next day, the euphoria continued: “London – everyone still celebrating our victory.”



Figure 3: “School of Officers representing The British Army. 3 Australians, 2 Canadians, 1 New Zealander, 1 Guards Brigade, Remainder British Units. Taken at Berkhamstead [*sic*], England November 1918.” Meyers pictured top left (*private collection*).

From this point, numerous drafts of diggers began their journey home, but Lieutenant Meyers was not among the first to leave. With his departure weeks away, the scheduling afforded him two unique opportunities. Firstly, attending a dinner and concert with over a thousand troops in the Hotel de Ville, arranged by Colonel Maurice Wilder-Neligan. Ernie kept his menu, complete with the signatures he acquired on the night. Secondly, his participation in a parade before King George V in London on Anzac Day 1919 was captured in a professional photograph, in possession of the family, labelled “Major W. McCann, 10 Bn leading parade. Lieut. E.H. Meyers leading 9 Bn Contingent”. His time at war had ended, and it was time to come home.

In addition to the Military Cross and two bars, a unique honour among the Queenslanders who enlisted during WW1, Ernie Meyers was awarded the 1914-1915 Star (Gallipoli), the British War Medal, and the Victory Medal. Foreign recognition came in the shape of the French Somme Medal, and the Belgian War Veteran's Cross. His later service in WW2 resulted in the award of the Defence Medal, the War Medal, the Australian Service Medal, and the Australian Medal of Merit.

Family, Career and Community

With his father having died in May 1916, Ernie returned home to Ipswich and a family that was quite different to the one he had left. His mother, Frances, lived until her early nineties. In 1919, along with fellow veteran Leonard Jackson, he founded Jackson & Meyers, Auctioneers, Valuers and Real Estate Agents. In the years that followed he was valuer to the Ipswich City Council and member of the Land Valuation Appeals Board. He was also a Fellow of the Real Estate Institute of Queensland; Vice President, State Board of Management, R.E.I.Q; and a Fellow of the Commonwealth Institute of Valuers.

Marrying in 1925, Ernie was fortunate to have Edith Beatrice England as a partner in his life for 46 years until her passing at the age of 71. They had two children, his namesake Ernest Peter (known by his second name) and Audrey. Seven grandchildren followed.

One significant journey Ernie and Edith made occurred in 1964, the year before he retired from business. Their destinations included France and Belgium, with some poignant reflections recorded by Ernie in a travel diary.

29 July 1964: ... and realising I was in Ypres salient, which we knew was the scene of utter desolation, shell holes and slush, without a trace of vegetation, or a building, I simply gazed in wonderment at the change that had been wrought by man's industry and nature's healing of all the scars in the 46 years that had elapsed since I last saw it.

30 July 1964: ... returned to hotel at 4 p.m. Tired and quietly thankful – a bit overwhelmed. "Last Post" at Menin Gate at 9 p.m.

Decades later, as part of the commemorations of the centenary of the Armistice that ended WWI in 2018, Ernie's great-granddaughter, Sergeant Melissa Wright, was in Ypres on official duty. She commanded the bearer party which marched the caskets of two unknown soldiers along the same cobblestone roads that

held so many memories for Ernie, to be laid in state under Menin Gate.

Volunteer Defence Corps, Queensland

After leaving for active service aged eighteen, Ernie returned from war at twenty-three; but he never shared the sentiment that this had been ‘the war to end all wars.’ As he went about creating a life for himself as a civilian, there was always an undercurrent of concern for Australia’s security in an unstable world that he shared with other veterans. In a document he later wrote on the history of the Volunteer Defence Corps in Queensland, he described how “[w]ith its experience of the realities of War and the fatuity of some aspects of European diplomacy at the time, the old A.I.F. had no illusions left. Officers of the High Australian Command [*sic*] returned home with a definite belief that Japan had to be recognized as a potential enemy.” In Ernie’s view, as early as 1919 “far-sighted realists among AIF leaders” believed Australia needed an “effective Volunteer Reserve as an auxiliary to the Commonwealth Military Forces ... successive governments were urged to establish such a group but little was developed beyond the ‘paper stage’”. Despite these concerns, through this period even the system of compulsory military training was suspended. Ernie recorded his own perspective, and those of men like him:

Many thoughtful veterans of 1914-18 remembered the essentials of effective defence – a trained staff of adequate strength, munitions men, and effective ancillary services – and wondered. Queenslanders knew that New Caledonia was distant only a few hours by air and only 20 hours top-speed steaming from the Coast near Brisbane. They knew other factors of vulnerability quite unappreciated by the mass of their fellow citizens. With that knowledge, and an appreciation of other facts and factors, ex-servicemen’s organisations strengthened their appeals to Canberra to provide opportunities and facilities for active participation in the defence of Australia.

Indeed, “without waiting for direct authority”, units of returned soldiers like Ernie Meyers started forming well before they were officially established as a Volunteer Defence Corps on 3 August 1940.

In 1942, the year of crisis for Australia’s war effort, during the time of Prime Minister John Curtin, Meyers accepted the rank of Brigadier and appointment to command the Volunteer Defence Corps (QLD), 1st Military District. The Minister for the Army, F. M. Forde, wrote to him at this time:

Your name was brought up tonight by Mr. A. Grammond ... who told me of your good qualities, and I was delighted to hear him give you well-merited praise. I had already heard many glowing accounts of your excellent work in the Volunteer Defence Corps, and it has made me feel very pleased that I approved of your appointment as the Commanding officer of the Volunteer Defence Corps in Queensland.

As the representative of an electorate in Central Queensland, I am naturally very interested in the defence of the vulnerable north-eastern part of our State and, realising the difficulty in sending the A.M.F. or A.I.F. troops to all the centres, I believe that we will have to rely to a very large extent on the V.D.C.

That can only be done if the right organizing ability and drive are given by the Commanding Officer. I look to you with confidence to give the necessary encouragement to the very fine body of men who are in the V.D.C. in Queensland, and to have that number greatly increased.... Although the war position is serious, I look forward to Australia being successfully defended.

With this appointment, Ernie went on to oversee the force of thousands of VDC personnel scattered the length and breadth of Queensland, keeping prolific records of his time as Brigadier. In his period as Brigadier, the VDC grew to an organisational strength from December 1941 of 9,347 members to its highest total in June 1942 of 17,249, remaining above 15,000 until December 1943. His objective as CO was to ensure the capacity of this force to defend against, and repel, enemy forces in the event of an invasion.

Figure 4: Brigadier Ernest Meyers, CO Volunteer Defence Corps (Qld.), c. 1942 (*private collection*).



This was no small task. Logistically, he had three components he needed to meld together – people, geography and communication. The men of the VDC were charged with the defence of an area of some 1.8 million square kilometres, including approximately 7,000 kilometres of mainland coastline and nearby islands. Telegraph and telephone services were the fastest, but not the broadest, means of communication available. Meyers’ role required organisational skills, a capacity to consider a multitude of issues simultaneously, and an ability to effectively communicate between those making the decisions and those that carried them out. He had to devise plans for those many kilometres away and deliver them well before they may have needed to be enforced.

Once given official status, the VDC rapidly set about developing “into a force to be reckoned with”. Ernie recorded its early formation:

The plan at first was to restrict membership to War veterans, but as many citizens in reserved occupations or who were beyond military call-up age were eager to join, the ranks were wisely widened to include everyone eligible for enrolment as a Home Guard. And so, it came about, that, as with the AIF, every learned profession, every trade and calling was represented in the ranks of the VDC.

They commenced with armbands as “the only badge of distinction”, carrying “pick-handles, broom sticks, dummy mortars and tommy guns” for weapons. Volunteers sacrificed nights, weekends and even annual holidays for “training parades, manoeuvres, bivouacs, schools of instruction and in administrative work”, while car and truck owners providing transport at their own expense. Their mission was to provide protection of vulnerable points, tactical defence, initial resistance, and potentially guerrilla resistance to enemy landing.

The need for the VDC was highlighted in a record written by Ernie about the battle of the Coral Sea:

The Coral Sea Battle of 7th May, 1942, fortunately saved Australia from impending enemy landing. Weeks later, VDC men, making a reconnaissance along the far Northern Queensland Coast near Cape Grenville discovered much wreckage, oil drums, and Japanese provisions washed up, no doubt, after the great battle. Few people in Australia realised at the time how close they were to Japanese invasion. Although organised and ready to make any sacrifices necessary VDC Troops in the immediately threatened areas were inadequately equipped for battle, and most of them would

assuredly have been overwhelmed had the Japanese reached our Northern Shores.

One of the more specific duties of the VDC included the creation of a practical blueprint to, in Ernie's words, "scorch" Brisbane should invasion of Queensland's capital city be imminent. Key locations were identified for demolition in the city, to render them useless to the enemy: bridges, power and water supplies and airfields made the list, and the means and manpower to destroy them were arranged should the time ever come. He recorded how the 3rd Queensland Battalion VDC – which covered the area of Yeronga, Sherwood and West End – identified the following industrial demolition sites:

Clapham Railway Junction, approaches to the three metropolitan traffic bridges, Archerfield Aerodrome, and Rocklea Munition Works. In March 1943, plans and specifications were prepared by FTD personnel and explosives were stored for the destruction of all ocean terminal petrol depots and electricity installations in the Brisbane Metropolitan Area.

Coolangatta, Thursday Island and all the various VDC Battalions in between also identified their local demolition sites and formulated a destruction strategy. Divided by distance but united in purpose, Meyers was a pragmatic and determined leader of the Queensland VDC. His discharge occurred on 10 March 1945, whereupon he was placed on the retired list VDC with honorary rank of brigadier.

And so, over one hundred years after the arrival of a newborn in Riverstone via Cairns, we are left with a story of one man who served in WW1 with distinction and humility; in WW2 as a major player in the defence of home soil; and who was an active civic leader, son, husband, father and grandfather. "Never an idle moment" was how Ernest Henry William Meyers chose to describe himself when interviewed for the *Queensland Times* article. An apt summation from this man of "great dash and initiative."

Notes

¹ *Queensland Times*, 20 March 1974, p. 12.

² This article draws on unpublished material including Ernest Meyers, 'Diary' (1918), 'Diary' (1964), and 'History of VDC,' private collection.

³ Michael Maton, *The Military Cross to Australians* (North Turramurra, NSW: M. Maton, 2004), p. 7.

⁴ *London Gazette*, 19 November 1917, p. 11953.

⁵ *London Gazette*, 1 February 1919, p. 1636.

⁶ *London Gazette*, 8 March 1919, p. 3228.

⁷ The term used for the enemy line; see Norman K. Harvey, *From ANZAC to the Hindenburg Line: The History of the 9th Battalion AIF* (Brisbane: William Brooks & Co., 1941), p. 246.