

# **I am an Australian Light Horseman**

**By**

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I am an Australian Light Horseman. I was born and raised in the bush, I learned to ride at age three – don't be amazed, bush kids are like that. By the time I was six I had learned to shoot. I am a crack shot, there's no need to be concerned.

When War was declared I headed to the city as quickly as I could. I was big for my age and never was sickly. How old was I? I told the Recruiting Officer I was eighteen, not sure that he believed me, but my acceptance was routine.

My parents never knew, I had run away from home two years before. I guess if they had known there may have been tears. But the fact that I was only sixteen had never worried anyone. This was my chance to travel overseas, before I was twenty-one.

How did it work out for me? The training wasn't hard for me. And before long we were on a troopship heading out to sea. I never got to see Paris but any place was somewhere new, and not seen before, although Egypt was a really strange land.

We trained in the sand with our Walers, the mount of choice  
for our blokes – rough and tough horses, but in them we rejoice.  
Like Colonel Harry Chauvel, a soldier and horseman of some note  
Both horses and leader are made for hard work, that you can quote.

We climbed the pyramids and were involved in the notorious  
Cairo brothel brawl – why I'm not sure, but we were victorious.  
The Gallipoli campaign had started but we were not called until  
May, we went as unmounted reinforcements, where was the thrill?

Gallipoli, the baptism of fire! At last the frightening horror of war.  
Sniped at constantly by the Turks on the heights, death and gore  
Surrounded us. Was this why I became a soldier? I'm in it now  
And I will support my mates as long as my body will allow.

We dug in and survived until August when the British Generals  
Made a decision from safety, they were protecting their genitals,  
That a massive breakout was in order and that maybe some would  
get through. We had to charge across the Nek, at least try if we could.

We were slaughtered by Turkish machineguns, no one got through  
I was wounded as I climbed over the parapet, I couldn't continue.  
The loss of life that day was appalling, we were just cannon fodder,  
the British Generals were not people our boys would lauder.

I was evacuated to a waiting hospital ship, patched and sent back  
to Egypt to recuperate. By the time I was ready for another attack  
our boys had withdrawn and we were joined by lots more untried  
reinforcements. We were back with our horses, we needed to ride.

Harry got promoted, eventually made a General, well-deserved.  
We fought some battles in the Sinai, these victories were observed.  
We were giving the task of taking Beersheba near Gaza, an important  
task if we were drive out the Turks and have the war shortened.

Normally the Light Horse dismount before an attack but Harry  
decided to catch the Turks and Germans while they were unwary.  
So the decision was made that we would charge their lines, we needed  
the water anyway. And so we hit them, 800 of us, basically unimpeded.

Try as I might I never made it! Hit in the thigh I fell from my  
horse. In agony I lay until the battle was over and by and by  
I was rescued by ambulance and eventually the retirement plan,  
I was shipped home, but was always proud to be a Light Horseman.

I am dead now of course, like all of my mates. We left all our horses  
and never knew their fate. But for those who read of our forces  
please remember the sacrifices, with your flag unfurled,  
that allow you to live - in the best country in the world!