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Major-General George Alan Vasey CB, CBE, DSO. 1895-1945.

George Alan Vasey was born on 29 March 1895 at East Malvern, a suburb of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

He was a descendant of Thomas Vasey who had come to Australia from Whitby in the County of Yorkshire, England, in 1852 to search for gold and then became a general merchant. At a Methodist Church in Melbourne he met and later married a Miss Brinsden from Essex, England.

One of their children, George Brinsden Vasey, studied law but unfortunately did not enjoy success as a barrister and solicitor. He became editor of the Argus Law Reports, at a salary of £5 a week, legal columnist for another newspaper, giving opinions on queries submitted by readers, and was the author of three legal text-books. In July, 1890, he had married Alice Isobel McCutcheon, whose father came from Belfast, Northern Ireland, and they had six children; George Alan was their third child. George Brinsden's influence on his children was such that they remembered with affection his charming and courteous manners and his insistence that they grew up in the same tradition. Apparently his most aggressive remark was "confound it all". One of his grand-sons who, with his parents, stayed at his grand-parents' home for some months said of him 'I don't know what sort of a barrister he was, but as a human being and an old gentleman he was magnificent.' Although money was never plentiful all the children received their secondary education in private schools.

Alice Isobel Vasey was said to be 'a reserved quiet woman, inordinately shy, but possessed of a will which all her children knew to be indomitable.' George Alan, known to his family as Alan, appears to have inherited these qualities. His sister, Marjorie, who was to become an Army Nursing Sister and later a Matron of an Army Hospital remembered him as being restrained and quiet.

In 1907 George Alan commenced secondary education at Wesley College, Melbourne, after attending Canterbury Grammar School for three years. He had grown into a tall, lean, rather shy young man with straight brown hair parted down the middle- with a tendency to fall down over his forehead. He is remembered by one of his fellow students as being '...quiet, not spectacular.. a school prefect, "scholastic" not "sporting"... he was not distinguished in any sport;rowed a little...from a good church family...a good boy but with nothing of the prig about him.'

In 1911, while he was at Wesley, the Royal Military College at Duntroon, near Canberra, was opened. The College was founded to provide regular staff officers for the newly formed Australian Army and offered the unique opportunity for free tuition whereas a University education was expensive.

Apparently, at that time, George Alan was not particularly interested in becoming a soldier but was interested in an outdoor life and realised that Duntroon and the Army could be a way of enjoying this, as well as providing a worthwhile career.

Consequently he sat for the entrance examinations which were conducted by Sydney University in November, 1912. He and others from Wesley were assisted in their studies for this examination by the long serving head-master who saw it as the College's duty to supply men who would serve their country.

There were 154 candidates that year of whom 33 were admitted to the college and 5 were from Wesley. Vasey and one other, Edward James Milford, were to become Generals and friends for life. It is also of interest to note that at that time a fellow student at Wesley, and only 3 months older, was Brother Sir Robert Gordon Menzies, a future Prime Minister.

During his time at Wesley, Vasey had been a member of the Commonwealth Senior Cadets and his school reference showed that he had held the rank of Second Lieutenant, was a prefect and that he had passed the public examinations for entrance to the University of Melbourne. His area officer in the Cadets reported that he was 'keen, and in my opinion will make a good officer'.

Of the class that commenced at Duntroon in 1913, six of the thirty-three became Generals- Vasey, Milford, William Bridgeford, Bro. Frank Berryman, Leslie Beavis and John Chapman- four others became Brigadiers and nine were killed in action as junior officers during the First World War. In the Final Exams that year Vasey was placed in the first five academically. Due to the outbreak of war the curriculum of Duntroon was altered considerably- Vasey's intake had all their academic work dropped so that they could concentrate on military matters and they graduated as Lieutenants in the Permanent Military Forces on 28 June 1915. During this last sixth month period Vasey held the rank of sergeant on the Corps of Staff Cadets. Whilst at college he earned a reputation as being good at horsemanship, drill and physical training and very good academically, especially in mathematics and physics, and possessed 'good leadership; but a slow maturer'.

Vasey was posted along with other graduates to an artillery Brigade and by December of that year he was in Egypt where they underwent further training and re-organisation as the Australian forces were expanded from two to four Divisions. Just before the Second Division sailed from Alexandria to Marseilles, France, on 14 March 1916 Vasey was posted to 19th Battery Artillery, 4th Brigade. Soon after arrival in France he was promoted to acting Captain but reverted to Lieutenant a month later.

He then went on leave to England and when he returned he was appointed commander of No. 1 section 2nd Division Ammunition Column. It was at this time that he first experienced the full horror of war. Between the 23 July and 5 September the 1st Anzac Corps ie. 1, 2 and 4 Divisions had lost 23,000 officers and men. Vasey's unit had been in action for long periods, his main task being to see that the artillery were continually supplied with ammunition.

On 9 August Vasey was promoted to Captain was posted as adjutant, 22 Brigade but by 5 November was battery commander 13 Field Battery. He had only graduated from Duntroon sixteen months before and was still only 21 years of age. The posting was evidence of his thorough training and his sound performance in the Somme battles.

Because of the losses in battle and the lack of trained officers the artillery batteries were re-organised from 4 to 6 guns thus reducing the number of batteries from 75 to 52. Vasey lost his battery and in March 1916 he was posted to 11th Infantry Brigade Headquarters as a trainee Staff Captain.

Here he was to gain experience in Infantry Brigade administration- the Staff Captain being responsible for transport, supply, ammunition and personnel.

During the period between that posting and 7 June 1917 Vasey had attended a staff course in England and returned to become trainee Brigade Major. He carried out these duties so efficiently during the battles in which the Brigade was involved that on 6 August, when Major George Wooton was transferred to 9th Brigade, he became Brigade Major. The confirmation of his promotion to Major came whilst he was in hospital recovering from influenza.

His military education was greatly expanded by his Brigade Commander, Brigadier-General James Cannan who, although he believed that Vasey was too young, at 22 years of age, to hold down such an important position, said that he had the greatest admiration for Vasey whom he considered to be '...hard working, meticulous, alert, convincing and courageous-yet some what shy and bashful'. Cannan quite deliberately set out to educate Vasey in command and leadership and most importantly to stand up for his own men. The lessons learnt were to prove very useful some years later- both in India and during Second World War campaigns.

In April 1918 Vasey was mentioned in despatches, in June he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and was again mentioned in despatches in April 1919. He was by then GSO2(General Staff Officer Grade 2) on the head-quarters of the 3rd Division.

After the cessation of hostilities he found it hard to adjust to the frustrations of peace-time soldiering. He took the opportunity to travel through France, Germany and Italy and enjoyed visiting theatrical performances in Paris and London and was presented with his DSO at Buckingham Palace.

Whilst others stayed on in England to attend specialist artillery training Vasey apparently had relished the challenge provided by leadership and tactical manoeuvres in the infantry and hoped that he would receive opportunities to put his experience into practice in Australia.

He returned to Australia, spending some time in South Africa, and disembarked at Melbourne on 14 September 1919. He was to be disappointed and to find that the realities of peace-time were contrary to those for which he had hoped. He decided to study accountancy as mathematics had been one of his strong subjects.

He had been promoted to the rank of Major in the AIF in September 1917 but on return to Australia and the Permanent Military Forces he resumed his substantive rank of Lieutenant but, as an honorary Major, continued to wear the rank of Major without the pay. He was promoted to Captain in 1923 but only after undergoing normal testing procedures - his file notes that he had been tested in **riding** and had attained the necessary standard to allow for promotion in the Staff Corps. Whilst he held a number of appointments during this period he found them to be unsatisfactory and his military career to some extent stalled.

His private life, however, had suddenly become very fulfilling and happy when, on 17 May 1921, he married Jessie Mary Halbert at St. Mathew's Anglican Church, Glenroy, Victoria. Her life and times are the subject of a separate paper.

Their love for each other and her wonderful support were to be the greatest influence on Vasey for the rest of his life. They purchased their first home in Bakers Rd. Kew, a suburb of Melbourne and it was here that their first son, George Halbert Vasey, was born.

Suitable postings in Australia were scarce and the path to promotion was to attend courses at either Camberley in England or Quetta in the west of India, in what is now Pakistan. Some of his Duntroon fellow graduates had already taken one or other of these courses and he realised that to succeed he would need to act- especially as there were only 2 positions at Camberley and 1 at Quetta available. He set to work and gained his qualifications in 1927 and took up a posting to Quetta in January 1928.

Quetta, at an altitude of 1600 m., is situated on a plateau and ringed by mountains some of which raise to an altitude of 3000 m., in the state of Baluchistan and approx. 50 km from the Afghanistan border. Whilst there Vasey made the most of the college training and exchanged ideas with British and Indian Army Officers most of whom had both First War and North-West Frontier experience. It is also said that he developed some of his colourful language for which he became noted.

It appears that on one formal occasion when the Vaseys were entertaining a group of officers and their wives, their son, George, burst in, at the head of a group of children, and caught everybody's attention with a string of profanities. Vasey quickly hustled the children outside and on his return said "I don't know where these blasted little devils get hold of all this bloody rude language." It completely changed the tone of the occasion and Vasey from that moment was 'in'. His two years in Quetta was like a rebirth for, on return to Australia, he was once again the vital, enthusiastic man of the war years.

Unfortunately the Australia to which he returned was in the grip of an economic depression and some officers were being discharged while others were being asked to take pay cuts. The permanent militia was replaced by a voluntary militia and completely disheartened Vasey, unsuccessfully, applied for the position of General Manager of the Royal Melbourne Hospital. He then went to Sydney to become brigade major for the 2nd Division, a similar position to one that he had held 12 years previously in Melbourne.

Vasey was to leave the artillery and return to his preferred infantry when he was posted as Brigade Major to 8th Infantry Brigade in March 1933. He immediately made his mark by 'terrific drive- not nervy but great vitality- if he disagreed he would say so in his characteristically forceful language'. His service with this Brigade was noted and when, in mid-1934, an exchange programme was resumed with the Indian Army and he was chosen as the first exchange officer.

This was an opportunity to serve with a regular army and he agreed to the posting with a great deal of anticipation. Family finances were such that he and Jessie sold their home in Kew as well as some period furniture of Jessie's, a wedding present from her father, and leaving their son, George, at school at Wesley College, in Melbourne they sailed to India with their second son, Robert.

Their finances were relieved to some extent by Vasey being promoted to Major a rank he first held in the AIF in 1917- he had spent twenty years as a brigade major except for the 2 years he spent at Quetta.

They were to spend 2 1/2 years in India during which time, although they corresponded regularly with, George jnr., in Melbourne, they found the separation so distressing that George joined them in India. Vasey's service there was varied including anti-terrorist and security operations in Bengal and 12 months operations on the North-West Frontier.

The family returned to Australia in March 1937 and Vasey was posted to Army Headquarters, Melbourne as GSO2(Training) and was promoted to brevet Lieutenant Colonel. He became GSO1(Training) but did not receive the rank of substantive Colonel until November 1939- two months after the outbreak of the Second World War.

This posting whilst very important to Vasey, because of the valuable contacts he was making, even more importantly brought about some family stability. He and Jessie bought a house on a 5.65 hectare property at Wantirna on the outskirts of Melbourne from where he travelled each day by bus to Army Headquarters. The house has been described as being white weather-board without electricity or sewerage; kerosene lighting and refrigerator, wood stove and chip heater. Week-ends were spent developing a garden and their long range plans were for this to be their retirement home.

In September 1939 the Prime Minister, Bro. (Sir) Robert Gordon Menzies announced that a division was to be formed for service overseas and that the commands in the division would go to militiamen. Staff appointments went, of course, to Staff Corps officers. Vasey was offered the position of chief administrative staff officer(Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General).

Vasey was quite shocked and disappointed when the position was offered to him but he was determined that he was not going to be left behind, so he accepted- unlike another officer who refused because he thought it below his qualifications and experience and others who just refused or avoided it.

He took up the position on 13 October 1939 and between then and 29 November 1939 when Menzies announced that a contingent would be sent overseas he was fully engaged in recruiting, training and equipping the 6th Division. England had already despatched ships to carry the troops to the Middle East and Colonel George Vasey was selected to lead the advance party which would prepare the way for the arrival of the 6th Division. The party sailed from Melbourne on board the RMS Strathallan on Friday, 15th December, 1939. One of the most poignant photographs of the war is that showing Jessie Vasey, her two sisters and Vasey's sister standing on the wharf waving goodbye to the Strathallan.

From that time on he was to devote all his previous training and experience to what ever theatre of war in which he was engaged. His letters to Jessie over the next five years reveal not only his deep love for her and his family but also his commitment to the job at hand and his concern for the welfare of the men under his command.

His letters home also give details of the actions in Greece, Crete and Palestine, comments as to the postings of other Staff Corps members and also other officers. Some of the comments are quite revealing! In Greece he had commanded the 19th Brigade and had earned a reputation as a very able commander. His letters to Jessie were full of his concern for his men, especially the married ones, and it is here that we get the first indication of his and Jessie's plans for the welfare of war widows. During this time he was awarded a Bar to his DSO and also the Greek Military Cross First Class.

Vasey's last posting in the Middle East was in Palestine. He left there by air, to return to Australia, on 19 December. Because of regulations in some of the countries he had to fly over on the way home he travelled as Mr. George Vasey, grazier. His brigade had formed a guard of honour on the road to the airport and it is reported that '*many of the village people actually wept when they saw him go- all because of the fair and humane treatment they had received as a result of [his] capable administration*'.

Kenneth Slessor, War Correspondent, described Vasey as 'tough, hard fighting, intelligent Commanding Officer, though evidently quick tempered, without much respect for the orthodox, and perhaps a bit jealous and disgruntled'. Before his return, to Australia, he understood that he would possibly become Director of Military Training or be given a command of some sort.

In fact, because of his experience as a staff officer, he was posted as Chief of Staff, Home Forces- with the rank of Major-General. Whilst the posting was understandable it seems surprising that he was not given a command- he was a very experienced battle commander.

Not long after his return to Australia, in March 1942, Vasey was involved in what was described as the 'revolt of the generals'. A group of younger generals, believing that the Government of the day was about to appoint the wrong man as Commander-in Chief, put forward a proposal that all officers over the age of 50 should be retired immediately. This would have meant that Generals Blamey, Lavarack, Bro. Bennett, Bro. Morsehead, Sturdee, Bro. Northcott and Savage would be retired and the Commander-in-Chief would be Bro. Major-General (Sir) Horace Robertson- known as 'Red Robbie' and a Brigade Commander in Libya. Vasey, whose only interest was to do that which was for the good of the Australian Army appears to have been a reluctant participant. However believing that Robertson would do a good job agreed. He went to Lt.-General Sir Sydney Fairbairn Rowell and invited him to a meeting. Rowell told Vasey what he thought of the idea and finished by saying to him that if he wasn't so bloody big, he'd toss him out of the room. He was 185 cm (6'1") tall and solidly built.

There are reports that this episode had some effect on Vasey's career. He was overlooked for Division Command, but on 6 April 1942 he moved to Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, as Deputy Chief of General Staff- the key operational staff position in Australia. He carried out the duties of the office with his usual vigour and drive. Among the decisions to which Vasey made an important contribution was the establishment of the North Australia Observer Unit which was established at the time when the Japanese were occupying Timor and Darwin was under air attack. He also assisted the Chairman of the Army Inventions Directorate, L.J.Hartnett, by 'cutting the red tape to shreds'.

As the war in the Pacific progressed Vasey and the Head-quarters staff then transferred from Melbourne to Brisbane and here Vasey was directly involved in dealing with the Americans particularly as at one stage Blamey was out of Brisbane for a period of 21 days. At the same time he was responsible for operations in Timor, North Australia and New Guinea. In September, 1942 the Commanding Officer responsible for the Port Moresby area convinced Blamey he had to have the assistance of one of the army's best fighters and Vasey was ordered to New Guinea to take command of the 6th Australian Division which had been given the task of both defending Port Moresby and halting the advance of the Japanese Army on the Kokoda Track.

Shortly afterwards, 27 October 1942, Vasey was ordered to take command of the 7th Australian Division, which had taken over from the 6th Division in fighting the Japanese in the Owen Stanley Range, because General Douglas MacArthur was not satisfied that the Division, under the command of Major-General A.S. Allen, was advancing fast enough. Like most Brisbane and Port Moresby based officers, MacArthur had no idea what conditions were like on the Kokoda Track. Apart from the jungle clad mountainous terrain and the ferocity with which the Japanese Army was fighting, this was the first time that an Australian Divisional Headquarters had been called upon to operate in the field without the assistance of transport vehicles.

As Vasey flew over the mountains to join the division he realised the enormity of the task that was ahead. He realised that the air was, and aircraft were going to be, very important; food, stores and ammunition had to be dropped in to jungle clearings and where landings could be made the wounded had to be evacuated. Vasey walked every mile of the track and where possible spoke to troops - often one to one. The condition and welfare of his men was paramount at all times.

By 2 November 1942 units under Vasey's command had captured Kokoda and it was then possible to re-construct a landing strip for aircraft. In the meantime he arranged for supplies to be airdropped.

With the Japanese Army falling back towards the coast Vasey kept up the pressure and although most of his troops were by this time feeling the effects of battle and the terrain he issued orders to press home the advantage.

Vasey walked the Track along with his troops, wading the rivers, crossing the log bridges and on one occasion providing entertainment as he tried to keep his balance on a swaying wire bridge. He led his forces through to the coast at Buna and on to Sanananda. Whilst his spirit was willing his body was showing the effects of the harsh conditions under which he had been living and campaigning. His ADC, Lt. Bill Riggall, said at the time *'All the troops think the world of GAV. I hear the most complimentary remarks as we walk along the road and I doubt if any other general in the AIF could have got as much out of his men. He has a word for everyone with just that sure touch that tells..'* The chief medical officer in New Guinea, Colonel Disher, wrote *'One of my most vivid memories is of driving with him(Vasey) towards Gona. Thin and gaunt, he stood up in the jeep as we went along, and we came upon men lying by the roadside. When they saw who was coming they all looked pleased to see him and attempted to get to their feet while he waved an arm and said "G'day, chaps!". Any other general I think would have been ignored, for it was an effort for them to get to their feet in their battle weary condition. Their "G'day, sir!" was more than just a formal reply.'*

During the campaign which had lasted three months Vasey's force had consisted of six Australian brigades and two American regiments but lacked artillery which would have provided sorely needed support to the infantry.

Vasey returned to Australia in January 1943 and was to take extended leave in Melbourne but on 10 February was admitted to Heidelberg Military Hospital suffering from malaria. The campaign in New Guinea had taken its toll and Vasey, like the majority of his troops, had suffered from the harsh conditions, the bitterly fought battles, malaria and shortage of food. After discharge from hospital he was reported as 'looking pretty dreadful'. 'very pale' and as being two sizes too small for his uniform.

In April, of that year, Vasey rejoined the 7th Division on the Atherton Tablelands where it had been sent to receive re-inforcements and to undergo training in the light of experiences gained in New Guinea. Vasey immediately set up a jungle training school. Whilst there he had recurring attacks of malaria, at one stage spending a week in bed, and he was forced to spend periods of up to two weeks recuperating. However when he could he would accompany his men on the exercises.

Vasey was very aware that during this period his men were a long way from centres of entertainment and, to counteract this, on one occasion organised a race meeting followed on the next day by a big rodeo- including a souvenir programme for each of the 12,000

men. As well he arranged for many barbecues and football competitions. His concern for his men was always uppermost in his thoughts.

One example was that he wrote to Jessie to say that the wife of a sargeant, who had married in England, was arriving in Melbourne and that the sargeant had no family or relatives to meet her. He asked that Jessie give all the assistance she could.

When told that his Division was to return to New Guinea and proceed overland from Wau to the Markham Valley he said, "Bloody hell- I don't want another bloody Kokada Track- we'll fly". He then gained authority for an American unit, 503rd Parachute Regiment, to train with the 7th Division. He eventually produced a plan that his Division would be flown into Nadzab air strip; after it had been captured by a combined Australian land and American Paratroop attack.

During the next part of the campaign in the Markham Valley and places like Shaggy Ridge, Vasey was, where¹ever possible, as close to his troops as possible- either on the ground or observing from light air-craft. One of his more memorable orders covering the attack on a feature called the Pimple at Shaggy Ridge was ' *The 7th Division will advance on a one man front. Anyone disobeying this order will break his bloody neck.*'

The next objective was to reach the coast which was achieved but only after some hard fought battles and finally the Japanese Army was in retreat. Eventually Vasey and his Division returned to Australia for leave and to reform and receive reinforcements.

After Vasey had leave in Melbourne he returned to Queensland and while visiting the Atherton Tablelands he fell ill with what was to be diagnosed eventually as acute infective polyneuritis. He was transferred to the 115th Australian General Hospital at Greenslopes, a suburb of Brisbane. He was so ill that for a period he was placed on the Dangerously Ill List. His spirit remained the same; even though he was described as 'a six foot one inch emaciated man on wobbly legs trying to shave himself.' When the nurse who found him out of bed ordered him back or she would report him. Vasey told her that he would cut her bloody throat if she did; she replied that she would cut his bloody throat if he didn't get back into bed. The same nurse looked after him from then on at his request; spending up to 14 hours at a time until eventually they overcame the disease.

The illness cost him command of his beloved Division and what hurt the most was that he was unable to personally say good-bye. It also provided an excuse for Blamey to stop him going back to active service.

At the same time, the latter half of 1944, Vasey's profile with the public was at its highest. He was on the cover of the *Womens Weekly* his portrait was painted by both Allison Beale and James Quinn, he was photographed by Dr. Julian Smith and in February, 1945, he was voted as Australia's most handsome man by a panel consisting of an artist, sculptor and photographer.

He was still upset at losing his command and believed that this popularity could be of use to him. At an interview with Sir Frederick Shedden, the Secretary of the Department of Defence, he was highly critical of Blamey and others. Apparently Blamey's promotions and recommendations for honours were in the main for those who supported him. Vasey had long interviews with Frank Forde and Senator J.M. Fraser, Acting Minister for the Army. Whilst visiting Jessie in Hospital he met and talked with the Prime Minister, John Curtin, who as also a patient. Curtin invited Vasey to visit him after he was discharged from hospital and there they continued discussions on political matters.

Blamey continued in his efforts to prevent Vasey returning to his command of the 7th Division, arguing at some length with the Minister for the Army, Rt. Honorable Frank M. Forde.

At the time there was some discussion as to whether Vasey was completely recovered and in some quarters his liking for gin and whether this effected his ability to lead or even whether it had contributed to his illness. One of his medical officers, Colonel H. Clive Disher, said that although Vasey drank a lot 'He had never knew him to get tight'.

Whatever doubts Blamey may have had, Vasey certainly had none and early in February he was rewarded for his persistence with being appointed to command the 6th Division. Before travelling north he spent his last night at his home, Wantirna, with Jessie and friends. In their presence he began to talk about his concerns for the men under his command and related how they came to him with their concern as to what would happen to their wives and children if they did not survive the war and would he look after them. He turned to Jessie and said 'stick to the war widows and when I come back you shall have every atom of help I can give'.

Vasey's appointment to the 6th Division apparently was intended to be of a temporary nature and that, at an appropriate time, he would be appointed Commander-in Chief. Vasey is quoted as telling a Colonel Pollard of this and his wife, Jessie, also believed that The Prime Minister, John Curtin, had said that this was the Government's intention.

This was not to be, however, because on 5 March 1945, while returning to New Guinea by air the aeroplane in which Vasey and others were travelling ran into a tropical storm near Cairns. Because Cairns aerodrome was closed the pilot was advised to fly onto Cooktown. The aerodrome controller saw, during a break in the clouds, the plane circling the 'drome. The Commanding Officer of 25 Operational Unit also saw the plane as it came out of a rain squall and as he watched the plane executing a slow left-hand turn suddenly the right wing dropped and the plane dived into the ground. There were no survivors. Among the other passengers to die were Major-General R.M. Downes, the chief medical historian, Colonel H.R. Russell, a senior medical officer, Lieutenant W. Riggall, Vasey's ADC, and Corporal E.J. James, Vasey's batman.

Along with the other two senior officers Vasey was buried with full military honours in the military section of the Cairns Cemetery. The guard of honour consisted of 200 members of the 7th Division, from artillery, infantry and machine-gunners, 100 officers also attended. General Blamey and Bro. Lieutenant-General Morsehead were the chief mourners and the chief pall bearers were Major-Generals Milford and Wootten, and Brigadiers Chilton, Bro. Dougherty and Eather.

During the time immediately after his death the tributes and letters received by his widow, Mrs. Jessie Vasey, came from all over Australia from people whose lives had been touched in some way by Major-General "Bloody George" Vasey- from high-ranking officers to car drivers and members of infantry platoons. All of them acknowledging that they were privileged to have known him.

While Vasey's death was such a loss to Jessie and their family, to the Australian Army and to the nation it has been proposed in some quarters that, because Vasey was never happier than when leading his units into battle against an enemy and because he had spent 30 of his 50 years in the Army that he would have found it hard to adjust to peacetime. Even though he had promised Jessie his full support in looking after War Widows.

Masonic Career.

George Alan Vasey was initiated in Wesley Collegians Lodge No.358 United Grand Lodge of Victoria on 10 October 1927, Fellowcraft 10 November 1927 and Master Mason 9 January 1928.

During the time he was in India he affiliated with the McMahon Lodge No.3262 English Constitution.

This lodge was consecrated in Quetta, Baluchistan, on 12 March, 1908, and transferred to London, England, in 1947. He was received as a joining member on 19 April 1928 and on 21 June he was presented with his Master Mason's Certificate, No.61757, by the lodge at the request of Wesley Collegians Lodge. He held the office of Junior Deacon in McMahon Lodge for the 1929/30 lodge year and although he left Quetta in 1930, he remained a member until he called off on 31 May 1936.

On arrival back in Australia he affiliated with Lodge Army and Navy No.517 United Grand Lodge of NSW on 12 November 1930 and called off on 8 August 1934. He received Certificate No. 117220.

He was still a member of Wesley Collegian's Lodge at the time of his death on 5 March 1945.

Acknowledgments

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Correspondence from 1) McMahon Lodge No.3262 United Grand Lodge of England
2) Wesley Collegians Lodge No.358 United Grand Lodge of Victoria.

United Grand Lodge of New South Wales Membership records.