

## *Aloysius ('Lloyd') O'Toole*

Aloysius Lloyd O'Toole was born in Mandurama NSW in 1894, the seventh child of James and Jane O'Toole. He was known to his family as Lloyd but appears in official records as Aloysius.

Lloyd was the first of the four brothers to join the army. He enlisted at Liverpool (Sydney) on 1 December 1914 and declared he was 22 when in fact he was only 20. He was posted to the 3rd Reinforcements of the 2nd Battalion. After basic training he embarked with his unit on the *Seang Choon*, sailing from Sydney on 11 February 1915 bound for Alexandria, Egypt. On 5 April 1915 they embarked again at Alexandria and sailed to the Dardanelles to join the Gallipoli campaign.<sup>i</sup>

Lloyd took part in the initial landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 and therefore played a direct part in the ANZAC legend. He received a bullet wound in the thigh when he reached the beach and another bullet wound in the head later that day. On the third day he suffered a compound fracture to his leg, caused by shrapnel from a shell.<sup>ii</sup> Badly wounded, he was evacuated to Alexandria and then to England where he was admitted to No. 2 Western General Hospital in Manchester on 16 May 1915. There he was treated for nearly 10 months, during which time he underwent 17 operations on his leg.<sup>iii</sup> He was returned to Australia in March 1916.



Above: HMAT (His Majesty's Australian Troop Ship) *Seang Choon* that carried Lloyd O'Toole to war.

On his return Lloyd was entertained and presented with the Citizens' Medal at a social evening organised by the Gosford Patriotic and Social Society. The evening was reported in some detail in the local newspaper, and part of the report is as follows:

Private O'Toole was fortunate in surviving the dangers he encountered, while he was unfortunate in having had to undergo so many operations and was still booked for others. However, he trusted that he would soon be his old self again, and hoped he would endeavor to realise a little of the spirit and well-wishes which was behind the gold medal it gave him so much pleasure to bestow. Private O'Toole said that he was hoping to get well again in order to return and help his mates ...

Lloyd's war officially ended on 16 October 1916 when he was discharged from the army as medically unfit, but the war inside his head was far from over. In those days, soldiers suffering emotional trauma from war service were simply labelled as 'shell-shocked' and their condition was neither understood nor treated. In fact as late as the

1970s, Australian diggers returning from the Vietnam war were not given sufficient support to cope with their experiences. These days, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is well understood and support is readily offered to people suffering traumas far less severe than those who were exposed to the horrors of war.

Today, relatives will tell you that 'Lloyd was not the same after the war'. He lived in the Cowra district until about 1920 and then moved to Gosford. He was then employed by the NSW Railways as a fireman, presumably working on steam locomotives.

In January 1921 Lloyd had been drinking for several days and was heavily intoxicated when he shot his first cousin, Mary Margaret Marshall. She was working as a barmaid at a wine bar in George Street, Sydney, and Lloyd had asked her several times to go out with him but she refused. When she refused yet again, Lloyd returned to the wine bar and shot her three times in the head and neck with a revolver (a fourth shot missed). Lloyd then shot himself in the head although the bullet did not penetrate his skull.<sup>iv</sup>

Both recovered from their wounds and afterwards Lloyd had no recollection of the event. He was charged with 'wounding with intent to murder' and tried at the Central Criminal Court in Sydney on 13 April 1921. He was found guilty and sentenced to death but his sentence was commuted to five years in jail. He served just under four years and was released from jail by special licence on 12 January 1925.<sup>v</sup>

Things seemed to improve for Lloyd after his release. He married Rosa May Carr in 1926 at Willoughby and in 1930 they were living at French's Road, Chatswood. They had four children – Aileen O'Toole born in December 1926, Reginald in August 1928, Harold Bradman in July 1930, and Irene in July 1934.<sup>vi</sup> By 1936 Lloyd and Rosa were living apart.<sup>vii</sup> Sadly, Rosa passed away in 1941 at the age of 40, leaving four children aged between seven and fourteen who were then cared for by their grandmother Mary Ellen Carr.



Above: Rosa, Lloyd and their four children (photo courtesy of Catherine Williams).

Lloyd died of pneumonia on 4 June 1944 at the age of 50. He is buried in the Field of Mars cemetery, Catholic section E, grave 232. Remembered with pride, sadness and understanding.

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<sup>i</sup> official army service record for Private Aloysius O'Toole, service number 1612.

<sup>ii</sup> clipping from undated, unknown newspaper titled 'Welcome Home'.

<sup>iii</sup> service record and the *Forbes Times* 28 May 1918 page 2.

<sup>iv</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald* 21 January 1921 page 9 and 14 April 1921 page 6. *Bathurst Times* 21 January 1921 page 2. *Daily Perth News* 14 April 1921 page 4.

<sup>v</sup> *New South Wales Police Gazette* 16 February 1921, 25 May 1921 page 299 and 21 January 1925 page 39.

<sup>vi</sup> Information provided by Catherine Williams is gratefully acknowledged. Catherine is a great niece of Rosamay O'Toole nee Carr.

<sup>vii</sup> NSW electoral roles for 1936 and 1937. Lloyd was living at 48 High St in Willoughby while Rosa was at 120 High St. This confirms information provided by a friend of the family.