

**THE RETURNED & SERVICES
LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA
WA BRANCH INCORPORATED**

PATRON: HER EXCELLENCY MRS KERRY SANDERSON AO
THE GOVERNOR OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Speaker's Notes Battles of Bullecourt and Ypres Monday April 24 5.00pm

Herbert Johansen Appel

Herbert Johansen Appel, the only son of Mr and Mrs Jens Appel of Subiaco was also killed 100 years ago in 1917. From the first day Herbert Appel entered Christian Brothers' College he was a favourite with all, teachers and students alike. He was a boy of charming nature, ever ready to do a good turn to his schoolmates.

He was a student of the College for seven years and his first notable scholastic triumph was in 1906 when he headed the list in the West and South Australian Junior examinations. He then went on to pass the Senior and Higher Public examinations with distinctions.

Herbert Appel was College Prefect in 1909, 1910 and 1911 and the winner of the Durack Medal for Dux of the College in 1911. He was also the Christian Brothers' candidate for Rhodes Scholar.

As an athlete Appel shone. He was a member of the Football 1st XVIII Premiers team in 1909, and a member of the Cricket 1st XI Premiers Team of 1909.

Herbert Appel was a talented cricketer and Captained the College 1st XI in 1911. He had the distinction of making the highest score of the season, 138 against Hale. Appel also had the record of the greatest hit of a cricket ball at the College, hitting from the turf wicket and sending the ball to top of the roof, a few yards from the tower. As a footballer he played 13 league games for the Subiaco Football Club over the 1910 and 1911 seasons.

On leaving the College, Appel competed in the Government surveyor's examination conducted throughout the Commonwealth and his name "figured first".

Appel was a third year university engineering cadet, aged 23, when he joined the call to war in August 1915 where he served in France for two years as Lance Corporal with the 6th Field Company Australian Engineers.

He was wounded in May 1917 but remained on active duty then on the 19 September 1917, Lance Corporal Herbert Johansen Appel, was wounded in action and died that same day. He was 26 years of age. He is listed as dying at Poperinghe and buried in the Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery Flanders in Belgium for soldiers who had been wounded near Ypres and who later died in the large Allied casualty clearing stations located in the area.

Throughout the Great War of 1914-1918 Poperinghe, or "Pops" as the British soldiers called it, was used as a gateway to the battlefields of the northern Ypres Salient. It was an important rail centre behind the front line and was used for the distribution of supplies, for billeting troops, for casualty clearing stations and for troops at rest from duty in the forward trench areas. Thousands of troops passed through this small town at some time or other. There was generally at least one Division billeted in the town, and it was described as a wartime

centre for recreation, for shopping and for rest". The population before the War was about 12,000, but in 1917 there were as many as 250,000 soldiers billeted in the area. The town also contained a hospital that treated civilian casualties from the fighting at Ypres.

The main square formed the hub of five main roads leading into the town and, therefore, was constantly bustling with military traffic, military personnel and those civilians who had stayed on in the town. Because of its importance to the military behind the front Allied lines, the town was frequently targeted by long range German artillery. During the Third Battle of Ypres which was the major British offensive in Flanders from 31 July - 10 November 1917, Poperinghe and the surrounding area was bombed by German aircraft. Some bombs landed on the Casualty Clearing Stations nearby. In eight weeks of fighting in this area Australian forces incurred 38,000 casualties.

Lance Corporal Herbert Johansen Appel was one of many talented young men from schools such as CBC Perth, now Trinity College who were struck down in their prime; never realising their full potential. A further tragedy for their family being that he was their only son.

Lest We Forget