

Stories of Australian Wendish soldiers

On 10 May 2018 at the Burnside Library, the Wend/Sorb Society of SA proudly presented the topic, *Australian Wends who served in World War One* (WW1). When Australia was called to fight the Germans in WW1 many Australians of Wendish descent joined up to defend their homeland. Committee members recounted the stories of their ancestors in a well-attended morning session, attended by about 50 people.

Leona Coleman spoke of typical war stories of three cousins connected with the **Schuppan** family, who arrived in Australia from Tauer, Lusatia, in 1858. Oswald and Bertram **Duldig** both enlisted in the army at Burra on 4 May 1916. Oswald was from World's End and Bertram was probably from Peter's Hill, though he gave his address as Riverton. Bert **Noll** of Wilmington enlisted in Adelaide a few weeks later on 22 June. All three were farmers or farm labourers; Bertram was 26 years, and Oswald and Bert, both 22 years. They all undertook basic training at Mitcham and sailed from Adelaide on 28 August 1916 on the *Anchisis* as part of the 10th Battalion, arriving at Plymouth England on 11 October. These three men served on the Western Front. On 20 September 1917 Oswald was killed in action in Belgium.

Ruth Walter presented three **Herrmann** brothers named Ben, Edward (Kelly) and Albert (Jock). They were born in Hamilton, Victoria, in the 1890s and came from a farming background. Their mother was third generation Wendish Australian (**Rentsch**) and their father was German Australian. Ben served at Gallipoli and in France, where he was killed in August 1916. Kelly and Jock were both seriously wounded.



Ruth Walter

Marie Brazier and Ruth Fiebig presented their ancestor: the famous surgeon Dr Bernard **Zwar**, the son of Wendish leader Johann Zwar. Dr Zwar was born on 20 June 1876 in Stockwell, SA. He was appointed a Major in the Australian Imperial Force in Oct 1914 and allotted to the 2nd Australian Stationary Hospital. Dr Zwar tended the wounded at Gallipoli landing and later served in Egypt as a Medical Officer.



Dr Bernard Zwar

Pauline Burger presented the **Dalitz** brothers from Dimboola, Victoria. There were ten sons and three daughters in the family; five sons enlisted in the Australian army. The first to enlist in June 1915 were Frederick William (Bill) aged 29, a Methodist blacksmith, and Alwyn Clarence (Clarrie) aged 21, a Methodist carpenter. Bill was injured at Gallipoli in 1915 and recovered at Heliopolis, Egypt. In April 1917 he was awarded the Military Medal for guiding wagons to safety for 72 hours. Clarrie was captured on the Hindenburg Line on 11 April 1917 and sent to the German POW Camp (Güstrow Lager) until Armistice Day. The next two to enlist in March 1916 were Henry Charles (Chas) aged 24, a Presbyterian bricklayer, and Carl Walter (Wally) aged 19, a Lutheran grocer. Wally was killed in action in May 1917. In March 1918 Ernst Oswald (Os), a Presbyterian postman, enlisted.

In conclusion, these young men of Wendish heritage were proud to serve their nation and fight in World War One, but suffered much trauma, injuries and illnesses as a result. They are an inspiration to their descendants.

Marie Brazier