

Col. Robert Haylock Owen C. M. G.

Robert Haylock Owen was born on 7 January 1862 and when aged 24 years enlisted in the Colonial Military Forces on 24 February 1885 during the early days of the Sudan War. He embarked on 3 March 1885 on the *SS Iberia* with the rank of Lieutenant and returned to Australia on 23 June 1885 on board the *SS Arab*.

At the time of the outbreak of the First World War Robert Owen was appointed to the AIF on 31 August 1914. By May 1915 he had assumed command of the 3rd Battalion. Being wounded at the Dardanelles on 22 June 1915 he required hospitalisation at Cairo. Robert Owen must have been suffering from ill health when he volunteered for service. A letter in his military records shows that concerns were held as there was a request to bring him before a medical board as soon as possible. That was in July 1915 less than 12 months after he left Australia for active service.

By this time he was 53 years old and suffering from Neurasthemia (nervous exhaustion) and unfit for general service. He was sent to England. He returned to Australia on the *Suevic* in October 1915. The London Gazette in November 1915 stated that the King was pleased to appoint R H Owen to the Order of St Michael and St George.

On arriving home at Wollongong Station in late November 1915 the Mayor Alderman Smith, himself a returned serviceman, greeted him and two soldiers carried him shoulder height to an awaiting car.

It was considered that he was not well enough to be active in the armed forces and his records show that he was discharged in May 1916 and was finally placed on the retirement list on 1 February 1924.