



South African War 1899-1902

(Boer War)

United Service Club

Honour Roll



These *History and Heritage Notes* are intended for private use by USC Members. They are deliberately relaxed in style and aim to be informative and conversational in tone rather than academic in structure and without source acknowledgements/referencing. Members are therefore requested not to reproduce or distribute them outside our membership. We acknowledge that there may be some errors or omissions, despite our best endeavours. Please contact the Club if you have additional information or comments that will assist to improve these Notes.

We acknowledge and thank the following members of the History Interest Group for their assistance and work in researching and drafting this Note: Brigadier Rod Hamilton CSM RFD (retd), Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Maitland OAM RFD (retd), and Major Roslyn Carlyle .

HONOUR ROLL

BOER WAR

(SOUTH AFRICAN WAR 1899 – 1902)

Around 16,000 Australians volunteered to fight in the South Africa War 1899 - 1902, (officially also known as the Second Boer War but commonly referred to as the Boer War). Over 60 Australian nurses also served. It remains Australia's third-worst conflict in terms of casualties - a total of 606 Australians were killed or died from disease.

In 2014 the History Interest Group noted that the Club had not formed an Honour Roll of Members who were killed during, or died as a result of, service in the South African War 1899 – 1902. A small group researched the subject¹.

The United Service Club Members who were killed or died as a result of their service in the South African War 1899-1902 are shown in the Table below, with a profile of each on the pages shown.

This History Note is intended to commemorate their service.

Name	Unit	Death	Page
Lieutenant James Whamond ANNAT	D Company, 3rd Queensland Mounted Infantry	6 August 1900. Killed at the battle of Elands River.	4
Lieutenant Lachlan John CASKEY	5 th Queensland Imperial Bushmen	27 September 1901. Killed at Makari Drift, Caledon River	5
Lieutenant John HIGSON	4 th Queensland Imperial Bushmen	12 November 1902. Died as a result of his war wounds in Taringa, Brisbane	7
Lieutenant John LEASK	E Company, 3 rd Queensland Mounted Infantry	20 August 1900. Died of wounds in Pretoria (after being wounded at Elands River on 6 August).	9

Most records of the Club's early years have been lost but it is almost certain that most Queensland officers², especially those outlined in this document, were USC Members, given that the Club performed an educational role for military officers and given the small size of the Defence Force and of Brisbane at that time.

Lieutenants Annat, Caskey, and Leask are commemorated at their various gravesites in South Africa; on Panel 1 of the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra and on the South Africa War Memorial in Anzac Square, Brisbane.

Lieutenant Leask is also commemorated at Spring Creek (Clifton) State School; and Leichardt Street (Boys) State School. Lieutenant Caskey is also commemorated by a memorial built in his honour at Toowong Cemetery. Lieutenant Higson is also commemorated at his grave at the Toowong Cemetery, Brisbane.

¹ The research involved the following key elements:

- Search of Australian War Memorial records for all officers commemorated as having died from service in the Second Boer War
- Classification of the State of residence of those officers from sources such as their regiment or unit and press reports
- Search of the Queensland Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.
- Electronic search of archived newspapers for relevant articles and notices for the United Service Club; and for each individual identified as a Queenslander.

² There are exceptions. For example Lieutenant Alfred Ernest Pooley (5th Queensland Imperial Bushmen) is listed on the Memorial in Anzac Square but he is unlikely to have been a Member of the Club as he was not an officer before he left Australia. (The Club was then an officers' club.) According to the AWM nominal roll, he served with the 4th Queensland Imperial Bushmen as a Sergeant and promoted to sergeant-major⁷ in June 1900. He elected to remain in South Africa when the Fourth Contingent returned to Australia and was transferred to the 5th Queensland Imperial Bushmen where he was promoted to lieutenant. He was killed in action at Makari Drift on 27th September 1901.

Historical Context

When the Second Boer War broke out in 1899, Australia was made up of six colonies that were on the verge of becoming a federation. Each Colonial government in Australia maintained some form of military force, comprising a small 'regular' cadre and part-time Militia.

Six "contingents" (organisations that were specially raised to be sent to South Africa, sometimes formed from a group of units and sometimes from an individual unit) were despatched from Queensland. Other colonies in Australia also despatched Contingents. Some of the Australian soldiers who joined the fighting were already in South Africa when the war broke out, some joined British or South African colonial units and some made their own way to the Cape and Joined local units. Recruitment also took place in Australia itself.

At Federation on 1 January 1901, the Commonwealth assumed the responsibility for the defence forces and the various colonial forces were transferred to Commonwealth control – the Queensland Defence Force was transferred in March 1903. There were Contingents despatched as Commonwealth of Australia units from 1902.

See Attachment 1 for a list of all Contingents that were despatched from Australia and see Attachment 2 for an overview of those Contingents in which these four USC Members were serving.

Military Context

Around 16,000 Australians volunteered to fight for Britain in South Africa from 1899 to 1902, five of whom were awarded a Victoria Cross for valour in battle. Most Australians served in mounted units, known variously as Bushmen, Mounted Rifles, Imperial Bushmen, The Australian Commonwealth Horse and the Light Horse.

More than 60 Australian nurses went to the Boer war. Some were provided by governments or by privately raised funds, while others went at their own expense. The nurses served to aid the sick and wounded under very harsh conditions. Three were awarded Royal Red Cross medals. The Boer War marked the death of a nurse, Frances Hines—the first Australian woman to die in war.

It remains Australia's third-worst conflict in terms of casualties - a total of 606 Australians died in the two-and-a-half years in South Africa, about half from disease and half in action.

Lieutenant James (Jim) Whamond ANNAT

(D Company 3rd Queensland Mounted Infantry – Third Queensland Contingent)



James Whamond Annat (sometimes recorded as ‘Annant’) was born in Lintrathen, Airlie, Scotland in 1864. He left school at 16 years of age in 1880 and joined the Gordon Highlanders to commence a career mainly as a professional soldier (and a short period as a part-time miner in Queensland).

In January 1881 he was in action in the First Boer war, including the Battle of Majuba Hill, where he was wounded in the groin resulting in a lifelong slight limp. In 1883 - 1884 he saw service with the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders in the Zulu War (1883-1884) and also in Egypt and India. He went to Canada in 1887 and was severely wounded in 1890 at Pine Ridge fighting against the Indians.

He came to Australia where he was an instructor in both the NSW and Queensland Defence Forces. He was posted to 3rd Queensland (Kennedy) Regiment in 1895³. Sergeant Major J M Annat was provisionally commissioned (lieutenant) in 1896 with a permanent appointment, according to the Queensland Government Gazette, from 3rd May 1899. In 1899 he was the Officer Commanding the Warwick Company of the Queensland Rifles.

He was engaged in gold mining in the Warwick district, owning a crushing and cyanide plant and mine on the NSW border and had mined on a claim known as the Mountain Maid in the Warwick District.

Lieutenant Annat was selected for service in South Africa as part of the Third Contingent and embarked from Brisbane on 2 March 1900⁴. He saw action in battles in Rhodesia and West Transvaal, with principal engagements including Relief of Mafeking (16-17 May 1900), defeat at Koster River (22 July 1900) and defence of Elands River Post (4-16 August 1900). Lieutenant Annat was killed on 6 August 1900 at the battle of Elands River (one of the most significant engagements fought by Australians in the war). He was struck by a 12lb shell and died about 10 minutes later.

He was 36 years old leaving a wife (Isabella) with five young children. The eldest was seven years old and the youngest was three months. He had taken part in the relief of Mafeking and served with distinction in the early days of the siege when “he often went out into enemy-held territory.”

Lieutenant Colonel Baden-Powell commanded at Mafeking, and Jim and Isabella named their youngest child Hector Baden Mafeking Annat. Jim had written to his wife advising her that he had altered his Will in her advantage in case he joined ‘*the grand majority in the next few days...*’

The Australian War Memorial lists his War Service and Honours as “*operations in Rhodesia and the Transvaal*”.

³ This Regiment had its headquarters and two rifle companies in Townsville, and rifle companies in Charters Towers, Ravenswood and Mackay. It is not known where Annat was posted.

⁴ The Third Queensland Contingent comprised The Queensland [Citizen] Bushmen; 3rd Queensland Mounted Infantry; and 2nd Bushman Regiment. They embarked with their horses in Brisbane on 2 March 1900 on the transport *Duke of Portland*. The Contingent returned dismounted to Australia in June 1901.

Lieutenant Lachlan John ('Jack') CASKEY

(5th Queensland Imperial Bushmen – Fifth Queensland Contingent)



Lachlan John ('Jack') Caskey was born at Spring Creek on the Darlings Downs of Scottish immigrants. He was one of seven children and from the age of five he was brought up by his widowed mother at her farm at Spring Creek near Clifton⁵. He went to South Africa with the 5th Queensland Imperial Bushmen and was killed in action on 27 September 1901 at Mokari Drift.

Jack was 5ft 8in tall with black hair and brown eyes and was described in the Brisbane Courier on 12 October 1901 as follows: '*qualities of fidelity to duty...intensely sympathetic disposition...good horseman with or without a saddle...a Good Shot*'. He was 31 years old when he was killed and had never married.

Caskey began his teaching career as a 'pupil teacher' at age 15 years. He became an officer in the Queensland Teacher's Volunteer Corps and was Officer Commanding the School Cadets at the Leichardt Street (Boys) State School for Boys in Brisbane from 1898 to February 1901.

At the time of his enlistment he was a School Teacher at Allora State School. He had been a Teacher's Union member (interested in 'wage issues' and the 'Rules of Head and Assistant Head Teachers').

Caskey was selected for the Fifth Queensland Contingent (5th Queensland Imperial Bushmen) that sailed from Brisbane in March 1901⁶. On arrival in Cape Town they were deployed in theatre from April 1901 - March 1902 under in East Transvaal, and the Free State, with principal engagements including a defeat at Makari Drift, Caledon River.

Lieutenant Caskey was killed at Makari Drift on 27 September 1901. He was aged 31 years and was single, with his mother (Marjory Caskey) as Next of Kin. He left an estate of realty and personally of £516. Lieutenant Caskey was Mentioned in Despatches on two occasions. His war service is listed as Cape Colony, Orange Free State, and Transvaal.

When news of his death reached Brisbane, teachers, students, family and friends arranged for two memorial plaques to be erected in his honour at the Leichardt and Spring Creek Schools.

⁵ Brisbane Courier, 12 Oct 1901

⁶ The Fifth Queensland Contingent comprised the 5th Queensland Imperial Bushmen. Its strength on embarkation was 529, ordered into three mounted squadrons and one cyclist company, which later reverted to three mounted rifle squadrons only. They embarked with their horses in Brisbane on 6 and 10 March 1901 on the transports *Templemore* and *Chicago*. On arrival in Cape Town they were deployed in theatre from April 1901 - March 1902 under General Plumer in East Transvaal, and the Free State - with principal engagements including a defeat at Makari Drift (27 September 1901). The Unit returned dismounted from Cape Town to Brisbane on 30 April 1902 on the transport *St Andrew* via Albany and Melbourne. Total casualties of the Contingent were 26 killed or died of wounds (including Lieutenant Caskey), four died of disease, three killed accidentally by comrades.

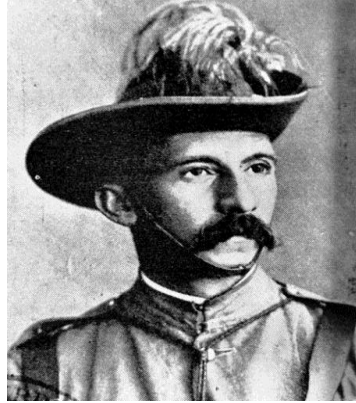
Then with the additional support of the Valley Presbyterian Tennis Club, the Cricket Club and the Referees Association, a memorial was built in his honour at Toowong Cemetery. His regiment arrived back in Brisbane on 30 April 1902 and were on parade for the unveiling and dedication of the memorial on 3 May 1902.

The monument reflects his military, scholastic and sporting interests – see photographs below that show swords, cricket bats, tennis racquets etc. Its restoration was coordinated by the National Boer War Memorial Association at a cost of over \$8,000, with contributions from Queensland State Government, RSL Brisbane North District, Kedron-Wavell RSL Sub-Branch, the Sherwood-Indooroopilly RSL Sub-Branch and Friends of the Toowong Cemetery. The memorial service was held in the cemetery on 23 September 2012. USC President Colonel Dennis Scanlan CSM FRD ADC was Guest of Honour and represented the Club at that service.



Lieutenant John HIGSON

(4th Queensland Imperial Bushmen – Fourth Queensland Contingent)



John Higson was a school teacher at South Brisbane State School, and a president of the West Moreton Teachers Association. He was said to be genial, good-natured and of jovial disposition, but he never married.

He was appointed lieutenant 4th Queensland Imperial Bushmen⁷, in the Fourth Queensland Contingent that sailed from Brisbane on 18 May 1900. During the fighting he was wounded, shot through the head. The AWM records state: '*severely wounded at Zandfontein 25/09/1900.*'

He had several operations and was examined by a Medical Officer on 21st January 1901 and the subsequent Medical Report (dated: 16th February 1901) stated: '*Fair health generally, but he is suffering from the effects of a bullet wound thro' the head. His sense of smell is destroyed.*'

He returned to Brisbane on six months leave of absence, arriving on the 'Karanuo' on 16 February 1901, with no apparent ill effects other than loss of smell. His discharge address was recorded as Mrs Cabet, Stanley Terrace Taringa, but after being declared cured he returned to South Africa to re-join his regiment - just before it returned home in June 1901.

However about 16 months after his return to Brisbane Lieutenant Higson died as a result of his war wounds on 12 November 1902 in Taringa, Brisbane. He was 38 years old and not married. He was buried with full military honours at Toowong Cemetery. Officers of the United Service Institution (as USC was then known) were among those who sent a wreath and several attended.

The following story appeared in the Brisbane Courier on Friday 14 November 1902:

Death of Lieutenant Higson

'The sudden death of Lieutenant John HIGSON, which took place at Mr Abell's house at Taringa on Wednesday afternoon, where he had for some time been staying, is reported. The deceased gentleman attended the adjourned meeting of the United Service Institute [as the United Service Club was known at that time] on Saturday, and was then apparently in his usual good health. On Sunday morning, however, the people of the house heard groans issuing from his bedroom, and entering, found him lying in an unconscious condition. Dr Wheeler was called with promptitude, and did what was possible; but Mr Higson never regained consciousness, and died as reported above.'

⁷ The Fourth Queensland Contingent comprised the 4th Queensland Imperial Bushmen. Its strength on embarkation was 387, organised as three mounted rifle squadrons. They embarked with their horses in Brisbane on 18 May 1900 on the transport *Manchester Port*.

They were deployed in theatre from June 1900 - June 1901 in the Free State, Transvaal and East Transvaal, with principal engagements including the battle of Rhenoster Kop (29 November 1900), the "Great De Wet Hunt" and the advance on Pietersburg.

The Contingent returned dismounted to Brisbane on 5 August 1901 on the transport *Britannic*. Casualties were eight killed or died of wounds (not including Lieutenant Higson), and five died of disease.

At the time of his death Lieutenant Higson was a member of the committee of the Brisbane Lieudertafel, and also a member of the North Australian Masonic Lodge, and at one time was president of the East Morton Teachers Association. His only relative in Queensland is his father, a man well up in years, who lives at Milton.

The deceased soldier went twice to South Africa. On the first occasion he was a member of the Fourth Contingent, of which he was a Lieutenant, and in the course of the fighting he one day received the wound which is believed to have caused his death. He was shot through, the bullet entering on the left side of the forehead, and emerging on the right side. After receiving the wound, he did not lose consciousness for a time. Captain Berry and another Officer...helped him from the field of action, and he took shelter in a farmhouse... Several operations were performed, though it was considered a hopeless case. To the surprise of all, Lieutenant Higson made a marvellous recovery, and when he returned to Queensland was apparently little the worse of the wound. His old, genial, good nature and jovial disposition was still his main characteristic, and to outsiders there was no visible change in him. He himself said he experienced little inconvenience. He noticed, however, that feeling in that part of the head was gone, and that his sense of smell had gone and that, though he felt all right in the mornings, he got weary in the afternoons...

He returned to Queensland, having been declared cured, and later went out again to join his Regiment. He had only just arrived, however, when they were ordered home. In South Africa Lieutenant Higson was examined by a medical board with a view to pension. On returning to Queensland he resumed his duty with the Department of Education as a teacher at South Brisbane, continuing in the work until the time of his death.

During his voyage back to South Africa the second time...there had been some irritation in the locality of one of the wounds....

The remains of the late Lieutenant Higson are to be accorded a military funeral, and all the Officers and men available are being asked to attend...The funeral will move from Lieutenant Higson's late residence at 3,30 o'clock this afternoon."

He was aged thirty eight years.

The Military funeral meant that the coffin was draped in a Union Jack and was transported on a gun carriage from his home in Taringa to the Toowong Cemetery. A military cortege consisting of soldiers, sailors, a band and a firing party from the South Brisbane State School escorted the coffin from the corner of Jephson Street and Sylvan Road (Toowong).'

Lieutenant John LEASK

(3rd Queensland Mounted Infantry – Third Queensland Contingent)



John Leask was born in Aberdeen, Scotland in 1865. He served with the 1st Volunteer Battalion of Gordon Highlanders for five years.

In 1888 he moved to Maryborough, Queensland. He was a member of the Maryborough Rifle Club and is recorded as being '*a fine shot*'.

In 1893 he moved to Bundaberg and was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Mounted Infantry.

His civilian employment is listed as '*Commission Agent in Bundaberg*' and that he '*resides at his own farm*'.

He was selected to form part of the 3rd Queensland Mounted Infantry Third Queensland Contingent⁸ that left Brisbane on 2 March 1900.

Leask deployed with his unit and saw action with the principal engagements including Relief of Mafeking (16-17 May 1900), and the defeat at Koster River (22 July 1900).

Lieutenant Leask died of wounds in Pretoria, aged 35 years on 20 August 1900. The AWM records state that he was: '*Severely wounded at Koster River, 22nd July 1900; Died of wounds and pneumonia at Pretoria 20th August 1900*'.

⁸ The Third Queensland Contingent comprised The Queensland [Citizen] Bushmen; 3rd Queensland Mounted Infantry and 2nd Bushman Regiment. Its strength on embarkation was 316, organised in two or three mounted rifle companies in each unit. They embarked with their horses in Brisbane on 2 March 1900 on the transport *Duke of Portland*. They were deployed in theatre from April 1900 - April 1901. Initially in Rhodesia and West Transvaal, with principal engagements including Relief of Mafeking (16-17 May 1900), defeat at Koster River (22 July 1900) and defence of Elands River Post (4-16 August 1900). They also served in Northern Transvaal, including the battle of Rhenoster Kop (29 November 1900), and the advance on Pietersburg. The Contingent returned dismounted to Australia in June 1901, disembarking from the transport *Morayshire* in Sydney and onward movement to Brisbane was by train. Total casualties were three killed or died of wounds (including Lieutenants Annat and Leask), and five died of disease.

CONTINGENTS from AUSTRALIA

Colony	Designation	Left Australia	Returned to Australia
New South Wales	First NSW Contingent	9 Oct 1899	6 Dec 1900
	Second NSW Contingent	17 Jan 1900	29 Apr 1901
	Third NSW Contingent	28 Feb 1900	11 Jun 1901
	Fourth NSW Contingent	23 Apr 1900	17 Jul 1901
	Fifth NSW Contingent	c17 Mar 1901	4 Jun 1902
Victoria	First Victorian Contingent	28 Oct 1899	4 Dec 1900
	Second Victorian Contingent	14 Jan 1900	Dec 1900
	Third Victorian Contingent	10 Mar 1900	Jun 1901
	Fourth Victorian Contingent	1 May 1900	12 Jul 1901
	Fifth Victorian Contingent	15 Feb 1901	25-26 Apr 1902
Queensland	First Queensland Contingent	1 Nov 1899	17 Jan 1901
	Second Queensland Contingent	13 Jan 1900	3 May 1901
	Third Queensland Contingent	2 Mar 1900	Jun 1901
	Fourth Queensland Contingent	18 May 1900	5 Aug 1901
	Fifth Queensland Contingent	6 & 10 Mar 1901	30 Apr 1902
	Sixth Queensland Contingent	4 Apr 1901	various
	Seventh Queensland Contingent	20 Aug 1901	various
South Australia	First South Australian Contingent	2 Nov 1899	30 Nov 1900
	Second South Australian Contingent	21 Jan 1900	30 Nov 1900
	Third South Australian Contingent	7 Mar 1900	Jun 1901
	Fourth South Australian Contingent	1 May 1900	27 Jul 1901
	Fifth South Australian Contingent	9 Feb 1901	27 Apr 1902
	Sixth South Australian Contingent	6 Apr 1901	27 Apr 1902
Western Australia	First Western Australian Contingent	7 Nov 1899	29 Dec 1900
	Second Western Australian Contingent	3 Feb 1900	8 Dec 1900
	Third Western Australian Contingent	14 Mar 1900	28 May 1901
	Fourth Western Australian Contingent	8 May 1900	20 Jul 1901
	Fifth Western Australian Contingent	6 Mar 1901	29 Apr 1902
	Sixth Western Australian Contingent	10 Apr 1901	29 Apr 1902
Tasmania	First Tasmanian Contingent	28 Oct 1899	7 Dec 1900
	Second Tasmanian Contingent	5 Mar 1900	14 Jun 1901
	Third Tasmanian Contingent	26 Apr 1900	5 Apr 1901
	Fourth Tasmanian Contingent	27 Mar 1901	5 Aug 1902
Commonwealth of Australia	First Australian Contingent	16-18 Feb 1902	By Aug 1902
	Second Australian Contingent	From Mar 1902	Aug 1902
	Third Australian Contingent	May 1902	Aug 1902
Commonwealth of Australia – Units formed in South Africa	Various units formed between Nov 1899 and early 1902	Not applicable (formed in South Africa)	Dissolved or disbanded between Apr 1900 and Jun 1902

Contingents of the Deceased USC Members

The Third Queensland Contingent comprised The Queensland [Citizen] Bushmen; 3rd Queensland Mounted Infantry; and 2nd Bushman Regiment. Its strength on embarkation was 316, ordered in two or three mounted rifle companies in each unit. The Commanding Officer was Major Walter H. Tunbridge. They embarked with their horses in Brisbane on 2 March 1900 on the transport *Duke of Portland*.

They were deployed in theatre from April 1900 - April 1901. Initially under General Carrington in Rhodesia and West Transvaal – with principal engagements including Relief of Mafeking (16-17 May 1900), defeat at Koster River (22 July 1900) and defence of Elands River Post (4-16 August 1900). They also served under General Plumer in Northern Transvaal - including the battle of Rhenoster Kop (29 November 1900), and the advance on Pietersburg.

The Contingent returned dismounted to Australia in June 1901, disembarking from the transport *Morayshire* in Sydney and onward movement to Brisbane was by train. The Contingent's casualties were three killed or died of wounds (including Lieutenants Annat and Leask), and five died of disease.

The Fourth Queensland Contingent comprised the 4th Queensland Imperial Bushmen. Its strength on embarkation was 387, ordered into three mounted rifle squadrons. The Commanding Officer was Lieutenant-Colonel A. Aytoun, and later Major W. T. Deacon. They embarked with their horses in Brisbane on 18 May 1900 on the transport *Manchester Port*.

They were deployed in theatre from June 1900 - June 1901 under General Plumer in the Free State, Transvaal and East Transvaal – with principal engagements including the battle of Rhenoster Kop (29 November 1900), the "Great De Wet Hunt" and the advance on Pietersburg.

The Contingent returned dismounted to Brisbane on 5 August 1901 on the transport *Britannic*. The Contingent's casualties were eight killed or died of wounds (not including Lieutenant Higson), and five died of disease.

The Fifth Queensland Contingent comprised the 5th Queensland Imperial Bushmen. Its strength on embarkation was 529, ordered into three mounted squadrons and one cyclist company, which later reverted to three mounted rifle squadrons only. The Commanding Officer was Lieutenant-Colonel J. F. Flewell-Smith, then later Major F. W. Toll. They embarked with their horses in Brisbane on 6 and 10 March 1901 on the transports *Templemore* and *Chicago* respectively.

On arrival in Cape Town they were deployed in theatre from April 1901 - March 1902 under General Plumer in East Transvaal, and the Free State - with principal engagements including a defeat at Mokari Drift (27 September 1901), and the Natal border campaign including the stand at Onverwacht (4 January 1902) where 13 died and 17 were wounded.

The Unit returned dismounted from Cape Town to Brisbane on 30 April 1902 on the transport *St Andrew* via Albany and Melbourne.

The Contingent's casualties were 26 killed or died of wounds (including Lieutenants Caskey and Pooley), four died of disease, three killed accidentally by comrades.