

BOWRA, Frederick Douglas Atlee. Buried Shrapnel Valley.

In some reports, references are made to a number of Australians who were “gassed” on the peninsular. These, however, were men who were injured by the poisonous gases following the explosion of some of our own mines. If a mine, when fired, did not break through satisfactorily to the open air or to the enemy’s workings, the poisonous gas left by the explosion remained in the tunnel, endangering the life of anyone who entered it. For example, on Oct. 29, in order to make sure that a working party might safely enter Tunnel C2, in which a mine had just been fired, **Lieut. F. D. A. Bowra** (or Perth) of the 4th Fld. Coy. went down the rope ladder in the shaft leading to it. He had warned Lieut. E. T. Bazeley (of Nagambie, Vic.) of the 22nd Bn. that there might be danger from poisonous gases, and as he did not return Bazeley and a man named Currington (of Annandale, N.S.W.) went down with a rope. They found **Bowra** collapsed, but before they could rescue him both were overcome. Bazeley had barely strength to climb the ladder; Currington began to climb and fell back. Maj. Newcombe and Lieut. Thom were summoned from the 4th Coy.’s H.Q., and Thom, refusing to be tied to the rope, went down, but collapsed before he could save **Bowra**. The gas was now coming up the shaft. Cpls. J. A. Park (of Sydney), C. F. Mills (of Sydney), W. Bowden (of Geelong, Vic.), J. Shaw (of Kalgoorlie, W. Aust.), and others went down, but Thom, **Bowra**, Currington and two other men of the 22nd, Pte. W. B. S. Good (of Wonthaggi, Vic) and Pte. G. Stelling (of Essendon, Vic.) died, and Col. G. C. E. Elliott, chief engineer of the division, Maj. S. F. Newcombe, and twelve others were seriously “gassed.” (Currington had five brothers serving at the war.). A similar accident had occurred shortly before in a mine-gallery at Russell’s Top, where an officer of the 5th Field Coy., Lieut. E. J. Howells (of Camberwell, Vic), became unconscious, but was dragged out by Cpl. J. H. Precious (of Melbourne), who himself collapsed just as he reached safety. Both survived.

The Official History of Australia in the war of 1914 – 1918. The Story of Anzac. Volume 2. C. E. W. Bean. University of Queensland Press, page 823.