

Hinman, Arthur

Bespectacled and lightly-framed, Arthur Hinman did not look capable of playing VFL football let alone leading men into battle.

Yet Hinman defied all appearances to play league football with distinction before concentrating on a career as a mining engineer and, when war intervened, as a soldier in Australia's baptism of fire at Gallipoli.

Arthur Gurr Hinman was born at Launceston in 1890, the second son of Arthur and Lucy Maud Hinman and was educated locally at Launceston Church Grammar School before crossing the Bass Strait to enrol for the Bachelor of Mining Engineering course at the University of Melbourne in 1909.

Hinman already had shown considerable football talent as a winger with the Launceston Football Club and University therefore welcomed a ready-made player to its ranks and he made his VFL debut in 1910. His 24-game career with the University Football Club from 1910-11 saw him used as a wingman, rover and half-forward flanker.

Then, in 1911, Hinman was joined at the University club by brother Bill (a law student), who not only had a more illustrious career with the Students (38 games from 1911-14), but also won a forest of laurels for his bravery in World War I.

The Hinman brothers played on opposite wings for University in some games in 1911, although Arthur at one stage put his studies before football when he declared himself unavailable to play because of a field trip.

Arthur Hinman abandoned his league career to concentrate on his studies and on graduation in 1914 moved back to Tasmania to work with the Mount Bischoff Tin Mining Company and based himself at Waratah.

When war erupted in August that year, Hinman immediately enlisted, was granted a commission because of his experience with the 91st Infantry (Tasmanian Rangers) and sailed from Australia on November 30, 1914, for Egypt and then the landing at Gallipoli.

Just 15 days after the landing at Gallipoli on April 25,

BORN:

June 19, 1890

DIED:

May 10, 1915

PLAYED:

University 1910-11, 24
games, 1 goal

RANK:

Lieutenant, 15th Battalion,
1st AIF



Lieutenant Arthur Hinman

Hinman was involved in the planning to dig in against the Turks and, according to official Australian war historian Charles Bean in *The Story of Anzac*: "Urged a strong objection to the whole undertaking, pointing out that in the morning following the assault the Australians certainly would be driven out of any captured trenches by the Turkish machine-guns, which would enfilade them from both flanks."

The digging of a trench went ahead and although the mission was accomplished, there were heavy losses, as Bean reported: "Lieutenant Hinman ... who was that night in charge of No 6 Subsection of Quinn's (Post) — took his men out into the open to continue the work. 'It's perfectly safe,' he said. A few minutes later he was killed by a bullet through the head."

Later, fellow officer Captain J.A. Good wrote to Hinman's mother:

"We landed, as you no doubt are aware, on the first day, and the various companies and platoons of the 15th Battalion were separated. Arthur's platoon being out on the left, and apparently had a bad time.

A few days after this we all rejoined the Battn., and took up our positions on Pope's Hill, but on the seventh day we were ordered to occupy the now famous position of Quinn's Post.

"At this time he and I were the only officers of the original Tasmanian Companies in the 15th who remained, and often at night, as we sat in our dug-out, we wondered who would be the first to go, for it seemed impossible that we should remain long unwounded when so many had been hit.

"Arthur did splendid work on the post, and ev-

eryone sincerely regretted his death. His post was exceptionally difficult to hold owing to the close proximity of the Turkish trenches, which were only about 15 yards away in places.

"The position on the day prior to his death was as follows: The Turks held a line of trenches directly in front of our trenches; at either flank we were separated by about 50 yards, but in the centre our trenches were only 15 yards apart.

"Orders were issued that we were to go forward and occupy these trenches, and instructions

were issued accordingly. Three parties, consisting of about 50 men each, were to be sent forward, one party to each flank and one to the centre. The intention being to occupy these trenches and dig communication trenches from our old lines to the new one.

"Lots were drawn by the Battn. officers to decide who would take charge of these parties, but Arthur drew a blank, and did not go with the first party, who had a comparatively easy time, as they surprised the Turks and captured the trenches with the exception as we afterwards discovered of

about 30 yards of trench in the left centre.

"Without capturing this extra line it was impossible to hold the remainder, and Arthur gallantly collected a number of men, and charged forward with the intention of securing this position. It was in this charge that he met his end.

"Although the conditions in Gallipoli were severe I never heard him once complain. He was ever ready and anxious to perform any task that was required. By his splendid work and control of his men (who speak highly of him and sympathise with you in your loss), he gallantly



Bill Hinman, Arthur's brother, had a highly-distinguished military career

assisted to hold a position which was recognised by all as being the most difficult of all positions to hold."

In another letter, by Captain G. Aberdeen, of the 3rd Light Horse Field Ambulance, Mrs Hinman was told of how her son "saw all his own men safely started" on the assault but that on the way back "a hail of lead from the machine guns caught him, and in an instant he was gone".

The letter continued: "The Turkish losses had been so heavy that shortly after this fight they asked for an armistice to bury their dead. This was arranged. It may be some small comfort to you to know that Arthur's body was recovered by his men, and that he was given a Christian burial by one of our Padres. He lies about 10 yards in front of the No 5 post, Quinn's Post, a position

which will be historic in Australian military history."

Captain Aberdeen's assessment of the importance of Quinn's Post was accurate and there are 473 war casualties commemorated at this site, Lieutenant Arthur Gurr Hinman among them.

Although Arthur Hinman's war lasted just 15 days, brother Bill had a long and highly-distinguished military career and, after also serving at Gallipoli, was promoted to the rank of Captain and won the Military Cross for bravery in January, 1917. He also won Belgium's *Ordre de Leopold* and the French *Croix de Guerre* and was mentioned in despatches three times before being demobilised in June, 1919, and then becoming a lawyer in Hobart.