

James Stephen Lynch

An Unsung Life

Part Seven

Compiled by
Vince Gattenhof



As this is
being written
it is August
2016 and in a

matter of weeks,
18th September
2016, it will be
100 years since
James Stephen
Eather were
the first part of
serve on the
a couple of
In this essay
Lynch's unsung



Lynch and Gertrude Elizabeth
married. And as recorded in
this narrative he sailed off to
Western Front in W.W.1, just
weeks later.

about James Stephen
life, the picture on the left is

the wallet and diary he carried with him during his time on the Western Front. There was also
another item James had in that wallet. It was a small metal medallion as shown on the right and
obviously very much prized.

The picture above is of the reverse side of the medallion and as can be seen it is engraved :-

Trophy. D. L. C. (Dalgety Rifle Club.)

Perhaps James' lucky charm?

The wallet, the diary, the medallion and James made it back to Australia in 1919.



The magnificent photo from the previous page is another discovery from the past of James Stephen Lynch.

At the top of the picture are his medals from his service in World War 1.

They are the British War Medal 1914-20, and the Victory Medal.

These medals were awarded to all Commonwealth troops in W.W.1. Something in the order of 6,500,000 altogether. Commonly referred to as the W.W.1. pair.

Both are impressed on the edge:- 2445 Pte J. Lynch 55 BN A.I.F.

The lower item in the photo is a much more personal keepsake.

It is a watch fob presented to James from the Dalgety Rifle Club. On the front is engraved Dalgety Rifle Club 1917, and on the reverse is engraved J. LYNCH.

Life for James Lynch after he returned to Australia from the Western Front in 1919 was never to be the same as it was when he enlisted in 1916. Grazier from Bulgundra was a long distant memory as there had been changes in the family property over the years. The eldest brother John appears to have retired to Sydney in the early war years, and that was where he died in 1924, in Parramatta. The remaining brother still working on the property, Michael, eventually sold out and had a clearing sale that was very well advertised on Saturday 21st April 1928 on site. Included in the household items was a piano. No doubt the one Gertrude Lynch used to teach and perhaps entertain the family some 15 plus years before.

James' other siblings had also moved away as they married and followed their own desires as the property was not able to support them all. James' younger brother Thomas Sylvester Lynch who had also served in the Shanghai Municipal Police had moved to New Zealand when he retired from their service as had another of his sisters.

James and Gertrude had just two weeks together after being married and then some two and a half years apart when James joined the A.I.F. and journeyed to Europe. His return was very much celebrated by Gertrude's Eather family as shown in that old welcome home photo alongside the family house, "Yabbi", in Belmore, Sydney.

Where they settled initially is not known but it was in Sydney. And there was the prospect of having to find employment in an atmosphere of returning service men and not a great deal of work to help them adjust.

But, settle and adjust they did!

The photo below is of a receipt / certificate that was also discovered folded up in the back of James Lynch's wallet that contained his diary.

"The Returned Sailors and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia." New South Wales Branch.

It is their Certificate to Certify that J. Lynch was accepted as a member of the R.S.S.I.L.A. from 22nd July 1921 and entitled to wear badge No. N2158.

"Address" House name undecipherable, Grant Street, Artarmon. Sydney.

The Returned Sailors and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia
New South Wales Branch.
PHONE 4599.
A. G. POTTER,
Secretary.

CERTIFICATE. 46958

SYDNEY, 22/7/21 19

This is to Certify that J. Lynch, Reg. No. 2408,
Rank, [blank], Unit, [blank], is a Member of the R.S.S.I.L.A. and entitled to wear badge
No. N2158 Address, [blank]

I hereby acknowledge having received Badge No. [blank]
and understand that such Badge is the property of the above
League and returnable on demand. I agree to keep the Badge in
my possession and abide by the Rules and Regulations.

I hereby acknowledge the receipt of the
sum of £ [blank], which entitles
Mr. J. Lynch to Membership
until the 31/12/19

Signature, [blank] for Secretary, [blank] 19

Gertrude's younger sister, Kathleen Cecelia Francis Eather had married Vincent Gattenhof in 1906 and by this time had a family of five children. Vincent had started work as a postal assistant with the Post Office and went on to be Post Master in several country towns. They had managed to purchase a house which was in Mary Street, Hunters Hill in Sydney which became their family home for the rest of their lives. James and Gertrude Lynch also moved into the area in the early 1920's and are listed in Electoral Roll records as living at "The Gunyah". 60 Prince Edward Street, Gladesville right up till the end of the 1930's. Gertrude's occupation was listed as "Home Duties", and James was listed as "Postal Assistant". They were just a matter of a few streets away from sister Kathleen and Vincent. It would be a reasonable assumption that Vincent, James brother in law, had more than a little influence in guiding James into the Postal Service.



From left Gertrude Lynch (wife of James Lynch)
Kathleen Lynch (daughter of Eugene Lynch)
Louisa Lynch (wife of Thomas Joseph Lynch)
Sydney 1920

The photograph above taken in 1920 shows the Lynch ladies were keeping in contact and obviously very good friends. Gertrude, wife of James, Kathleen Lynch, born in Shanghai daughter of Eugene Lynch and his first wife Sarah, and Louisa Lynch, wife of Thomas Joseph Lynch, a cousin of James and Eugene Lynch. (Thomas Joseph Lynch was also in the welcome home photo recording James safe return from W.W.I.)

Eugene Lynch at the time of his second marriage to Edith Dewis in 1911 was listed as the Inspector in Charge at Wayside Police Station, Shanghai. They had four children over the next eight years all born in Shanghai.

Edith Margaret Lynch, born 31 July 1912. Died 4 Sept. 1916 from scarlet fever. Shanghai.

Eugene Philip Lynch, born 8 January 1914. Died 3 July 2000, Sydney.

Mary Margaret Lynch, born 18 July 1917. Died London 1 July 2006.

Eileen Barbara Lynch, born 3 March 1919. Died Sydney 26 April 2004.

Eugene Lynch retired in 1926 after just over 30 years service in the Shanghai Municipal Police. In 1921 he had been promoted to “Chief Inspector” On his retirement “The North China Herald” reported on a presentation to Eugene by the S.M.P. headlined “Chief Inspector Lynch retires.” “Presentation to the Father of the Force.”



The photo of Eugene Lynch on the left was taken 1925 in Shanghai in his full dress uniform.

At the presentation given to Eugene by members of the S.M.P. he was given a gold engraved shield and an ostrich skin wallet in which was a very handsome cheque payable on his arrival in Australia.

Eugene Lynch and his family left on the P & OS. Macedonia “en route” to Australia.

On arrival they initially resided for a short time with James and Gertrude at their Gladesville home. Eugene’s grand daughter recalls her aunt saying she was sent to the convent school attached to “Villa Maria” Catholic church in Mary Street, Hunters Hill.

Eugene and family eventually moved to 10 Ranfurley Road, Bellevue Hill and it was here on 24th July 1930 that Eugene Lynch died. He was 61 years of age. The Sydney Morning Herald carried quite a long and informative obituary on him in the days following. Both he and his brother James had seen the old family property "Bulgundra" sold off in 1928 by their brother Michael.

Gertrude and James continued living at 'The Gunyah' Gladesville until after James turned 65 which was in 1938. He worked as a Postal Assistant until he reached retirement age and Gertrude was still listed as "home duties" in the Electoral roll.

W.W.2. approached and James and Gertrude decided to move back to the old Eather family home at Belmore with Gertrude's sister Theresa, known as "Tess" to all the family. "Yabbi" was still the drop in centre for all the relations whenever they were passing that way. Family events were usually celebrated there as can be seen by the photo below. The gent in the glasses is one of Gertrude and James nephew.

Vincent Gattenhof, (the second), son of Vincent and Kathleen (sister to Gertrude). With his wife Dorice and their two children. Vincent, (the third) in front and Marie, the babe in arms. It was late 1938 and the occasion was the baptism of Marie Therese. The photo was taken in the back yard of "Yabbi" with the rear of the old weather board house with a big open back verandah just on the right. This always contained a couple of beds for visiting family. The two story building behind was the Catholic convent which was next door. The Catholic Church where Marie was baptized and where also James and Gertrude were married in 1916 was directly behind the convent. Another large family celebration.



James Stephen Lynch and Gertrude Elizabeth Lynch were listed in the early 1940's Electoral Roll as residing at 4 Wilson Avenue, Belmore. James was noted as being "Retired", and Gertrude was noted as "Home Duties". The latter years of James and Gertrudes' life were spent with Gertrude's sister and her siblings who seemed to come and go but always spent time at "Yabbi" when around.

As noted before James died in 1948. He left behind little knowledge of his very varied life that was passed on to any of the family. Despite the Eather Family having a very large Family History Group that has been researching all sections of their forebears for more than 30 years and having published some 200 plus newsletters over that time with results of family research from 400 plus family members James' did not get mentioned.

I was 12 years old when James died and as our small family seemed to spend every second weekend at "Yabbi" in the middle 40's where my parents and grandparents joined the residing residents of the family home for meals, chatter and cards, the memory I have of James and Gertrude was of two very imposing people, not given to frivolous talk but very, very polite and they didn't take too kindly to little larrikin kids. In all the years since not one family member of their age made mention of James' army service let alone his service with the Shanghai Municipal Police.

The Eathers', James family by marriage, were not alone in having no knowledge of his history.

The descendants of the Lynch side of James family organized a family reunion in 2010 to be held in the old family town of Dalgety. They had a web site which showed a little of their weekend reunion.



This was the Dalgety Hall where the reunion was held.



The interior of the hall very nearly finished being set up.

It appears there were quite a few family members coming.



These were the main organizing people. I do believe the two bookend ladies are sisters and granddaughters of Eugene Lynch.

It was some four years later when I was put in contact with the lady on the left, by Robert Bickers that the history of the two families started to come together as far as James was concerned. Catherine, above on the left in yellow, has supplied all of Eugene, her grandfather's details as recorded here.

There was a very interesting item that came to light from the Lynch Family Reunion that Catherine passed on to me. The following photo with the comments attached..



One of the photos brought to the reunion was of James Lynch's return from W.W.1. and the family celebration at "Yabbi" with his wife and mainly her family. The Eather's. Plus a couple of James old friends and family. The notation on the right hand side of the photo shows that the Lynch descendants had no idea who the main guest was.

"Top left. Harry Lynch. Front right. Major T.J.Lynch. Side on (in white) on right Louisa Lynch. Who are the others in the photo?"

.There was no idea that the main person in the centre front being celebrated was James Stephen Lynch.

Nearly 100 years after the events that consumed James Lynch's very active life the family descendants of both the Lynch and Eather families had no idea of the times he had been involved in. No knowledge of the horrors of his Western Front experiences and even less of his ten year involvement with the Shanghai Municipal Police.

"An Unsung Life."

This ongoing wandering saga has been an attempt to bring James Stephen Lynch's formally forgotten life into greater view. "Unsung no more". I cherish it and am still trying to find more from his Shanghai days.

Major T.J.Lynch who features in the photo above was James' cousin and a great influence on the lives of James and in particular Eugene. Lousia Lynch was his wife and features in the photos with Gertrude and Eugene's daughter Kathleen.

Thomas Lynch topped the first course at the newly established School of Gunnery in 1886. He was an assistant instructor at the School of Gunnery before qualifying as a master gunner, 3rd class. On 1 January 1894 he was promoted to master gunner 1st class (warrant officer) and was appointed Assistant Fire Master NSW Field Artillery Regiment. He went on to make a career in the army and there is a very interesting entry on him in the "Australian Dictionary of Biography" on line.



A final photo of James Lynch, pictured here with his niece Julia Maude Primmer.

Circa 1900.

He was on his long leave from the Shanghai Municipal Police.

