

= Stanley Price Weir =

Brigadier General Stanley Price Weir , DSO , VD , JP ( 23 April 1866 ? 14 November 1944 ) was a public servant and Australian Army officer . During World War I , he commanded the 10th Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force ( AIF ) during the landing at Anzac Cove and the subsequent Gallipoli Campaign , and during the Battles of Pozières and Mouquet Farm in France .

Weir returned to Australia at his own request in late 1916 at the age of 50 , and in 1917 he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and was mentioned in dispatches for his performance at Pozières and Mouquet Farm . He went on to become the first South Australian Public Service Commissioner . He was given an honorary promotion to brigadier general on his retirement from the Australian Military Forces in 1921 . Weir was retired as public service commissioner in 1931 . In retirement he contributed to various benevolent and charitable organisations , and died in 1944 .

= = Early life = =

Weir was born in Norwood , South Australia , on 23 April 1866 , a son of Alfred Weir and Susannah Mary ( née Price ) . His father was a carpenter , who had emigrated to South Australia from Aberdeen , Scotland , in 1839 , two years after the colony was founded . Weir attended Moore 's School , the Norwood Public School , and Pulteney Street Grammar School . In 1879 , at the age of 13 , he joined the Surveyor General 's Department as an office assistant . He assisted the surveyor who pegged out the land at the rear of Government House , Adelaide , for the Torrens Parade Ground , and was later promoted to clerk . On 14 May 1890 , he married Rosa Wadham at the Christian Chapel , Norwood . He rose through the department to be appointed Survey Storekeeper , Custodian of Plans and Custodian of Government Motor Cars , on 1 July 1911 . He was appointed a justice of the peace on 10 September 1914 .

= = Early military service = =

Weir enlisted in the part @-@ time South Australian Volunteer Military Force in March 1885 , joining the 1st Battalion , Adelaide Rifles , as a private . By 1890 , he had been promoted to colour sergeant . He was commissioned as a lieutenant in the 3rd Battalion , Adelaide Rifles , on 19 March 1890 , and was promoted to captain on 25 May 1893 . When the South African War broke out he volunteered for service with the South Australian Bushmen 's Corps , but mounted officers were preferred , and he was not selected .

On 1 July 1903 , the Adelaide Rifles became the 10th Infantry Regiment of the Commonwealth Military Forces , and Weir was appointed adjutant . He was promoted to major on 1 January 1904 , and appointed as regimental second @-@ in @-@ command . He was awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal in 1905 , and the Volunteer Officers ' Decoration in 1908 . On 22 June 1908 , Weir was promoted to lieutenant colonel and appointed the commanding officer of the 10th Infantry Regiment . On 1 January 1912 , he was transferred to the unattached list but this only lasted until 1 July , when the universal training scheme was introduced . He was soon appointed to command the 19th Infantry Brigade , and on 9 September 1913 he was promoted to colonel .

= = World War I = =

On 12 August 1914 , Weir received a telegram from Colonel Ewen Sinclair @-@ Maclagan , the designated commander of the 3rd Brigade , offering him the command of the 10th Battalion . Weir promptly accepted , and on 17 August was appointed as a lieutenant colonel in the Australian Imperial Force ( AIF ) , making him the first South Australian to be commissioned in the AIF . He retained his rank of colonel in the part @-@ time forces in an honorary capacity .

= = = Gallipoli = = =

Weir assembled and trained his battalion at the Morphettsville Racecourse , then embarked with them on the transport Ascanius on 20 October 1914 as the first convoy of Australian troops departed for overseas service . On arrival in Fremantle , six companies of the 11th Battalion were embarked on the transport , and Weir was appointed Officer Commanding Troops for the voyage . The troops began disembarking at Alexandria on 6 December 1914 , and were entrained for Cairo , where they began to set up camp at Mena . The Australian Official War Historian , Charles Bean , described Weir as being " somewhat above average in years " for a battalion commander . Following the Allied decision to land a force on the Gallipoli Peninsula , the 3rd Brigade was selected as the covering force for the landing at Anzac Cove . The 10th Battalion embarked for the Greek island of Lemnos in the northern Aegean Sea on 1 March 1915 , and after further training on Lemnos , the battalion was one of the first two battalions ashore on the morning of 25 April 1915 .

During the landing , when the boats carrying the lead elements of the battalion were around 40 yards ( 37 m ) from shore , according to Bean , Weir observed to another officer in his boat that everything was silent , but soon after Ottoman troops began firing at the landing force . Weir landed with the scout platoon , and urged both his men and those of the 9th Battalion to immediately begin climbing the cliffs that overlooked the beach . Weir , along with " B " and " C " Companies of the battalion , reached what later became known as " Plugge 's Plateau " . Heavy fighting followed the initial landing and , within five days , half of Weir 's battalion had been killed or wounded . The Australian and New Zealand advance inland from Anzac Cove was subsequently checked by the defending Ottoman forces and was eventually contained in a small beachhead inside a series of ridges that ranged around the cove . Weir was the only commanding officer from the 3rd Brigade to go forward of the first ridge , and a ridge running off the 400 Plateau subsequently became known as " Weir Ridge " .

As stalemate set in , Weir continued to command his battalion throughout the early stages of the campaign until 25 August , when he was appointed acting brigadier general and placed in command of the 3rd Brigade . On 11 September , he became ill and was evacuated to Malta , where he was admitted to hospital . He was subsequently evacuated to the United Kingdom , where he convalesced until January 1916 , when he was appointed commandant of the Australian reinforcement camp at Weymouth , Dorset .

= = = Western Front = = =

Weir 's health had not completely recovered by the time he embarked for Egypt , and he rejoined his battalion on 4 March 1916 . After his departure , the 10th had fought through the remainder of the campaign before being withdrawn along with the rest of the Allied force in December 1915 . The battalion was subsequently moved back to Egypt . In mid @-@ 1916 , the bulk of the AIF was transferred to the Western Front , and Weir led the 10th Battalion through July and August 1916 during the Battles of Pozières and Mouquet Farm . At Pozières , the battalion suffered 350 casualties in four days . By the time of the battle , Weir was the only original battalion commander remaining in the 1st Australian Division , and had turned 50 years of age . On 23 August , immediately after Mouquet Farm , Weir was again appointed acting commander of the 3rd Brigade . Exhausted , on 7 September 1916 he asked to be relieved , and his request was granted . He returned to Australia on 23 September 1916 , and his AIF appointment was terminated on 14 December . In the Australian official history of the war , Bean observed that despite his age , Weir " took his battalion into the front line , commanded it there throughout its first battle , and remained longer in the field than almost any of the senior militia officers who had left with the original force " .

= = Post @-@ war military service = =

After his AIF appointment was terminated , Weir resumed his service in the Citizen Military Forces ( CMF ) . In 1917 , he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and the Russian Empire Order of St. Anne , 2nd Class , with Swords , and was mentioned in dispatches for his performance at Pozières and Mouquet Farm . From 1917 to 1920 , he was aide @-@ de @-@ camp to the

Governor @-@ General of Australia , Sir Ronald Craufurd Munro Ferguson . Weir retired from the CMF as an honorary brigadier general in March 1921 , his last appointment being as commander of the 20th Infantry Brigade . He was only the second South Australia @-@ born officer to reach the rank of brigadier general . On 31 March 1921 , Weir was appointed Honorary Colonel of the 10th Battalion , a position he held for many years .

= = Later life = =

Weir had two significant advantages in his return to a civilian career . Firstly , he was repatriated well before most servicemen and , secondly , South Australia had implemented a policy of preferment of returned servicemen for government employment . These circumstances helped him gain appointment as the first South Australian Public Service Commissioner in 1916 . Weir was not suited to this role , being unable to navigate the competing personal and political agendas of senior public servants and politicians , and was soon sidelined . In 1925 , legislative changes made it possible for the government to replace Weir , and this took place in 1930 . In the last year @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half before his retirement in 1931 , Weir was the chairman of both the Central Board of Health and the Public Relief Board , excelling at the latter .

On 8 June 1923 , after many years of poor health , Weir 's wife Rosa died . He married Lydia Maria Schrapel in 1926 . Weir led an active retirement , contributing to several religious , charitable and welfare organisations and activities . These included the Norwood and Maylands Churches of Christ , Benevolent and Stranger 's Friend Society , the Our Boys Institute ( OBI ) , the Masonic Lodge , Cheer Up Society , and YMCA . At various times he served as President of the Commonwealth Club , the Churches of Christ Union , the St. Peters Sub @-@ Branch of the Returned and Services League , and the Cheer Up Society .

Weir wrote the foreword for the history of the 10th Battalion , titled The Fighting 10th : A South Australian Centenary Souvenir of the 10th Battalion , AIF 1914 ? 1919 , which was written by a former member of the battalion , Cecil Lock , and published in 1936 . In 1943 , Weir was badly injured in a car accident while returning from an OBI camp at Victor Harbor . It was believed that his injuries in the accident contributed to his death on 14 November 1944 . Weir was survived by his wife Lydia , and his son Lionel and daughter Beryl from his first marriage . His brother , Harrison Weir , was the State Government Printer . Weir was buried in West Terrace Cemetery .

= = Awards = =

Weir received the following honours and awards :

Long Service and Good Conduct Medal in 1905

Volunteer Officers ' Decoration on 11 April 1908

Distinguished Service Order on 1 January 1917

Mentioned in despatches on 4 January 1917

Order of St. Anne , 2nd Class , with Swords ( Russian Empire ) on 15 February 1917

King George V Silver Jubilee Medal on 6 May 1935

= = Promotions = =

Weir 's military career commenced in March 1885 , when he enlisted as a private . He quickly rose to the rank of colour sergeant before being commissioned in 1890 . He rose from private to brigadier general over a career spanning 36 years . His officer promotion dates were :

Lieutenant on 19 March 1890

Captain on 25 May 1893

Major on 1 January 1904

Lieutenant colonel on 22 June 1908

Colonel on 9 September 1913

Lieutenant colonel ( AIF ) on 17 August 1914

Brigadier general ( honorary ) on 17 March 1921