



Source A A letter from Edward Edwards to his father, *Wangaratta Chronicle*, 17 July 1915, p. 3. (The original letter was dated 15 July 1915 and republished in a number of Victorian newspapers soon after to promote patriotism and duty to the British Empire. Edwards was originally from Wangaratta but living in Melbourne when he sent this letter.)

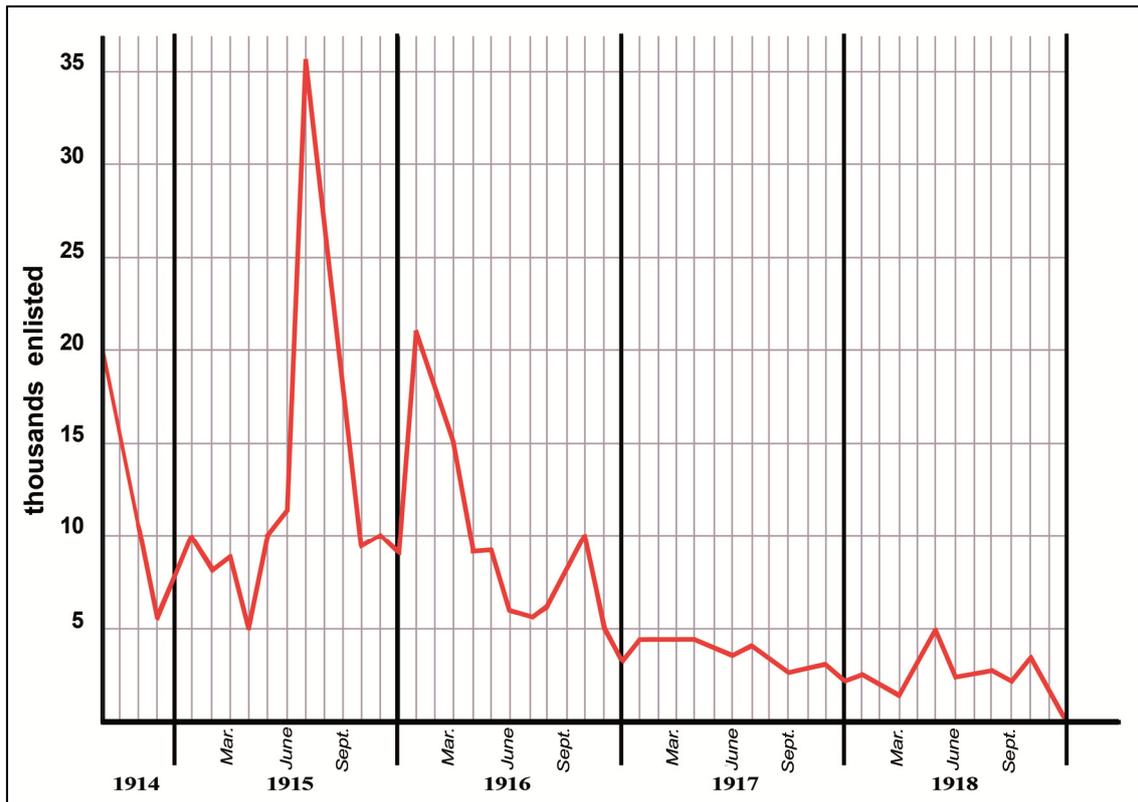
Dear Dad,

I have written to mother often enough asking her could I go to the war. Well I am eighteen this week, and will be about to go. Of course it will be hard on mother for a while, but still it is my duty to go to war, and go I must. Mother put a lot of rot in her last letter saying she would not give up any of her sons except to God. Well she must know that if my time has come, I must go; but I am not frightened to die. You must get an idea of how I feel when you read the latest recruitment figures. All the able-bodied men are going, and those who are left behind are looked down upon and scorned. You must let me do my duty, not that I expect a joy trip, but to do my duty as a Britisher; and you as a Britisher, do yours. Of course if I don't get your consent I'll go all the same. Only what I don't like is going without your consent; but I must go. If I go to camp without it and I am brought back I will be disgraced. I am sure you don't want me to be like that. And if I am not allowed to go to the war I will never come home again. I'd sooner die than be one of those who didn't go. You can't imagine half the insults that are hurled at a big man like me. What about when the war is over, life won't be worth living. I have thought this out pretty thoroughly during the last nine months – weighing everything carefully, and I find it my plain duty to go to war. I know it will be hard on mother, but somebody must sacrifice their best. I don't know what it is but I have got the fighting blood in me, and it is rotten to be tied down by parental affections. Of course and mother thinks the world of her boys when the time to leave has come. Now, Dad, do your duty to your country and give me consent. I want you to answer this yourself. We will see what you are made of now, Dad. Somebody must avenge Charley Powley's death and its me for the job.

Your loving son,

E. Edwards

Source B Graph showing enlistment figures in Australian during the First World War.



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Source C Extract from an article in the *Myrtleford Mail*, a Victorian newspaper, 17 June 1915, p. 7

Private Charles Powley... was killed in action when the Australians first landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula on April 25th, and the sad news of his death was first received in a letter from his brother, Private J.H Powley, who is now in hospital... Private J.H Powley's letter was as follows:

"I do sincerely trust that these few lines will find you all in good health. I am in hospital with a sprained ankle, but otherwise I am in splendid health. By the time this letter reaches you I am sure you will know of the death of our dear brother Charles. He was shot close to me on the beach when were landing [at Gallipoli]. No words can tell how broken hearted I am..."

... Private Charles Powley who was 21 years of age was the first man in Wangaratta to volunteer [for the AIF].

A Brave Young Recruit

“I Am Not Afraid to Die.”

WANGARATTA—Cr. W. H. Edwards, J.P., of Wangaratta, has received official information that his son, Private Edward Edwards, was killed in action in Belgium* on 26th July. Private Edwards was nineteen years of age. He enlisted on 3rd August, when he was barely eighteen years of age. He was engaged in the Commonwealth Audit Office. He wrote home seeking the permission of his parents to enlist, as he was anxious to avenge the death of his cousin, Private Charles Powley, who had been killed at Gallipoli. He concluded his appeal with the spiritual sentence: ‘I am not afraid to die.’ He was among the first Australian troops sent from Egypt to France and had been there four months. He was with a bombing party, and later joined a raiding party. Mr. and Mrs. Edwards on Monday received news that their other son, Private Charles Edwards, had been wounded in France.

* Private Edwards was killed at Pozières which is actually in France, not Belgium.