

## Wilbur Lincoln HAM

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Wilbur Ham was born on 14 November 1883, a member of a prominent Melbourne family. His father, Cornelius Ham, had been Lord Mayor of Melbourne from 1881 to 1882. Wilbur attended Melbourne Grammar and later Toorak Grammar, before completing his law degree at Melbourne University in 1905. He won the Supreme Court Prize in 1905. He completed his articles at Malleson's and was admitted to practice in 1906 and signed the bar roll in 1907.

He enlisted in March 1915 and received a commission as a 2nd lieutenant in the 13th Light Horse Regiment, which was formed at Broadmeadows. He left Australia in May 1915, aboard the *Persic*, and arrived in Egypt in June 1915. In September the regiment was deployed to the Gallipoli peninsula and manned the trenches at Lone Pine. They were withdrawn late in 1915. Ham travelled to France arriving in June 1916. The Light Horse regiments saw action in the Somme throughout the rest of 1916 and were present at Pozieres, Bapaume, Arras and the Battle for Ypres. Wilbur Ham was appointed adjutant to the 1st Anzac Mounted Regiment and became a captain. He was mentioned in despatches in late 1917 and, at about the same time, he was appointed a major. In November 1917, his horse slipped on ice and Ham was thrown and injured his knee so severely he was left with a permanent limp. It also meant the end of his military career and he returned to Australia in May 1918.

He resumed his career at the Bar and was appointed Kings Counsel in 1927. He was involved with, and knowledgeable about, constitutional cases, appearing before the High Court on numerous occasions including *Clements v Ellis* in 1934, *Australian Knitting Mills v Grant* in 1936 and *South Australia v Commonwealth* (first uniform tax case) in 1942. He died in January 1948.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Wilbur Ham with fellow officers from the 13th Light Horse regiments aboard a tourist steamer in Egypt, 11 July 1915.