

Gustav Celeste LACHAL

Gustav Celeste Lachal was born in 1879 to a French family of jewellers and landowners. He attended Xavier College Melbourne and Melbourne University. He was admitted to practice in December 1902 and married Elizabeth McCaffrey the following year. After initially living in Abbotsford, they moved to the township of Woomelang where he practised as a solicitor.

He was 35 years old and had four children by the time of his enlistment in September 1914. He was assigned to the 3rd Light Horse Field Ambulance at Gallipoli but contracted influenza and was hospitalised. Lachal remained unwell with colitis and it was some months before he returned duty, and even then only on light duties in hospitals rather than at the front lines. In May of 1916 he was charged with insubordinate language and resisting an escort. He faced a Field General Court Martial on these charges, but was found not guilty. He embarked back to Australia the next month and settled back with his family in Middle Park. Lachal was discharged from service in 1917.

He and Elizabeth had another two children after his return, in 1917 and 1919, but sadly his 10 year old son Jean-Pierre drowned at the beach in 1918. Lachal worked in Customs upon his return and appeared in arbitration and industrial relations matters on behalf of the Officers Association of the Department of Trade and Customs.

He died in 1939, aged 60, in Hawthorn. He saw his oldest son Leon become a distinguished RAAF pilot, who represented the RAAF at the Coronation of King George VI.



Members of the 3rd Light Horse Field Ambulance with their horses in the Suez in 1916, at the time that Gustav Lachal was there.