

James (Hamish) Logie Harcus

James Harcus was born on Orkney, studied law in Edinburgh and came to Sydney in 1907. He was admitted to the NSW Bar 31 May 1912 and practised in University Chambers. On 19 December 1910 he was commissioned in the New South Wales Scottish Rifles, which later became 25th Infantry, a popular militia unit for lawyers.

He was commissioned in the 1st Contingent, Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force as a Captain on the 18 August as officer commanding the machine gun section. He left Sydney on *Berrima* on 19 August and sailed to Rabaul, New Guinea. His unit took part in the fighting against the German garrison. He returned to Sydney at the end of February 1915.

On the 2 May 1915 Harcus was appointed Captain in the AIF and joined the 20th Battalion in 5th Brigade. He was promoted to Major in command of "D" company on the 1 June, then embarked at Sydney on *Berrima* on the 26 June for service abroad.

The 20th Battalion took over the defences on Russell's Top, on Gallipoli on the 26 August. Harcus was admitted to hospital in the 5th Field Ambulance with dysentery on the 16 October and returned 1 November.

Withdrawal from Gallipoli was inevitable because of the tactically poor position in which the ANZACs found themselves, exacerbated by the freezing winter weather. On 11 December, Harcus went forward of their headquarters with the Sydney solicitor, Major Gordon Uther and their Battalion Commander, Major Richard Jenkins to check the frontline in preparation for the evacuation. Turkish shells exploded nearby as they scrambled up Monash Valley, but they were safe in its deep trenches. However, when they arrived at Russell's Top they were more exposed and, after waiting a few minutes, they scuttled along the less protected trench towards the frontline. After barely a dozen yards a shell landed amongst them, killing all three men. It was a devastating blow to their unit.

James Harcus was 34 years old when he was killed. The three brother officers were buried next day in the cemetery at the foot of Walker's Ridge, but the graves of Majors James Harcus and Richard Jenkins could not be located when the Imperial War Graves Commission consolidated the Anzac cemeteries after the war ended. Their names are therefore commemorated together on Panel 64 of the Lone Pine Memorial.