

The Australian Map at Hurdcott

In 1914 land was requisitioned from two farms (Hurdcott and Naish's), both in Compton Chamberlayne parish, to establish a military training camp. This camp, built by British troops in 1915, was administered from the main camp at Fovant, 5 miles west. In March 1916 it was taken over by the Australian Imperial Forces and became their No 3 Command Depot. It was still run from Fovant. Several of the huts were allocated for a hospital as wounded Australians came back from France.



The outline of the hospital can still sometimes be clearly seen from the air.

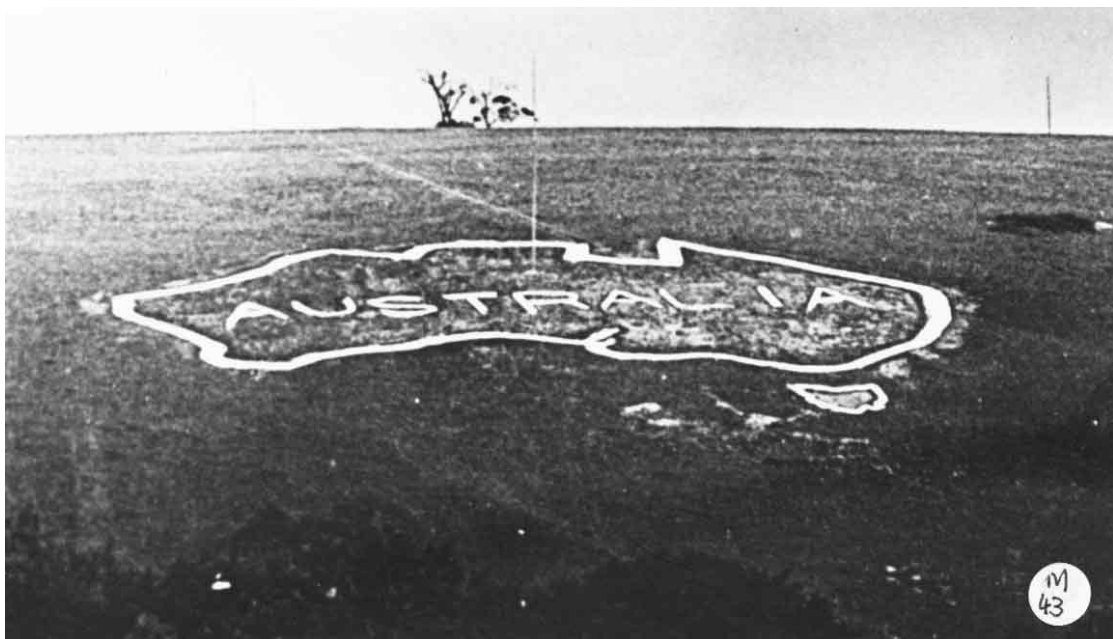
Naish's farm buildings are on the left. (Photo by M.A. McKenzie)

Following the cutting of regimental badges on the Downs overlooking the camp at Fovant, the Australians cut a map of their homeland in the hills above their camp.



An early photo of the camp and map lent by Willie Langdan of Compton Chamberlayne.

During WW2 all the hill carvings were allowed to grow over to prevent them being used as identifying marks by raiding bombers. In 1951 the map was cleared and a flagpole was erected. Willie Langdan, who farmed Naish's farm, undertook to raise the Australian Flag on certain days including ANZAC Day and Australia day. This he did until he retired. His daughter and her school friends can claim they have walked Australia from north to south, east to west and all around the coast in one day!!



The refreshed map in 1951 with the flag pole in the centre.

Unfortunately, the map has again been allowed to grow over and photos taken from ground level show very little. If the light is in the right direction and with the eye of faith one can just make out the coastline from Sydney to Melbourne. It is still seen from above but is growing fainter.



A photo taken from the air in 2005. Thanks to Fovant Badges Society.

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