

Robert Browning Black



Robert Browning Black, usually known as Bob, was born on 6th September 1888, son of Thomas and Jeannie Black, Livingstone, Scotland. He migrated to Australia arriving on the *Orontes* on 30th May 1908 at the age of 19 and worked for Hugh McColl at 'Strathmore' in the Greenethorpe district. In 1910 he began share farming on Robert Kinleside Dempster's 'Gambarra' station. His block was close to the Grenfell-Cowra road where he lived firstly in a tent until a corrugated iron sharefarmer's cottage was built. The Diprose family were very good to him as a young man living by himself. In 1912 his parents and two sisters, Margaret and Jeanie, emigrated to live with him and all became involved in the Greenethorpe community.

At the height of World War 1, on 19th March 1917, he enlisted at Grenfell in the AIF. He was in the 19th and later the 20th Battalion, 9th Machine Gun Company and his service number was No. 752A. After initial training he embarked on 30th October 1917 at Melbourne on *HMAS Aeneas* disembarking at Devonport on 27th December 1917 and was later sent to the Western Front. On 30th August 1918 he was wounded in the right foot and invalided to England on 3rd September 1918 to the Weymouth Military Hospital. Still medically unfit for service, in the closing days of the War he was repatriated to Australia on the *Takada*, arriving in Melbourne on 11th February 1919. While on R & R in Melbourne with the Ellis family he met Janet Adam (nee Ellis) a widow with a daughter, Johnsie.

He was discharged on 12th March 1919 and returned to his share farm, which his father had managed during his absence. Later that year RK Dempster advertised 'Gambarra', an area of 5,900 acres, for sale and it was deemed suitable for 16 farms, averaging 25 acres, for Soldier Settlement. As Dempster stipulated that as well as returned soldiers former sharefarmers on 'Gambarra' should be allowed to apply for a block, Bob qualified as both. He chose the prime block adjoining the Tyagong Creek close to rail and services at Greenethorpe, naming his farm 'Braemar'. Bob married Janet Adam on 6th January 1923 and had four more children, Michael, Barbara, Alison and Christine.

Extract from Christine Doonan's presentation ANZAC Day:

"People remember my father, Bob Black, as a natural leader and a forceful public speaker who held office in many organisations, such as Greenethorpe Farmers & Settlers, which he represented at state conferences, P & C, RSL, Greenethorpe Show & Agricultural Bureau and for some years he served as a Councillor for the Weddin Shire. He also enjoyed writing letters to the Land newspaper. He was on the committee for building this Soldiers' Memorial Hall when RK Dempster, whom he knew as the owner of 'Gambarra', was invited back to set the foundation stone in August 1921."

Bob and Janet retired to Castle Hill in 1954 and at their farewell on 27th August 1953 Bob was awarded life membership of the Greenethorpe Soldiers' Memorial Hall in recognition of his long service to the district. Janet was also recognised for her work in the community.

Presented by Christine Doonan - Daughter of Bob Black