

George Davidson



George Davidson, MM, 1885 – 1963

14th AIF, 5th Australian Brigade, 1st ANZAC,
56th Battalion, 6th Reinforcements, No. 2641

George Davidson, born 20 June 1885, was the eldest son of 10 children born to Andrew and Mary Davidson on a small farm near Cuminestown, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. In 1911, George, aged 25, migrated to Australia with friends, Jim Norrie and Alex McKay. Jim's brother, John, who had migrated in 1902, was managing an orchard near Koorawatha and arranged local work for the recent arrivals. George worked for H O McColl at *Strathmore*, Koorawatha, for two years before taking up Farm 38 Hanwood in 1913 in the newly developed Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area.

George enlisted in June 1916, embarking at Sydney on HMAT A40 *Ceramic* in October 1916. He served on the Western Front in France as a stretcher-bearer and was awarded a Military Medal (MM) on 5 October 1917 along with a fellow stretcher-bearer, Private James Lewis, for their valiant service during the battle of Polygon Wood, near Ypres, Belgium. This battle was one of the bloodiest of WWI with over 20,000 allied soldiers, and around 13,000 enemy soldiers killed or wounded 26 -27 September 1917 alone.

George returned to Australia in July 1919 and successfully applied for a soldier settlement block on the recently subdivided *Gambarra* station, Greenethorpe. In October 1923, he married Annie Norrie and they set up home at *Hillview* in the former shearer's quarters. In 1928, just before the Great Depression, they paid top price for the adjoining *Gambarra* homestead block. On 16 September 1933, Annie died suddenly of pneumonia and George was left widowed, with daughters, Helen, Dorothy and Mary, aged 9, 6 and 3, and a debt now greater than the value of the farm. Annie's cousin, Annie 'Bid' Norrie, came from Sydney to help and stayed on as part of the family.

Despite the trauma of the battlefield, the premature loss of his wife, and financial hardships, George continued farming at *Gambarra*, adopting modern techniques of soil conservation and tree plantings to combat erosion. In 1955, he and Bid retired to West Ryde leaving Bruce Brown to share farm and manage *Gambarra*. In 1962, the year before he died on 3 August 1963, George sold the farm to Bruce.

George Davidson was a thoughtful, reserved man who enjoyed reading and valued education, especially for his daughters. George's descendants include his 3 daughters, 11 grandchildren and 29 great grandchildren. Since the 1980s grandson, David Watt (son of Mary and Cedric Watt) and his wife, Dianne, have farmed in the Greenethorpe district.

25 April 2015



(L-R) Reverse side of
George Davidson's
Victory Medal,
Military Medal and
British War Medal