

A SOLDIER'S STORY



Service No.: 280
Name: Robert Charles HOCKRIDGE
Nickname: Bob



Medals and Decorations

1914 - 15 Star
British War Medal
Victory Medal

Rank: Corporal
Service: Army
Enlisted: 20 Oct 1914
DOD: 24 Jul 1915

Bob was born on 15 Oct 1888 at Penwortham (near Clare SA) to Thomas Charles Hockridge and Agnes Adelaide Hockridge (nee Glendenning). He was the youngest of 3 children in the family, 2 boys and a girl. His family lived at Norwood, then Clare before moving to Wallaroo. His father was a storekeeper.

On completion of schooling he moved with his family to Wallaroo (SA), where he joined the local Infantry militia unit and was engaged in the business of his father at Wallaroo for some years. His father died in Feb 1909 and it is thought that the family then moved back to Norwood.

"He then moved to Tumby Bay and took employ with Messrs. McFarlane Bros in their store on Lipson Road; he was also engaged in farming in the Tumby area for a short time" (Adelaide Observer Aug 1915) prior to his enlistment in the Army at Morphettville on 20 Oct 1914 at the age of 26. At the time of enlistment he recorded his occupation as grocers assistant.

On enlistment he was sent to Base Light Horse at Mitcham for training before being allocated to 9th Light Horse Regiment (9th L H Regt). His training in the Militia must have stood him in good stead, for 3 days after being allocated to his unit he was promoted to Corporal and then entrained for Melbourne.

The 9th L H Regt was formed in Adelaide and trained in Melbourne between Oct 1914 and Feb 1915. Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Regt hailed from South Australia and the other $\frac{1}{4}$ from Victoria. As part of the 3rd Light Horse Brigade, the 9th L H Regt sailed from Melbourne on 11 Feb 1915. Bob (with his unit) disembarked from HMAT "Karroo" in Egypt on 14 Mar 1915 for further training.

The light horse units were initially considered unsuitable for operations at Gallipoli,

but were subsequently deployed without their horses. The 3rd Light Horse Brigade landed in Gallipoli in May 1915 and was attached to the Australian and New Zealand Division. Bob arrived in Gallipoli on 16 May 1915.

After surviving at Gallipoli for 3 months, including the horrors of the Turkish counter attacks in May 1915, he reported sick on 17 Jul 1915 and was diagnosed with influenza. A week later he died of disease (DOD) aboard HS "*Sicilia*" at sea off Gallipoli; his sickness was later confirmed as Typhoid Fever.

It was initially reported to his family that Bob had been buried at sea between Gallipoli and Malta on 25 Jul 1917. This was amended on 3 Aug 1920 to state that he had been buried at the Mudros Cemetery, Lemnos by way of the following cable: "my communication of 27 Jul 1915 regarding the burial of your son, the late Corporal Robert Charles HOCKRIDGE, (Service No.) 280, 9th Light Horse Regt, advice has now been received to the effect that your son was buried in the Mudros Cemetery ... and not (at sea) as previously stated". Not a very caring correction some 5 years after the event!

His elder brother, Percival Horace (Pat), also served during WW1 in the Army in 3rd L H Regt.

Bob's name is recorded on the Tumby Bay Memorial.



A bullock team at Tumby Bay circa 1900



Mudros Cemetery, Lemnos, Greece