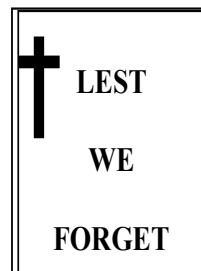


A SOLDIER'S STORY



Service No.: 6955
Name: Frederick James ATKINSON
Nickname: Fred



Medals and Decorations

British War Medal
Victory Medal

Rank: Lance Corporal
Service: Army
Enlisted: 26 Oct 1916
KIA: 26 Aug 1918

Fred was born on 23 Mar 1892 at Snowtown (SA) to Charles Henry Atkinson and Emma Stewart Atkinson (nee Bidgood). There were 4 children in the family, 3 boys and 1 girl, of which he was the second eldest. His family lived at Melton (near Snowtown SA) until they moved to Tumby Bay in 1904 aboard the SS "*Ferret*" and travelled inland to establish a farm in partnership with Mr. J. Durdin on Sect 2 Hundred of Cummins.

Fred went to Marble View School (south of the present day township of Cummins) which was located in the church at that location. On completion of schooling he worked on the family farm, and other farms in the area, until his enlistment in the Army at Adelaide on 26 Oct 1916 at the age of 24. At that time he recorded his occupation as farmer and his address as Cummins, West Coast, SA.

After processing Fred was sent to 2nd Depot Battalion (Bn) at Mitcham for training before being allocated to 23rd Reinforcements/10th Bn.

The 10th Bn was raised within weeks of the declaration of war in Aug 1914: the Bn embarked as a unit just two months later. It fought in Gallipoli with very heavy casualties before being withdrawn to Egypt and then sent to the Western Front in 1916.

Fred embarked from Adelaide (Outer Harbour) on 16 Dec 1916 aboard HMAT "*Berrima*" bound for Devonport (UK), arriving on 16 Feb 1917. Within a week of arrival he was admitted to the Fargo Hospital suffering from influenza, where he remained for 3 weeks, before resuming training. A fortnight later he was readmitted to hospital, this time the Parkhouse Hospital, suffering from Mumps; he was released from hospital a month later and proceeded to France to join his unit, being finally taken on strength on 22 May 1917. Two months later he was back in hospital, this time with Scabies, but was released back to his unit after only 2 weeks.

Whilst with the unit he must have been an effective soldier as he was promoted to Lance Corporal on 6 Aug 1917. On 6 Oct 1917 he was wounded in action (WIA) with gunshot wounds to his right leg and thigh and again admitted to hospital, this time 6th General Hospital at Rouen (France), before being evacuated to 2nd Southern General Hospital at Bristol (UK) aboard the HS "*Western Australia*". He returned to his unit on 10 Apr 1918.

On 9 May 1918 he was again wounded in action, this time with gunshot wounds to his right forearm; he was evacuated through 15th Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) to 6th General Hospital. After a relatively short stay he rejoined his unit in the field on 20 Jun 1918.

During Aug 1918 the 10th Bn was involved in the "Great Allied Offensive" on the Somme around Amiens: this action was also known as the "hundred days offensive". It was during this offensive that Fred, on 26 Aug 1918, was killed in action (KIA) in the field near Amiens during one of the last battles fought by his unit. The 10th Bn was withdrawn from the line in Sep 1918.

Fred is buried at Villers-Bretonneux Memorial. His elder brother, Ernest Albert Atkinson also served during WW1 with 10th Bn and was killed in action on 18 May 1918 at Merris (France), during the German spring offensive.

His family relocated from the Cummins area to Payneham after the death of their sons.



Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery, France