

A SOLDIER'S STORY



Service No.: 3533 (WW1)
S1722 (WW2)
Name: Ellis Gordon DARLING



Medals and Decorations

British War Medal
Victory Medal

Rank: Trooper
Service: Army
Enlisted: (WW1) 5 Mar 1917
(WW2) 27 Mar 1942
Discharged: (WW1) 20 Jul 1919
(WW2) 31 Oct 45

Ellis was born at Warratta Vale on 9 Apr 1896 to William Darling and Jessie Darling (nee Wishart); both his parents migrated from Scotland and settled at Warratta. He was the second of 5 children. His father was a farmer, with farms at Pereningie (a few kilometers north of Butler), Salt Creek and Warrata Vale, the family residing on the Warratta farm. Unfortunately his father died in 1901, resulting in the sale of the Pereningie farm (2000 acres for 200 pound ~ \$400) and the Salt Creek farm (800 acres for 80 pound ~ \$160).

Ellis attended school at Lipson with his eldest sister, a 6 mile walk each way. His mother decided that this distance was excessive, so he then undertook private schooling, his tutor being a Miss Hilda France (later Mrs. Hilda Baillie). Two years later the Warratta Vale School opened!

On completion of his schooling, Ellis, like most boys of his age, worked on the family farm. There was certainly plenty to do with fencing and clearing, as well as trapping wild dogs and rabbits, being the priority tasks.

An interesting story from his boyhood is recounted about the opening of the rail line from Cummins to Kimba. To celebrate the event free train rides were given. The family went by trap to Ungarra, then like many people in the area took the train to Darke Peak; taking food, clothing and bedding with them. The travelers stayed overnight in the railway cottages at the "Peak", which had been made available by the railways: however, it must have been spartan accommodation as many had to "share" stretchers.

On 5 Mar 1917 he enlisted in the Army and went to Adelaide (Hampstead Barracks) for induction. He was posted as a re-enforcement to 3rd Light Horse Regiment and within

a few weeks had embarked for the Middle East. On arrival in Egypt he and the other reinforcements made their way to Jordan Valley before being involved in the battle of Al Salt. After this the Regiment was involved in mainly police operations around Cairo in quelling civil unrest.

He returned to Australia in early July 1919 and took his discharge on 20 Jul of that year, returning to the farm at Warratta. The property had been share farmed during his absence, his family having moved to Adelaide (Hackney) for the period of the war.

Ellis was married on 18 Jan 1924 to Kathleen Mary Brazil of White Flat. They had six children, 4 boys and 2 girls. One of the boys, John (Potsy) Darling, now aged 86, still lives in Tumby.

Ellis then settled to the farming life until the outbreak of WW2, when he again joined the Army on 20 Mar 1942. He was posted to the 8th Auxiliary Horse Transport Company and although this unit did not see any service overseas, he remained with it until his discharge on 31 Oct 1945.

This second period of service must have been unsettling, because after his discharge Ellis only remained on the farm for a few more years before moving to Adelaide and taking employ with the Shearer Group specialising in agricultural equipment.

Ellis was an exceptional sportsman excelling in lawn bowls. He won the Club Singles Championship at his Adelaide bowls club in 1950.

He then retired to Tumby, he and his wife living in West Terrace until his death on 5 Jun 1978. His wife continued to live in the West Terrace house until moving into the aged care units. She passed away on 15 Nov 1994 at the Tumby Bay Hospital.



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Victory Medal



Ellis & Kathleen Darling (Brazil)
18 Jan 1924