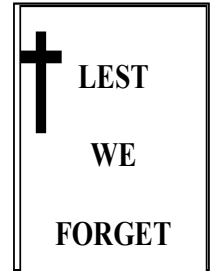


A SOLDIER'S STORY



Service No.: 4459
Name: Victor William DATSON
Nickname: Vic



Medals and Decorations

British War Medal
Victory Medal

Rank: Private
Service: Army
Enlisted: 31 Aug 1915
KIA: 13 Dec 1916

Vic was born on 14 Apr 1896 at Glanville (SA) to William Henry Datson and Anne (Annie) Datson (nee Scott). He was the youngest of 6 children in the family, 2 boys and 4 girls. His family lived at Glanville (SA), a north western suburb of Adelaide, near Port Adelaide.

Records indicate that Vic went to school at Broken Hill Public School, but this seems inconsistent with the family remaining in Glanville. On completion of schooling he worked for several years as a wheat clerk for Messrs. James Bell & Co. at Tumby Bay and Port Victoria. He enlisted at Port Adelaide (SA) on 31 Aug 1915 at the age of 19. At the time of enlistment he recorded his occupation as Clerk.

On enlistment Vic was sent to 2nd Depot Battalion (Bn) at Mitcham for training before being posted to 14th Reinforcements/10th Bn on 16 Nov 1915.

The 10th Bn was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during WW1, being recruited in South Australia it formed part of 3rd Brigade. It was part of the covering force for the Gallipoli landings on 25 Apr 1915 and so was the first ashore at around 0430 on that day. Two soldiers of the Bn are believed to have penetrated further inland than any other Australians at Gallipoli.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the 10th Bn returned to Egypt for reorganisation and reinforcement before sailing for France and the Western Front in March 1916.

On completion of training in Dec 1915, Vic embarked from Adelaide aboard HMAT "*Miltades*" bound for the Middle East, disembarking at Alexandria on 1 Mar 1916. He was sent to 3rd Training Bn for further training before embarking at Alexandria on 29 May 1916 aboard HMAT "*Tunison*" bound for France, disembarking at Etaples on 7 Jun 1916. He then moved forward to his unit, being finally taken on strength by his unit

(10th Bn) in Jul 1916, in time for the Bn's first major action in France at Pozieres in the Somme Valley.

On 20 Aug 1916 he was wounded in action with shrapnel wounds and resulting "shell shock" during the battle and aftermath of the battle at Pozieres, which saw some of the heaviest enemy artillery barrages of the war. He was evacuated to 3rd Casualty Clearing Station where he remained until 1 Sep 1916 when he was transferred to 6th Central Depot for further recuperation.

At the end of Sep 1916 he returned to his unit at Ypres (Belgium), but on 9 Nov 1916 he was again admitted for medical attention: this time to 2nd Field Ambulance for "trench foot", but was released after a week, rejoining his unit on 14 Nov 1916.

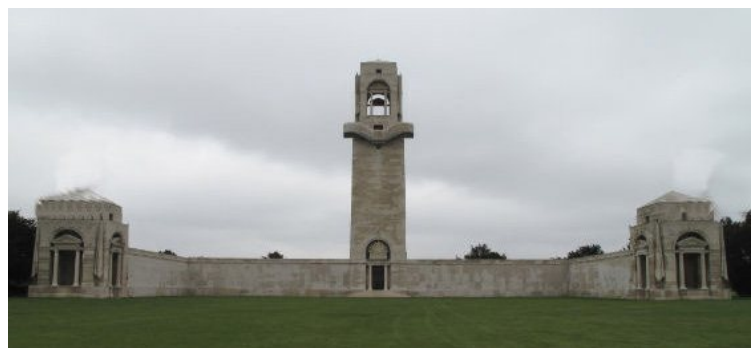
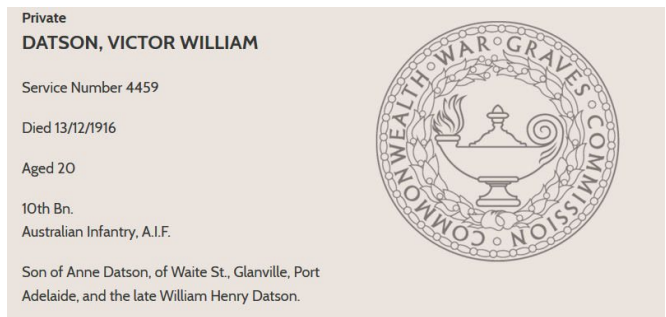
On 14 Dec 1916, less than a month after rejoining his unit, he was killed in action during trench warfare on the Somme, where his Bn had returned to "overwinter". He was 20 years of age.

Again the difficulty of communication is brought to the fore. After the end of the war, both Vic's parents had died and there was a hiatus in passing mail to the required person. It was eventually determined that his closest living male relation was his brother, Lionel, and all documentation and medals were passed to him, albeit the last of these on 19 Feb 1923.

Vic's name is recorded on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial amongst more than 10,000 names of other Australian servicemen who have no known grave. His name is also recorded on the Tumby Bay Memorial.



British War Medal Victory Medal



Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery, France