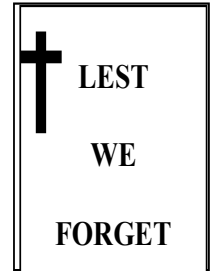


## A SOLDIER'S STORY



Service No.: 4929  
Name: Robert James TURNER  
Nick Name: Bob



### *Medals and Decorations*

British War Medal  
Victory Medal

Rank: Private  
Service: Army  
Enlisted: 31 Jan 1916  
DOD: 8 Feb 1917

Bob was born on 25 May 1889 at Mount Forrest (near Mount Torrens in the Eastern Adelaide Hills districts of SA) to William Turner and Maria Turner (nee Richards). He was the youngest of 8 children in the family, 4 boys and 4 girls. His family lived at Mount Torrens, although 2 of the older children were born at Blumberg (the original name for the town of Birdwood, SA). His father was a blacksmith

Bob went to school at Mount Torrens Public School. On completion of schooling he undertook an apprenticeship as a blacksmith and apparently qualified in trade as he moved to Edillilie in 1910 and worked in that trade. He married Ellen Agnes Scanlan (nee Quinn), a widow, at Edillilie on 13 Feb 1912. They were still living in that location at the time of his enlistment: it is not known whether they had any children

He enlisted in the Army at Keswick (SA) on 31 Jan 1916 at the age of 26, at the time recording his occupation as "blacksmith". On enlistment Bob was sent to 2<sup>nd</sup> Depot Battalion (Bn) at Mitcham for training before being posted to 10<sup>th</sup> Bn on 16 Feb 1916. On completion of training he embarked aboard RMS "*Mongolia*" at Adelaide on 9 Mar 1916 bound for Alexandria (Egypt), disembarking 7 weeks later. Whilst in Alexandria his posting was changed from 10<sup>th</sup> Bn to 50<sup>th</sup> Bn on 20 May 1916.

The 50<sup>th</sup> Battalion was raised in Egypt on 26 Feb 1916 as part of the process that was known as "doubling the AIF", drawing a cadre of experienced personnel from the 10<sup>th</sup> Bn supplemented by recruits from Australia; Bob was one of these new recruits, and was taken on strength by his new unit (50<sup>th</sup> Bn) in late May 1916.

He embarked, with his unit, aboard HMS "*Huntskill*" at Alexandria bound for Marseilles (France), arriving on 11 Jun 1916. The Bn moved into the front line two weeks after its arrival in France.

However, Bob did not remain with his unit for long as within a month he was admitted to 26<sup>th</sup> General Hospital at Etaples (France) with Bronchitis where he remained for almost 2 weeks before being released. He rejoined his unit on 13 Aug 1916, arriving in time for 50<sup>th</sup> Bn's first major action, being the Battle of Mouquet Farm during Aug/Sep 1916, in which the Bn suffered over 400 casualties. Obviously his illness persisted as he was again medically evacuated on 15 Nov 16; this time through 5<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance to 36<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station to 12<sup>th</sup> General Hospital at Rouen (France), where he remained for over two months. He was released from hospital on 10 Jan 1917 and rejoined his Bn.

Less than a month later (8 Feb 1917) he reported ill to South Midlands 1<sup>st</sup> Casualty Clearing Station and unfortunately died the same day from Acute Lobar Pneumonia.

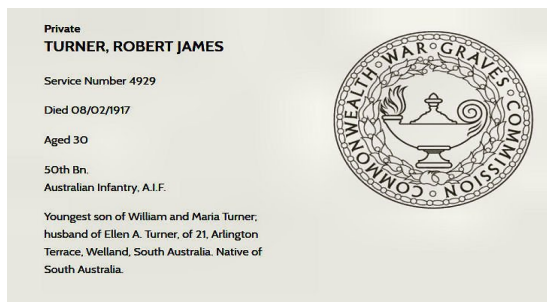
Over 12 months later the family were still waiting for a Death Certificate to allow probate to proceed. Again the difficulty in communication is brought to the fore. However, the support from the community of Edillilie appears to have been very strong, as a letter was written on behalf of his widow to the Army seeking more detail on Bob's death: in an unusual variance to normal procedure the Army actually responded to someone other than the Next of Kin.

Bob is buried at Dernancourt Communal Cemetery Extension, 2 1/2 miles (approx 4Km) South South West of Albert (France).

After his death his wife returned to Welland, Adelaide.



British War Medal    Victory Medal



Dernancourt Cemetery, France