

# Stories from the Honour Boards

Stories of those who served and are remembered on the Honour Boards in the Merrington Anzac Memorial Peace Chapel at Saint Andrew's Uniting Church

Booklet Number 92

# **DAVID JOHNSTON BINNIE 1886 - 1950**



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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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*Group portrait of staff at Enoggera Camp with the Governor General of Australia, Lieutenant General Sir Ronald CM Ferguson (centre front) and unidentified Acting Minister for Defence beside him. July 1918.*

*Captain DJ Binnie is second from left in back row.*

*Beside him (3rd from left) is Major WRE Sabine, Camp Quartermaster.\**

*See William Randolph Eppes Sabine Booklet number 30*

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## **Captain David Johnston Binnie**

David Johnston Binnie was born in Liverpool in the County of Lancashire, England on 18 August 1886, the only son of Thomas Binnie and Mary née Livesey. David's parents were farmers in the Cairns District of North Queensland.

David Binnie reached state school sixth class standard before entering the Queensland Public Service and receiving appointments in Southern Queensland towns – Boonah, Toowoomba and Rosewood. He married Mildred Goring at St James's Church in Toowoomba on what was described as a beautiful morning on Tuesday 5 November 1912 at 9.15. They lived at Rosewood, the base for David's work as dairy inspector and later inspector of stock in the Department of Agriculture. His tasks were varied. At the Marburg Show he was the judge in the dairy produce section. At the Esk Police Court he proceeded against a dairy farmer who had failed to remove manure from his cow bales and to properly clean his cream separator.

A baby girl Myrra Livesey Binnie arrived in 1914 and her little brother, Thomas David Binnie in 1916. After David's father died in 1915, his mother Mary joined the household.

David Johnston Binnie was also active in the citizen defence force. He served in Senior Cadets and as Area Officer 10B for 2½ years. He rose to commissioned rank in Second Light Horse (Queensland Mounted Infantry) at the end of 1912, years before the outbreak of war. At the age of 29 years 8 months Lieutenant David Johnston Binnie enlisted to serve overseas in the Australian Infantry Force (AIF). It meant leaving his wife Mildred, his mother Mary and two small children.

He joined on 15 April 1916 and was appointed to D Company, 42<sup>nd</sup> Battalion to train at Thompson's Paddock Camp, Enoggera. He embarked for active service abroad on 5 June on board HMAT *Borda* from Sydney, disembarking at Southampton on 23 July 1916. He was promoted to Captain on 22 August and proceeded overseas to France on 25 November. The 42<sup>nd</sup> entered the frontline for the first time on 23 December 1916. The winter of 1916-17 was horrendous and Captain Binnie was wounded in action on 20 January 1917. He was admitted to the 10<sup>th</sup> Australian Field Ambulance with shell shock and multiple wounds but his serious condition required hospital treatment. He was admitted first to 14<sup>th</sup> General Hospital, Wimereux in France.



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*The 14th General Hospital, Wimereux*

He was later transferred per hospital ship *St Patrick* to England where he was admitted to 4<sup>th</sup> London General Hospital, thence Cobham Hall. On 6 April 1917 he was still suffering from severe shell shock and was discharged from hospital for return to Australia.

He left England per Hospital Transport *Themistoccles* on 4 May 1917, disembarking at Sydney on 4 July. Though his appointment in the AIF was terminated at Brisbane on 9 August 1917, Captain Binnie continued to take an active part in army affairs at Enoggera Camp and at military parades. In a crowded Anzac Square on Anzac Day 1918 he read the names and brave actions of returned servicemen as the Governor Major Sir John Goold-Adams pinned the various medals on each man's coat.

David, his wife and young children and David's mother Mary moved to Cecil Plains where Mr D J Binnie was appointed to be supervisor of the soldiers' settlement there. Another child, Mildred Evelyn, was born in 1918.

Then a most unfortunate episode occurred to cause untold hardship and sorrow. David Binnie was accused of stealing money while employed as a public servant, found guilty and sentenced to three years in prison. The judge stated Binnie's crime was a breach of the trust imposed on him by the Government. In a request to appeal against the severity of the sentence pleas for leniency were made. In view of his good war record and previous good character the benefits of the probation clause should have been given. He had suffered severely from shell shock and this had been largely responsible for his lapse. But the magistrate did not interfere with the court's decision and the right of appeal was not granted.

After serving three years with hard labour in gaol David Binnie with his wife and children and his mother went to live in New South Wales. He tried farming for a while at Riverstone Station, Quaker's Hill and at Clovelly but David's marriage to Mildred was dissolved in divorce in 1939.

In the 1940s he worked as a book keeper at Gibbonsvale, Kikoiria. At the end of the decade he was living at Flour Mill near West Wyalong with no occupation.

He died at Concord Repatriation Hospital, Sydney on 25 February 1950, aged 63 years. The family funeral notice referred to his loving children, Myrra (then Mrs Lane), Thomas and Mildred. In another notice, members of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Association were invited to attend his funeral in honour of their comrade, Captain D J Binnie, 1<sup>st</sup> AIF.

### Select Bibliography

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*Lest we forget*