

# 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 122

## **JAMES CROMBIE** **1881 - 1942**



*Post Office, Longreach*

This booklet remains the property of Saint Andrew's Uniting Church.  
Please see a Guide if you would like a copy.

## **Cover Illustration:**

*Post Office Longreach*

*In 1909 James Crombie took over the grazing property called Beryl in the Longreach district, as its overseer and station manager.*

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Brisbane QLD 4000  
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## Crombie and Cameron Families, Western Queensland



*James Crombie senior*

James Crombie's father was also James Crombie (1834-1898), a pastoralist and politician who with the Cameron family stocked and later leased Barcaldine Downs and later Kensington Downs and Greenhills near Muttaborra in central western Queensland. He moved to Brisbane in the 1880s and purchased a large farm in the Fassifern district.

He became a director of the Royal Bank of Queensland and the Queensland Meat Export and Agency Company and joined the Meat and Dairy Board. James Crombie MLA represented Mitchell in 1888-93 and Warrego in 1893-98 in the Queensland Parliament.

James Crombie's mother was Isabella Harriet Cameron (1845 - 1921), aunt of Sir Donald Charles Cameron.<sup>1</sup> She married James Crombie senior at Springsure in 1869. They had four sons and three daughters. When James and Isabella Crombie moved to Brisbane in the 1880s their address was Oriel Road Albion and they were communicant members at Wickham Terrace Presbyterian Church, later Saint Andrew's on the corner of Creek and Ann Streets in the city.



*Isabella Harriet Crombie*

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<sup>1</sup>. See Stories from the Honour Boards, booklet 43, *Donald Charles Cameron*

## Driver James Crombie

James Crombie's name appears on the honour board that was unveiled by Rev Dr Ernest Merrington<sup>1</sup> in 1917. James Crombie was born on 24 October 1881 at Greenhills near Muttaborra, the youngest son of James and Isabella Crombie. In 1909 he took over the grazing property called Beryl in the Longreach district, a resumption of Kensington Downs as its overseer and station manager.

At St Andrew's Church of England Lutwyche on 2 April 1913 James Crombie married Amy Gladys Kirk Flower, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs J H Flower of Kirkston, Lutwyche Road, Windsor. They had a family of nine children, two of whom were born before James Crombie enlisted to serve in the Great War.

He was nearly 36 years of age when he applied to join the AIF in Brisbane on 21 August 1917. He noted on his attestation paper that he had been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service when he had applied previously, probably in connection with a Queensland Scottish Regiment, because of his stammering impediment. He was successful this time however and was appointed to the Mechanical Transport Unit for training at Enoggera. He did not leave Australia till 22 March 1918 when he embarked from Sydney on board HMAT<sup>2</sup> *Runic*, bound for London. On arrival he was given regimental service number 16393 and after a few days in hospital at Parkhouse in southern England he proceeded overseas to France via Folkstone. Private Crombie's service record notes he was attached to the Australian General Base Depot at Rouelles on 1 September 1918 and given the rank of driver in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mechanical Transport Company on 24 September.

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1. See *Stories from the Honour Boards*, booklet 2, Ernest Northcroft Merrington

2. His Majesty's Australian Transport

The Armistice was declared on 11 November but his duties continued at AIF headquarters in France till April 1919 when he was granted leave in the United Kingdom. Driver James Crombie returned to Australia per the ship *Ulysses* and he was discharged from the AIF at Sydney on 28 September 1919.

He returned to his pastoral property Beryl rejoining his wife and family and continuing his work as a grazier. He received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal by registered post in 1936 following his long delayed application by letter<sup>1</sup> for his entitlement.

James Crombie was a member of the Muttaborra RSSAILA<sup>2</sup> sub-branch and a member of the Longreach Club.

J Crombie died suddenly at the age of 60. On 30 March 1942, he took three of his children, one of whom was travelling south to enlist for active service in the Second World War, to catch the mail train at Chorregon, a small station on the Winton Longreach Line. On his return trip alone to Beryl he died in his car about three miles from the homestead, leaving his widow and nine children, four of whom at the time were in the fighting forces. James Crombie's remains were interred at Beryl, Rev W R W Roberts then minister of the Presbyterian Church at Longreach, officiating at the graveside.

Mrs Gladys Crombie left Beryl soon afterwards and lived in the Brisbane suburb of Ascot till her death in 1980, aged 88 years. She was buried at the Crombie Memorial at Toowong Cemetery.

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1. J Crombie to Officer in charge, Base Records, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, letter dated 6 July 1936

2. Returned Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia

## References

Australian War Memorial

National Archives of Australia, military records

Archives, Saint Andrew's Uniting Church, Brisbane

Brisbane City Council, cemetery records

Queensland Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages

Queensland War Memorial Register

Australian Electoral Rolls, 1888 to 1980

*Longreach Leader*, 2 April 1942, page 11

*The Telegraph*, Brisbane, 3 April 1913, page 8

*Ancestry*, on line

Waterson DB, *Crombie, James (1834-1898)*, [Australian Dictionary of Biography](#), volume 8, MUP, 1981

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*The road from Longreach to Muttaborra*





*Lest we forget*