

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 39

FREDERICK WILLIAM HARVEY DROVER

1890 - 1966



Ammunition Boxes on the beach. Gallipoli, 1915

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Please see a Guide if you would like a copy.

Cover Illustration:

Frederick Drover was with an Australian Army Service Corps whose main role at Gallipoli was to store and issue supplies - such as ammunition - from the beach.

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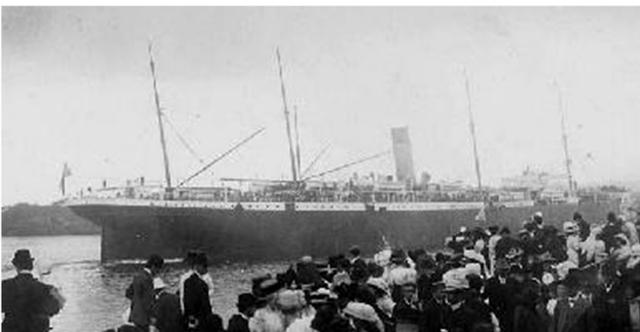
Private Frederick William Harvey Drover

Frederick William Harvey Drover was born on 15 October 1890 in Edinburgh, Scotland to William Steedman (sometimes recorded as 'Stedman') Drover, a music teacher, and his wife Charlotte Forsyth née Sutherland.

After the family arrived in Queensland Frederick worked as a typewriter mechanic with Stott and Hoare (in Adelaide Street, Brisbane) from 1911 to 1914. However, on 20 December 1914 he enlisted in the 1st AIF, and was placed with the 8th Company of the Australian Army Service Corps (AASC) in Sydney. The core role for such AASC companies was to maintain supplies and transport them to Divisions.

At the time of enlistment Frederick was residing in Kelvin Grove, single, and stood five feet six inches tall (167cm) tall, with brown hair, blue eyes and a dark complexion.

Some 8th Company personnel – specifically the supply and ammunition sections – were part of the build-up of Anzac personnel in Egypt between November 1914 and early 1915. Frederick was among reinforcements who arrived in Egypt in the middle of March 1915 on the *Runic*, having embarked in Sydney on 12 February 1915, and over the next two months Frederick would have been engaged in the work of supplying the troops in the camps at Mena and Maadi.



HMAT A54 Runic (State Library of NSW)

The HMAT A54 Runic weighed 12,490 tons with an average cruise speed of 13 knots.

The area held by the Anzacs at Gallipoli after the landing on 25 April 1915 was a narrow strip of beach a little over two kilometres long, and behind that, steep rough country extending inland less than one kilometre at even its deepest point.

In this environment the AASC role was supply rather than transport – the Navy shipped the stores to the beach and generally the Indian Army Mule Cart Corps and fatigue parties from the infantry brigades moved supplies issued from depots on the beach up to the fighting units.

By May there were two main depots on the beach, although much of the beach and shingle immediately above were covered with rations, forage, ammunition, fuel and other items: the aim at that stage being to have seven days' supply available onshore. The physical work was arduous and the beach far from a safe location – indeed, it could be one of the riskiest. All positions held by the Anzacs were within range of enemy fire, including the bursting of shrapnel shells above the beach.

Frederick embarked from Alexandria in Egypt on the *Franconia* on 14 May 1915 and landed at Gallipoli, where he was most probably employed at the beach depots. However, illness and physical limitations meant his active service was relatively short.

On 22 May Frederick was evacuated off Gallipoli and spent three and a half months in hospitals at Malta and in England. He was invalided to Australia on the *Suevic*, arriving on 20 November 1915, and was discharged from army service on 12 April 1916.

Rheumatic fever had not left any lasting cardiac damage but rheumatism – present in a minor way prior to enlistment and with episodic pains starting in Egypt - was accepted as having been exacerbated by his service. He was granted a temporary war pension for partial incapacity that continued until January 1917.



The unit badge of the Royal Australian Army Supply Corps at the time of his service.

In late 1916 Frederick married Nellie Looker Bigg (daughter of Archibald Walpole Bigg and Ethelinda Kate née Robinson) from Wilston in Brisbane. Frederick and Nellie lived in Eagle Junction, with Frederick working as a telephony mechanic with the PMG (1916-17) and then a typewriter mechanic with the firms of Dobells (1917-28) and Underwoods (1928-30). The family (which included a daughter and three sons), moved to Mount Isa in 1930, where Frederick worked for 25 years as a typewriter mechanic for Mt Isa Mines.

On 29 July 1966 Frederick and Nellie went to the Repatriation Commission in Brisbane for a benefit claim interview, but when they were approaching the counter Frederick collapsed from a heart attack. Attempts to resuscitate him were unsuccessful. He was aged 75. Nellie wrote afterwards to the Deputy Commissioner asking him to pass on her thanks to 'the doctors

who worked so hard to revive my husband also the young ladies and Mr McCracken and others who showed me such kindness on that sad day’.

Frederick’s remains were cremated at the Albany Creek Crematorium and rest there, together with those of Nellie, who passed away 12 years later.

Select bibliography

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Lest we forget