



Edgar Whitehorn

July 16<sup>th</sup> 1893 – October 13<sup>th</sup> 1978

World War 1 & World War 11

## Edgar Douglas Whitehorn

Edgar Douglas Whitehorn was my great grandfather, he was born on July 16 1893, the son of Frederick and Louisa, brother to 4 brothers and 3 sisters. The family lived and worked their family farm "Carclew" in the mid north of South Australia near Koolunga. Growing up, Edgar and his siblings walked 5 miles to school each day before returning daily to work the farm with their father. Edgar led a simple life with finding life of the farm one that he would continue working on the farm long after the war.

Brothers Edgar & Royse volunteered as members of the armed forces and enlisted on Nov 27 1914 with the 9<sup>th</sup> Light Horseman regiment at the age of 21. Training was regularly held in Clare or even Gawler – some 80 miles from their home. They trained with their horses and fellow mates preparing themselves for the day that their unit would leave and join the fighting overseas. Departing from Adelaide on board the HMAT A59 Botanist on June 2 1915 they were bound for Alexandria, Egypt as the 5<sup>th</sup> reinforcement to the 9<sup>th</sup> Light Horseman regiment. Edgar's first taste of the war was when his unit was sent to Gallipoli on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 1915. They were sent without their horses due to the steep cliff faces of the now known Anzac Cove. His baptism into war was one he would never forget. The extensive injury and illness of the troops in Gallipoli, became evident by the number of the solidiers that spent time in the sick bays. nt time in and of sick bays with a variety of illnesses – for Edgar it was mumps and ear infections. His unit was the next to go over the top in the battle of the Nek before the disastrous battle was called off due to the numerous men that were been slaughtered. After the Gallipoli campaign, his regiment was sent to the Suez Canal, before he was discharged on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 1916 due to illness, deafness and ottorrhoco.

While recuperating Edgar always felt the call of the war. Whether it was the excitement, desperation to return with his mates that were away fighting. Edgar soon found a way to return. Within one month of his brother returning, Edgar enlisted on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1917 under the name of Edward Whitehorn, joining the 10<sup>th</sup> reinforcement of the 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion. Embarking from Melbourne on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1917 aboard the Themistocles, he was bound for

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the Western Front where he served for nearly two years. His unit fought in many battles across the western front; Villers Bretonneux, Dernancourt, Lavieville and Morlancourt.

The weather in France, in April 1918 varied daily with reports of clear and warm days and then periods of rain. The fighting also varied from days under heavy fire and then others days were quiet. It was on of those bleak rainy days that Edgar experienced one of the hardest battles he had been a part of, the Battle of Dernancourt. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of April deep in the Western Front in the town of Dernancourt his unit battled hard against a determined enemy defending a crucial rail line. It was here that Edgar sustained the first of several injuries under fire on this day. Edgar's unit was under heavy machine gun fire when they were hit by artillery which caused 52 casualties and 9 men lost. Edgar was hit by the machine gun's stray bullets, wounding him in the face and ankle. A soldier named Matty who he had formed a strong friendship with was shot in the face, seriously wounding him and later he became blind. Edgar displayed his Anzac spirit by not leaving Matty behind. Edgar stayed with Matty for three days before any medical assistance was found.

The word 'ANZAC' has been part of the Australian language and life since the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 1915. A signaller in Egypt came up with the acronym for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. The Anzac Spirit is devined as Australians soldiers in the war displaying courage, endurance, ingenuity, good humour and of course mateship. It was believed that if you possessed these qualities you were a true Anzac. I believe my great grandfather embodied all of these qualities.

### *Courage*

My great grandfather was a young man from country SA, he knew very little of the outside world, and he signed up for the adventure of his life. he joined as the 950<sup>th</sup> Australian with his brother, Edgar demonstrated an enormous amount of courage greater than he had ever known. As a farmer, there was never a requirement for him to join the forces and yet he showed great courage to leave the security of his family for the unknown. He boarded a ship and sailed into the unknown. I think this displays an enormous amount of courage and I considerate 'pretty gutsy'. He was thrown into a foreign environment, dodging bullets and putting up with some of the worst conditions in which a man can live, yet still managed to laugh. My great grandfather possessed the ability to confront fear, pain, danger and uncertainty with a smile on his face, in my opinion that is courage

### *Endurance*

My great grandfather faced the constant fear of the enemy around him and of being shot. Every hour of every day he was left wondering whether or not he would see his family and his beloved country again, while explosions were going off constantly around him and bullets flying past his head. I can't imagine putting up with that for 4 years. and that is what an Anzac endured. Edgar decided to go back after recovering from his illness. He endured the hardship of the war twice for his country. He never thought of staying home where it was safe. He constantly felt the call of duty and service to return to the front to fight with his mates. He enlisted twice that's endurance

### *Ingenuity*

After his tour was cut short and he was discharged in 1916 with a severe ear infection which rendered him partially deaf, he was left with a longing to return to the front. When the brother he first joined with, returned to Australia in May 1917, a passion was reignited in Edgar to go back. Using ingenuity and a bit of larrikin luck he re-enlisted as Edward Whitehorn joining the 50<sup>th</sup> Battalion embarking on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 1917 aboard the Themistocles bound for the Western Front. On his papers he wrote his mother's name as next of kin for the first time he went to war as Edgar and the second time he used his father's name as next of kin when he went to war as Edward. Edgar used his ingenuity to fool the authorities and to make sure he was reunited with his mates on the Western Front.

### *Good Humour*

Never one to shy away from a prank, and feeling restless in hospital recuperating from a hernia operation Edward was part of a prank that cost him three days pay. In my research I was unable to find out the exact details of the prank, but my opinion those three days lost had most likely something to do with wonderful caring nurses that looked after those injured men. Humour distracted the soldiers from pain and sadness of the loss of mates and thoughts of family faraway.

### *Mateship*

While serving on the Western front there were many battles that Edgar endured with his mates. In one battle he witnessed his mate "Matty" receive gunshot injuries to his face, Edgar watched his mate in horrific pain stayed with him throughout the trauma. It took three

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days to find medical help, and for Matty to be taken to the medics in the field. That mateship lasted for a lifetime upon their return to Australia. Now back in Australia, Edgar would take his family to Adelaide and he would visit Matty on Anzac Eve every year, then he walked beside him in the Adelaide Anzac march every year.

Edgar returned home at the end of the war. He married Clarice Crouch in 1922 at age of 29 and had three boys and two girls. Edgar became involved in many community organisations in the township of Koolunga. He was the president of Koolunga football club for sometime even though he could never play football because of the uneven healing from a broken leg he received in the war. He was a keen rifleman, involved in the rifle club and he also competed in sheep dog trails. Edgar was very proud to be involved in the Adelaide Anzac dawn services every year. He marched every year, catching up with mates who he had formed a solid friendship with during the war. Edgar was a very private man, discussions about the war were only between his fellow mates after the Anzac march. Unfortunately very little was revealed to his family members. The family never fully understood why he never talked about what happened during those dark and terrible years. We suspect that he didn't share those memories because he didn't share the pain and suffering of what he saw and endured. For Edgar reliving those memories would have been almost too much to handle so keeping it too himself, trying not to think too much about it, was the best way to get on with life. At the age of 45 Edgar enlisted for war service again in World War Two with the 9 Light horseman of the 23 Regiment. I was not honoured enough to know for great grandfather personally but his story was often retold in the family and thus I feel I know him. Whenever the 'Anzac Story' is mentioned I remember my great grandfather proudly, knowing he truly embodied the Anzac spirit. Edgar at the great age of 84 died the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 1978 having lived a full life and was part of something that helped shape our nation's position and power and to make into the nation it is today.



Whitehorn and Ladbroke

9<sup>th</sup> Light Horse World War 1



Edgar Whitehorn World War 1



My Great Grandfather, Edgar Whitehorn.

The inscription on the back

*"To Anne Whitehorn (my grandmother)*

*This snap was taken a few days before we sailed"*





Inscription on the back ~

*"This was taken on a day we had just come in from drill"*

World War I



World War I

9<sup>th</sup> Light Horse

My Great Grandfather, Edgar Whitehorn (6<sup>th</sup> from the left)

**RATIONING ORDER, 1918.**

**PASS** CONTAINING LEAVE  
OR DUTY RATION BOOK.  
SOLDIER OR SAILOR.

Serial No. **21**    **Nº 015400**

No. .... Regiment .....

Regt. No. **3728** (Rank) ..... (Name) **Whitehorn** .....

has permission to be absent from his quarters from **31-12-18** .....

to **11-1-19** ..... for the purpose of proceeding to **Alasagout** .....

Is holder proceeding at end of leave or duty on active service or service afloat? .....

Signature and Rank of Officer issuing .....  
Station **Alasagout** .....

Date **31-12-18** .....

IF FOUND, RETURN TO ANY FOOD OFFICE.

N. 92 (Revised).

Ration Book issued to Edgar Whitehorn while on leave in 1918

**INSTRUCTIONS TO HOLDER.**

- Each coupon in this book, other than meat coupons, represents one week's civilian ration. The meat coupons entitle you to purchase meat at a shop according to the official Table of Equivalent Weights displayed in the shop. A coupon or half-coupon may be used to buy a meat meal anywhere.
- The book is not transferrable. You must produce the book whenever you buy any rationed food, or a meat meal. The seller will detach coupons. Coupons already detached are useless.
- You must spread your coupons over the full period of your leave and of your journey out and back. No fresh book will be issued to you. If the period of your leave or duty is extended, you must take this book, with the document authorizing the extension of leave or duty, to the Local Food Office, who will issue an Emergency Card to cover the remainder of your leave or duty. This book ceases to be valid at the expiration of your leave or duty as indicated by the date entered on the Leave Pass on the front of this cover.

**PENALTIES FOR MISUSE.—\$100 or six months' imprisonment, or both.**

Leaf 1.    **COUNTERFOIL.**  
(To be detached before Book is issued.)

No. .... Regiment .....

Regtl. No. .... Rank .....

Name .....

Date from ..... to .....

Commanding .....

Station .....

Date .....



Clare War Memorial

Clare War Memorial which features Edgar Whitehorn's photo

**MEMORIAL:** Monument

**LOCATION:** Main North Road

**ORIENTATION:** East

**DESCRIPTION:** A glass-fronted edifice containing a restored War Trophy German WW1 Krupp 75mm Field Gun that was captured by the 9<sup>th</sup> ALH on the 8<sup>th</sup> August 1918. Within the confines of the enclosure are descriptions and accoutrements of the Ninth Australian Light Horse. On two of the glass panels are acid etched effigies of the Ninth Light Horse badge. On each of the front walls are two polished granite plaques, all details are in gold leaf.

**INSCRIPTIONS:**

Title **1914 NINTH LIGHT HORSE MEMORIAL 1918**

Left wall:

Upper plaque:

AIF badge 9<sup>th</sup> ALH colour patch 9<sup>th</sup> ALH badge

Lower plaque:

ARTHUR A.G.  
 BAILEY A.A.  
 CHEETHAM D.H.  
 DAVIS A.R.  
 DAVIS F.J.  
 DAVIS R.  
 DENNISON R.L.W.  
 DUNSTAN R.P.  
 EVERETT G.E.  
 FITZGERALD W.G.G. +  
 FORTH M.E.F.  
 GILLEN F.A.  
 HAGEL G.E.  
 HAMP A.C.  
 HAMP J.R.  
 HANCOCK E.O.  
 HATHERLEY  
 J.E.HAWKINS  
 W.A.JACKSON  
 A.T.KADOW  
 H.C.H.KNAPPSTEIN  
 LORD A.C  
 MATHESON G.D.

K.I.A. +  
 SUPPORTED BY THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN  
 GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE HISTORY  
 TRUST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Right wall:  
 Upper plaque:

AIF badge 9<sup>th</sup> ALH colour patch 9<sup>th</sup> ALH badge

Lower plaque:

MOSEY P.G.  
MCEVOY W.J.  
MCGILLIVRAY J.A. +  
NICHOLLS W.H.  
PARKER G.W.  
PENNA W.H.  
RYAN L.A.  
SARGENT P.S.  
SCHULTZ C.W.  
SCLANDERS S.R.  
SCOTT T.E.  
SMITH E.K.  
SMITH W.  
SOLLY N.P.  
STOPP A.P.  
THOMAS J.D.A.  
TORNQUIST C.A.  
WHITEHORN E.D.  
WHITEHORN R.H.  
WILLIAMS H.W.  
WILLASON J.H.  
WOODHOUSE G.H.  
WYMAN L.J. +



The Clare War Memorial features my Great Grandfather's photo (Edgar Whitehorn) enlarged on the feature wall. His name is also on the Honour Board (above)



Edgar Whitehorn World War 11