

Frederick Archie Redman

When we drive through the towns and cities of Australia, we pass monuments in honour of the local young men who sacrificed their lives during the Great War. These men are recognised as having made the ultimate sacrifice for our country and their names remain for generations to see. On ANZAC Day the nation stops to remember these people. We tend to forget however, that thousands of men returned home after the war and set about resuming their lives, working hard and contributing to Australia that was still developing as a young nation.

Frederick Archie Redman, Archie as he was known, was one of these men. We know very little about him, as his life was largely unremarkable. Today, however, it is hard to imagine a young man in his early twenties surviving the battlefields of France and returning home to Murray Bridge, getting a job, marrying and setting about raising a family, with what he witnessed and went through, all but forgotten. If it happened now, we would provide him with all sorts of support and marvel at his resilience and bravery. There were thousands of returned soldiers like Archie who are the forgotten ANZACs, men who continued to display the legendary ANZAC Spirit, well after they left the horrors of war.

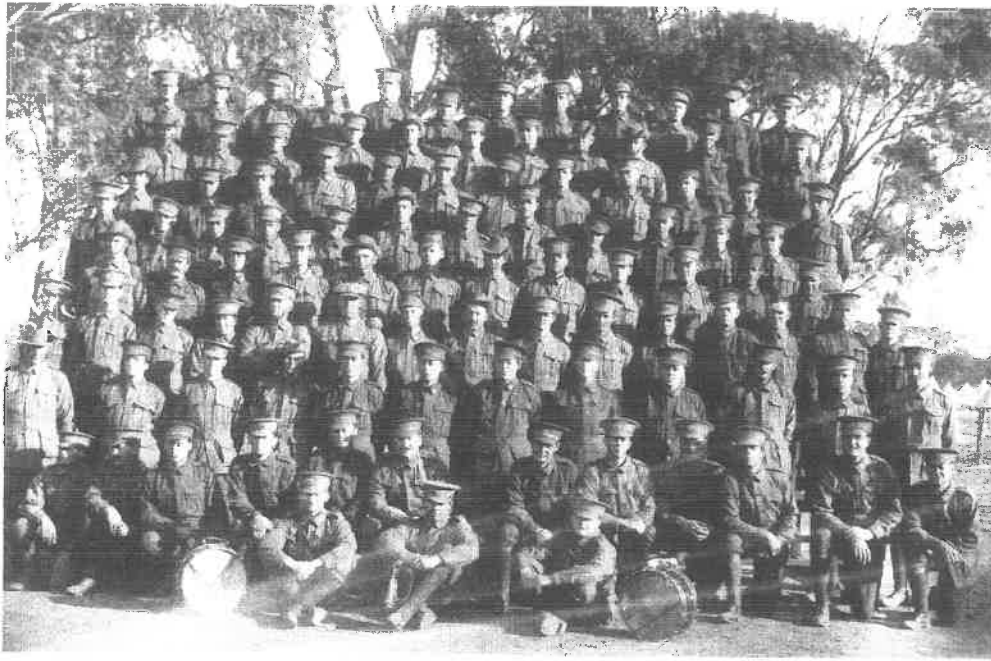
Archie was born on November 8, 1889, in Middleton, a small township on the Fleurieu Peninsula of South Australia. When he was a small child his family moved to Murray Bridge where they settled in and around the region. After leaving school, Archie worked as a labourer. He attended the Church of England and was a law abiding member of the Murray Bridge community. Three years prior to his enlistment, he joined the Murray Bridge Rifle Club and was in fact an active member when he joined the army (*Australian Government, 2012*).

His father, George Swann Redman, was born on March 13, 1853, in Manchester, United Kingdom. His mother, Mary Alice Boxall was born on January 24, 1857, in Booborowie, South Australia. They married on May 2, 1883, at St Jude's Anglican Church in Port Elliot, South Australia. Archie was the youngest of three children, with an older brother named Earnest, and a sister, Kate, who sadly died aged ten on June 7, 1897.

Archie enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces on August 16, 1915, in Adelaide, South Australia. He was given the rank of Private and was allocated the service number 3450 which, nearly 100 years later, remains our direct link to his war records. He became part of the 11th Reinforcements to the 10th Battalion which embarked from Outer Harbour, South Australia, onboard the HMAT A24 Benalla on October 27, 1915. Archie's enlistment papers state that he had black hair, hazel eyes and fair skin. He was 5 foot 6 1/4 inches (approximately 165cm) in height and weighed 141 pounds (approximately 65kg) (*Australian Government, 2012*).



Image 1: HMAT A24 Benalla at Port Melbourne on October 19, 1914



Eleventh Reinforcements 10th Battalion — Incomplete

Image 2: The 11th Reinforcements to the 10th Battalion

Archie was transferred to the 50th Battalion on February 26, 1916, at Serapeum, Egypt. On June 6, 1916, the battalion left Egypt for England on board the HMT Arcadian but due to German U-Boat activity in the entrance to the English Channel, they disembarked in Marseilles, France on June 12, 1916. The 50th Battalion's first frontline duty on the Western Front was on August 12, 1916, at Brickfields. Here the battalion encountered heavy shelling and casualties (*Freeman, R 2008*).

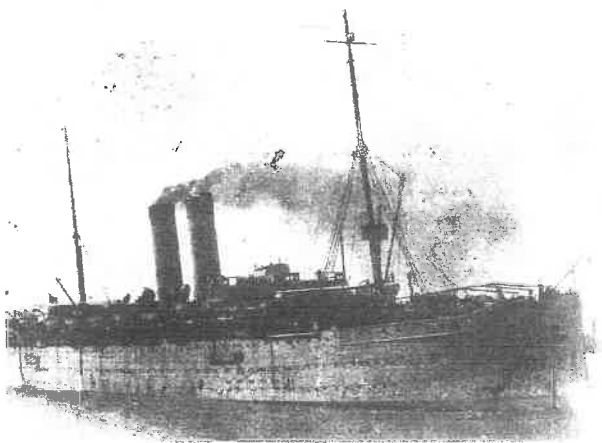


Image 3: HMT Arcadian

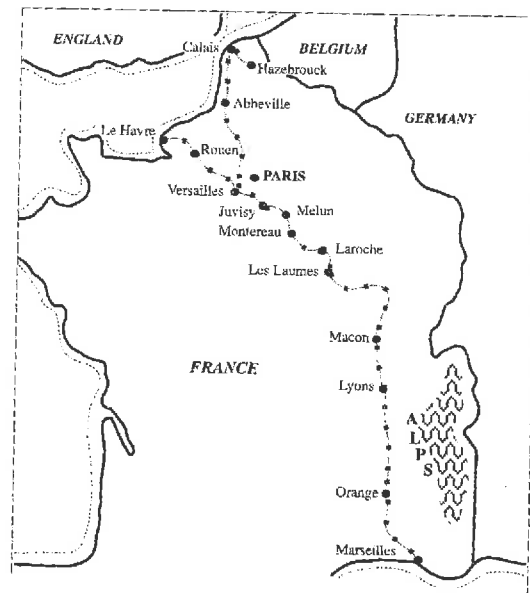


Image 4: Railway route of the 50th Battalion through France

In late February, 1917, the German Army retreated to the Hindenburg Line in order to fight from a more defensible position. They fortified many villages during their retreat, one of which was

Noreuil. On April 2, 1917, the 50th Battalion was one of the four battalions that attacked this village. On the morning of April 3rd, the Allied forces withdrew from Noreuil (*Australian War Memorial, 2012*).

The Battle of Messines took place in June 1917. It was a successful Allied attack on the Messines-Wytschaete Ridge that had been a strongly held German position since late 1914. The Australians and New Zealanders advanced after an artillery bombardment and achieved their objectives within hours. German counter attacks failed and the Allied forces held the position (*Australian War Memorial, 2012*).

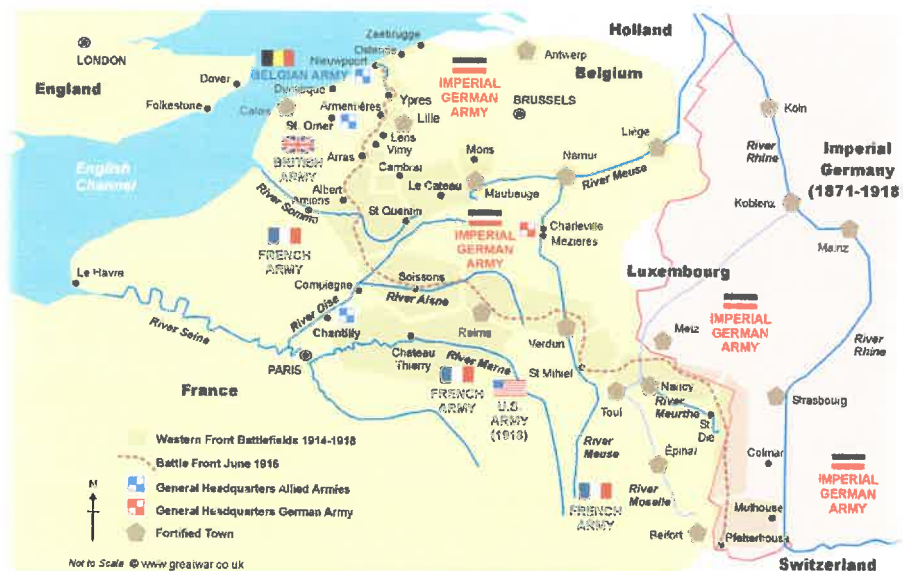


Image 5: Map of the 1914-1918 Western Front Battlefields

On September 23, 1917, the 50th Battalion relieved the 52nd Battalion on Westhoek Ridge. The Battle of Polygon Wood took place on September 26, 1917. It was part of the Third Battle of Ypres. The Allied forces achieved their objectives although the Germans launched several counter attacks which were stopped by heavy artillery fire. On September 28, the Battalion was relieved by the 45th Battalion (*Australian War Memorial, 2012*).

Much of late 1917 and early 1918 was spent marching and training. The Battalion spent time at Broodsinde Ridge, in Moislains and in Hollebeke (*Freeman, R 2008*). Records show that on March 8, 1918, Archie enjoyed the 4th Division Concert Party which was held in the Kimmel Shelters at Locre in Belgium. On March 27, 1918, the 50th Battalion took up a position in the front line to the east of Lavieville, a French village situated 5km from Dernancourt. Dernancourt is south of the River Ancre and was a scene of fighting between March 27 and April 30, 1918, during the German Spring Offensive. At the time of this battle the area was defended by the Australian 12th and 13th Brigades (*Australian War Memorial, 2012*).

On April 24, 1918, the Germans captured Villers Bretonneux. The Australian 13th (included 50th Battalion) and 15th Brigades recaptured the town in a well planned night attack. For their efforts the 50th Battalion was commended by their commanding officer (*Australian War Memorial, 2012*).

On July 16, 1918, Archie was sent to hospital in France, suffering from pleurisy. On June 20, 1918, he was transferred to England aboard the HMAT A69 Warilda. He arrived in Britain on July 22, and was sent to Bristol. On August 7, he was transferred to the 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital in Dartford, Kent (*Australian Government, 2012*).



Image 6: HMAT A69 Warilda

Archie returned to Australia on January 8, 1919. He was discharged from the Army on April 11, 1919. He served in the Australian Army for a total of 3 years and 239 days, with only 177 of those days spent in Australia. For his efforts and bravery he was awarded the 1914/15 Star, The British War Medal and the Victory Medal (*Australian Government, 2012*).



Image 7: Frederick Archie Redman's house in Murray Bridge (10 Beatty Terrace Murray Bridge)

Although the service of Archie on the Western Front will not be remembered or praised for individual bravery and achievements, his efforts reflect the typical ANZAC Spirit that all Australian people associate with the ANZAC legend.

When the words ANZAC Spirit are mentioned, qualities such as courage, mateship and larrikinism come to mind. Archie showed all these qualities during his time on the Western Front.

Every day that Archie spent fighting he displayed courage by risking his life for Australia and the British Empire. Although they are not recorded in history like their famous commanders, the ordinary Australian Infantry soldiers showed the greatest courage of all, as they were the ones who climbed out of the trenches for the Empire. Archie was one of these men. He especially displayed great courage in the months after December 15, 1917, the day when George Swann Redman, Archie's father, died. At a time when Archie would have been mourning the death of his father he kept on going, putting his feelings aside in order to protect his mates, his country and Empire.

Archie showed amazing qualities of mateship. Mateship is defined as having the qualities of loyalty, friendship and equality. While there is not a lot of information available about Archie's life we know from his records and research that he was part of a group of men that did Australia proud. After the

war he worked hard and contributed to the small community of Murray Bridge. On his return he might have taken the attitude of feeling sorry for having lost four years of his life at war. Instead he looked to the future, started a family and when World War II began, again enlisted to help in any way possible, his fellow Australians. There is no doubt that Archie had done his bit, but once again he felt that he could do more. This alone truly exemplifies the ANZAC Spirit.

At the height of the war, Archie would have been 26 years old. If he had been in Australia he would have been playing footy with his mates. Instead he was in a foreign country fighting with his mates. They would have been scared together, excited together and homesick together. As Aussies, there would have been a few larrikins amongst them and they would have had many laughs at the expense of their commanding officers. His records show that Archie went AWOL for a day and he was probably away in a local village having a few beers. Archie would not have been a saint but was a great example of an Australian at war who typified the ANZAC Spirit of courage, mateship and larrikinism.

After his return to Australia, Archie married a local girl, Edith Pretoria Burgess. They had four children who they named Iris, Ronald, Joan and John.

Records of Archie's civilian life are scarce. We know that he worked on the railways. On November 23, 1940, he broke his leg while working as a linesman in Taillem Bend when a railway motor quad derailed on the main Barmera Line.

On April 17, 1942, Archie enlisted in Taillem Bend, South Australia, in the 8th Battalion Volunteer Defence Corps and served as a Private until October 16, 1945. Volunteer Defence Corps were Australian Home Guards, made up of former soldiers who were considered too old for frontline duty (*Australian Government: Department of Veteran Affairs*).

On July 3, 1957, Archie died in Murray Bridge, South Australia, at the age of 67. He was buried on July 5, 1957. He now lies in the Murray Bridge Cemetery. His wife, Edith, died in Mitcham, South Australia on December 9, 1996, age 96. She was buried with Archie in the Murray Bridge Cemetery (*City of Murray Bridge, 2012*).

Every week, thousands of cars drive in and out of Murray Bridge and pass the town's cemetery. No one realises that resting there, is a man who led an extraordinary life. I travelled to Murray Bridge and photographed his grave. I located his humble house and imagined him walking through the gate. I have discovered the important dates in his life and a little about his extended family. I have not however, been able to find anyone who has a direct link to Archie Redman. This makes the legend and mystery of Archie even greater. There are many other silent heroes in buried cemeteries around Australia just like Archie and we owe them a great debt.

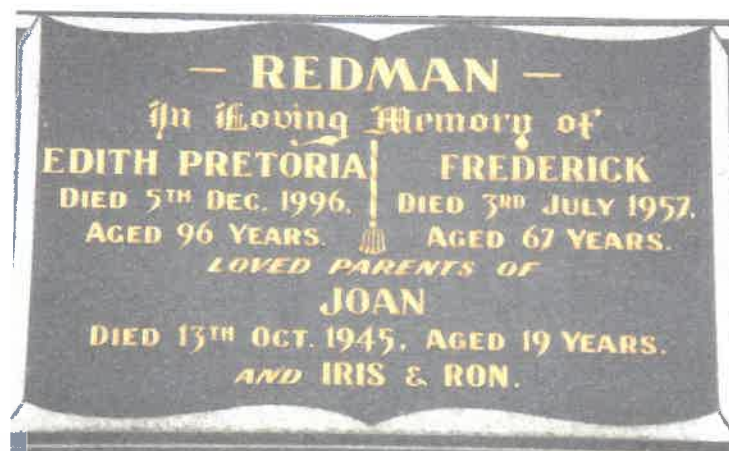


Image 8: Archie's gravesite in the Murray Bridge Cemetery where he lies with his wife and daughter.

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Griffin, N 2012, *Frederick, Edith and Joan Redman's Gravesite*, Photograph