

W D CAMPBELL



William Durrock Campbell was born in Port Adelaide on 14 March 1880. He joined the Merchant Navy as a “stoker” at the age of 14, lying about his age, stating he was 18. In 1904 at the age of 24, he married Elizabeth Holmes and they had five children, Ronald passed away aged 4 months.

William was 35 years old when he enlisted in World War I on 1st September 1915. At the time his occupation was listed as a “cook”. He transferred to 50th Battalion in August 1916 and was serving in France when he received an injury to his thigh. He returned to England on “Brighton” for recuperation. For much of the war, William worked as a driver serving between the 50th and 70th Battalions in both France and England. He left for home in May 1919 by the hospital ship “China” arriving in Adelaide on 6 June 1919 and subsequently discharged from the Army on 29th July that year.

Late in 1919, William travelled with as many belonging as he could, most in a wheelbarrow, walking with sons Allan and Alex to the Murray district via Morgan, (a distance of over 250km) with the hope of establishing himself as a fruit grower in the district. His wife Elizabeth, son William and daughter Audrey travelled the same journey later with horse and dray and family are told they spent several days walking and riding in the dray and camping out at night before also arriving in the Riverland.

The family lived in Monash for their first few years here, allocated 16¾ acres at Soldier Settler Block 656 at Monash just north of the main township. Here they cleared land and built a small home. The property had a selection of vines including sultana, gordo, doradillo and current. Both William and Elizabeth were involved in establishing a school at Monash for the new settlers children and 1920 saw the opening of the new school. Alex, Bill and Audrey all attended the school with their parents serving on the inaugural school council.

In 1924 William had also taken possession of Soldier Settler Block 252W along the Sturt Highway at Glossop and in 1927 the family relocated to this property, 33¾ acres and a four room cement home facing Slaven Road. There was an underground tank, ample shedding, 12 chains of channel containing 66 water outlets and a packing shed over the other side of MacGillivray Road. Some years later after marrying, both sons each built homes on either side of the property. William also owned a dry block across the highway from his main block which would become the site of the Glossop High School. Block 252 provide to be a prime piece of land, with William growing many mixed fruit trees, trellised vines and eventually with son Allan became the largest Smyrna fig orchard in the southern hemisphere in the 1950's. Once ripe, the figs dried on the tree and dropped to the ground then were picked up daily in trays made from half of a four gallon kerosene tin. They were then taken into the packaging shed (on the property across the road, washed in boiling salt water and spread on wire trays). The trays were placed on elevated rails and left in the sun to dry. Once dry, they were then steamed to rehydrate and packed into about 10x5cm cellophane wrapped blocks and packed into cases for market. Sadly this all came to an end when figs began to be imported from Turkey. William also at one stage experimentally grew peanuts and cotton on his property, to evaluate the possibility of growing them commercially. This never came to fruition.

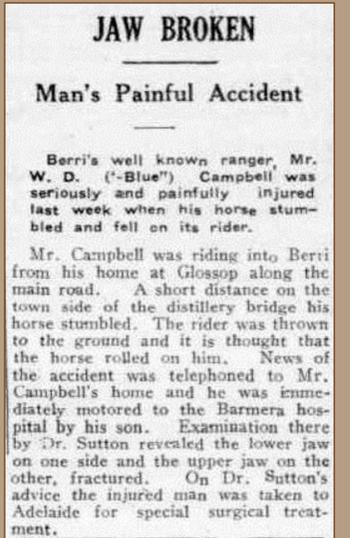
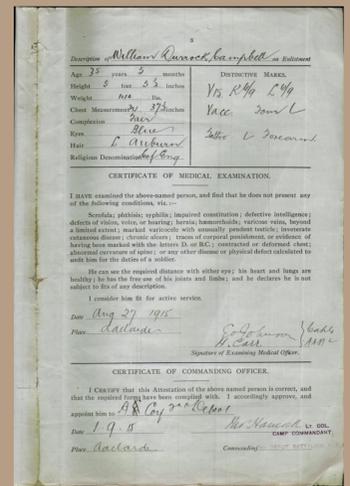
There is a pole to the right side of the photo of William's home from which their home was supplied with wind generated electric lights well before electricity was available in the district thanks to William.

William was a keen and proactive community member and was appointed Special Constable with the Berri Council, managing dog control and registrations in the district. He also held the position of Ranger with the Department of Lands, a job to report misuse of land, stealing of property, posts, fencing etc. in the Berri district. Needless to say, this didn't make him the most popular settler in the district. The Ranger was also in charge of common lands in the Berri district, responsible for grazing stock and vegetation clearing on common land, nominating which trees could be cut down for fuel to supply the boilers that supplied the steam to the pumps at the Berri Pumping Station. Regardless of his position as Special Constable, William was a well respected member of the community, holding positions with the Glossop RSL, Berri Masonic Lodge, Caretaker of Glossop Hall and involvement in both Glossop and Monash Primary Schools.

With his ginger hair, William was known in the district as “Blue” and for most of his life he was just called WD. He bred and showed poultry at the local horticultural shows and also was an avid pigeon racer.

William and Elizabeth were residing in Cheltenham in Adelaide when in 1967, whilst in Port Lincoln, William passed away. Seven years later in 1974, Elizabeth also died.

Alex, Allan and Bill lived their whole lives in Glossop and Berri, raising families who continue to live in the area.



Campbell Family
Alex, W.D. (Blue), Bill, Allan (Buck)
Audrey and Elizabeth



W.D. & Elizabeth Campbell's home, Slaven Road, Glossop c.late 1930s. Note pole to right for supply of wind powered electric lights.