ROBERT HAMILTON MM

Military Service

* Robert was born at Kittymuir farm on30/10/1892. Aged sixteen he sailed for work in New Zealand and then Australia, working as a ranch hand at Uranas, NSW.
* He joined the elite Australian Light Horse (Mounted Infantry) on the 10/9/1914
* The Regiment sailed from Sidney on HMAT Star of Victoria on 19th October and disembarked in Egypt on 8/12/14 for the defence of Suez.
* The Regiment was next deployed to Alexandria for Gallipoli without their horses. They landed at ANZAC COVE at 6am on the 12/5/15, where they mounted a defensive role for most of the campaign.
* The Regiment left Gallipoli on 21/12/15 for Egypt.
* In Egypt the Regiment joined the Anzac Mounted Division sand was deployed to protect the Nile Valley from the pro Turkish Senussi Arabs.
* On 14/5/16 they were tasked with defending the Suez Canal where the 1st Light Horse Brigade played a significant role against the turks at the Battle of Romani on 4/8/16.
* They then joined the Allied advance across the Siani in November and were involved in the Battle of Maghadaba (Dec ’16), the Battle of Rafa (Jan ’17) and the abortive 2nd Battle of Gaza in April.
* In the BATTLE OF TEL EL KHUWEILFEH, some 18 miles NE of Beersheba, on 3rd November, Robert was awarded the MILITARY MEDAL for bravery in the field. The citation reads: **On 3rd November 1917at Tel el Khuweilfeh this NCO took forward A Hotchkiss gun detachment to a forward flank position and considerably helped to keep down the enemy’s fire, and carried in a wounded man under very heavy fire. His coolness and bravery set a fine example to his men all day. Recommended by Lt Col Granville**
* 2 weeks after this award, Robert was wounded, with a gunshot wound to the neck but was not evacuated.
* The Regiment moved on Jaffa and then the West Bank of the Jordan River, the raids on Amman (24-24 Feb 1918) and Es Salt (30 April – 4 May), and the repulse of major German and Turkish attacks on 14th July. The Regiment then fought on, East of the Jordan. Turkey surrendered on 30 October and the First Light Horse sailed for Australia on 12th March 1919.
* Robert had embarked at Port Said for Southampton and disembarked for Leave on 19/12/18.
* He was discharged on 15/3/19 in London with the rank of Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant, and overseas service of 4 years 187 days.

Civilian Life After the War

* Robert returned home to Stonehouse and married Annie Naismith. They lived at Hamilton Ferme, at the Cross, and had seven children: Minnie, Robert, William, James, Ian, Douglas, Evelyn and Norman.
* He, along with his brother-in-law, James Watson, set up a bus company, The Admiral, running from Strathaven to Glasgow
* Robert then took on High Lanrigg Farm for a few years. When the council houses were built in Newfield Road he moved into no. 4.
* He bred greyhounds, and had kennels down at the Oilworks under the viaduct. He had a prolific winner in a dog named Avonhope. He also started working for Sam Park of Lesmahagow, as Racing Manager/Handicapper at Larkhall Greyhound Stadium from 1936 to 1964, when it closed down.
* At the outbreak of WW2 Robert was Section commander of the Local Defence Force No 5 Coy No 22 Platoon Section 1. Names of platoon members taken from his diary 26 August 1940 include: David Brown, alexander Bambrick, James Cryan, William C S Whitelaw, Henry McFarlane, David Finnie, George Harrison, Archibald Miller, David Miller, James Miller, Walter Mitchell, Henry Speirs, Andrew McLellan, Walter Lang, Thomas Moffat, hugh Boyle, john Whitelaw, George Spence.
* Robert retired in 1964. He kept bees, went fishing, carried out maintenance on the vehicles of his sons’ fruit & vegetable business, and did some handicapping for Shawfield Stadium.
* He died in 1970.

Taken from information received from William Mackie, his daughter Minnie’s son.