

**ANZAC Centenary Project Interview on 20 June 2014
at the H J Daley Library between Andrew Allan and
Barry Roy Reid and Judith (Judy) Anne Reid
Clarence James Graham (Judy's Grandfather)**

Transcript begins at 0:36

AA Where did Clarence come from?

BR He was born... when he came to the end of his life and he wasn't very well someone suggested to him that he write a bit of a history of himself. He wrote from when he was first born till when he joined up in World War I. But he was born on the 24th of November 1893 I think in Peterborough. His dad was in the railways. He had an older brother Ernest, a sister Reny, brother Mervin, sister Muriel, Vera, Ethel and a young sister Mavis. They had big families in those days. From Peterborough they moved to Port Pirie and then Mount Gambia where most of his younger life was. He went out rabbiting, working in the shearing shed with the snake falling out of the roof, his first job. They moved up to Gawler at some stage.

AA So he stayed for most of his life in South Australia?

BR Yes. My dad and Grandfather were in the railways as well and they used to move them around all the time. When he was in WWI his parents were living in Gawler as his girlfriend, future wife was. He didn't join up straight away, his younger brother Mervin joined up before him I think. According to records he joined up in June 1915 and he was in a reinforcement group. When he went over he was attached to the fourth field ambulance as a driver. Of the motorised one not the horse drawn there. There was a mixture of both.

AA I was wondering that.

BR Because he was working in the motor industry in Gawler, unusual for the army they actually used his skills to good effect. So he became a transport driver with the Sunbeams and Fords. He ended up being in charge of the Fourth Field ambulance motor transport company after the war had finished. Until then you used to have Doctor's in charge coz they were officers. Which is crazy but he started as a private and worked his way up to a Sergeant

AA Did he? They would be fairly basic Ambulances wouldn't they? In that time.

BR I've seen pictures and all they did is open up the back and slide them in. I don't know if they had racks or anything I'd like to know more about that. Also when he got the award for bravery I don't know if he was actually armed. I think he did it unarmed.

AA I'll get onto his medal in a second, was there anything else you can tell me about his service that stood out before getting his medal. Where he went?

BR He rose to the rank of Sergeant which wasn't bad. He embarked on the 27 October 1915. Went to Alexander in Egypt.

5:00

BR And he was transferred to the Australian divisional supply column and then he was attached to the Fourth Field ambulance. He was promoted to Lance Corporal 10 January 1917 then Corporal 13 January 1917 three days later and then on the same day he was promoted to Sergeant so he was a Corporal for only a few hours. 16 April 1918 he was transferred to 4th Field Ambulance. From some of his postcards back to his future wife he thought France was a beautiful place. The front with the trenches probably no more than two or three kilometres either side of that was normal France. He did say it was a beautiful Country. One that brought him back to his beautiful wife.

AA Can you tell me about what happened when he won the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

BR It was based on two events, first one was on the 8 August 1918 and the second was 10 August 1918 and this is where the Australians did the big push that eventually finished the war late October early November. From the listing from the Australia War Memorial: Field Ambulance 4 Reinforcement 11 Distinguished Conduct Medal for Conspicuous Gallantry and Devotion to duty in driving a motor Ambulance along roads which were being heavily shelled and searched by machine gun fire. On his return he took out and posted other ambulance cars so the evacuation of the wounded was carried out quickly and systematically. Two days later he repeated this by night. His coolness and resource on both occasions being the means of saving many lives.

AA So not just once but twice.

BR Yes I think he was crazy but I'm just thankful he got lucky otherwise I wouldn't have my wife. There was another guy with him a fella called Gill and I think they won it together but I haven't been able to find out about that.

9.30 mins

AA Where did this happen?

BR In France near Amiens on the Cr cy Road. I've tried to look it up on the maps but the roads may have changed since then. It was in the beginning of the big push. The German generals called it Germany's blackest day. It was a significant piece of military history for Australia. Only 2000 DCM's awarded during WWI. And 300 000 guys went over.

AA Something to be very proud of.

BR The medal he received is one level below the Victoria Cross. We are very proud of him.

AA You mentioned that he like France, did he talk about the War or the day he won the medal.

BR I was going out with Judy and we never even knew he had been awarded the medal until later in life I started getting interested in family history and started doing research and I found this and I said wow. He never spoke about it at all.

AA They never generally spoke about it did they?

BR The WWI guys were very insulin they kept it to themselves. He lived to 82 which wasn't a bad effort going through that.

11.00

AA Did he seem like he was affected by the War?

JR No, as kids we never noticed.

BR When I met him you would never have known. He was a lovely, lovely man.

JR He had to be in his seventies when he picked us up and took us for a drive, because his driving was shocking. He used to bring our grandkids jelly beans so we thought he was wonderful.

BR It's funny because my grandma used to do the same thing, when we went to her place we were always given jelly beans. One stage apparently I went in and said gran can I have a jelly bean and my mum told me off "You can't ask" and my grandma said "No it's alright Marion, I always give them jelly beans, it's my fault and I'm bad.

JR It must have been the thing they all do, be a jelly bean factory.

BR It's funny how little things like that stay with you forever.

AA Can I ask where the medals are now?

BR I think they are with Judy's cousin Ralph, because Judy's mum is the youngest child she was born in 1930.

JR Mum is still alive she is almost 85.

BR He would have been 37 when she was born, so it would have gone to Clarry's son, which was Uncle Bruce. I think he only had one son the rest were all girls. He got the standard three medals the 1914/15 medal and the DCM. There is a picture of him from 1935 marching in the ANZAC Day parade.

Showing photographs.

14:30

AA Do you remember him marching on ANZAC Day when you were a child?

JR No

BR Judy's father was an ex-serviceman he served in the last year of WWII, but I don't think your dad ever marched did he?

JR No I don't remember him ever marching.

AA Did you say he was going to go in WII?

15.00

JR I think we did go and see Grandpa march.

BR Yes well somebody must have taken their photo.

JR Yes that is right.

BR I think he was a Captain or involved in supply and logistics back then

AA He would have been around 52 then which was a fair age.

BR I think it was because it was non-combat and because he had served in WWI he had that sense of duty of doing the right thing. There was no danger but if he had have been made an Officer not a Captain that is getting up there.

AA I know there were some but there wouldn't have been many that would have served in both world wars would there.

BR The last year of the war was 1918 so I suppose if they were born in 1901, 1902 they would have been in their late 30's early 40's and there were a lot of

those guys around. Our last Prime Minister his dad and grandfather both served in WWI, that's rare.

JR You wouldn't think you would go back for a second lot would you?

AA Especially what he went through too. When did he die?

BR 1975 or 1976 in his early 80's. He got a mention in the Charles Beans History of WWI. You know down the bottom of the pages they have appendices and he got a mention in that. It mentions a Sargent from Gawler driving a motor ambulance.

AA That's very impressive because not many got a mention in Charles Beans writing.

BR As we said he just hid all this under a bushel, which was amazing.

AA Judy you told us earlier about his driving, can you tell us what experiences you had with his driving?

JR He would have been getting up in age probably early 70's, he would drive to mum's place and pick up the four kids and we would look forward to it every Sunday. It is a wonder mum let us go.

BR He was involved in the motor industry all his working life, because he and his brothers owned a garage on Lumley Road at Lumley called Graham Brothers. One of the films he showed us it was a tour through the Holden factory.

AA You were telling us about the first car in Mt Gambier.

BR He wrote about how he started working on bicycles and then it went to motorbikes. This is a report he did when he became Motor Transport CO in 1918.

20.00

BR We did a family history and his ancestor came a fellow called Duncan Grey he came to Australia in 1800. He was born in 1779 so he goes back a long way. In 1911 he would have been 18.

AA Have you been to the battlefields in France?

BR No. I have two Uncles, one died in 1917 and the other in 1918 and I have a picture of the cemetery and it is superbly looked after, it is brilliant however, I think I would prefer to go to Western France than Gallipoli to be honest because my family were all on the Western Front and only Judy's Great Uncle was at Gallipoli and I think we did more on the Western Front than at Gallipoli I would love to go.

- AA** It would be good to follow in his footsteps of where he went.
- BR** I have downloaded a couple of Unit diaries from his Unit of the things they did. The trouble with the Unit Diaries the only people they mention are the Officers or the NCO's, the others never get a mention. I would like to go to the War Memorial to their research section and talk to somebody who was an expert in the Field Ambulance, to find out how it operated and what went on because I guess there were probably stretcher bearers too. Those guys were popular when someone got hurt. I just wish I'd known when he was alive... he might have told me to go away.
- AA** He might have too
- JR** He got a bit grumpy as he got older, probably where I get it from.
- BR** He was a lovely man, he really was. He was very family oriented. He used to come out and see you guys every Sunday. The two pictures we've got there are of Judy when she was two and Judy's daughter when she was about the same age. That's a lot of family history that you wouldn't want to lose.
- JR** He had a lady live with her that wasn't my Grandmother.
- BR** Ivy, yeah she passed away early.
- JR** (Unclear) My Mum's Mum
- BR** That was in the thirties I think. Coz you Mum wasn't very old.
- JR** I remember when she passed away. Mum's nearly eighty-five now so she's doing alright.
- BR** And this is the lady he wrote to. The language is so different. When you he's describing they were going to do something it was called a stunt. Even if you watch that ANZAC show – we're not going to have a battle or a flight, it's when going to go into another stunt.
- AA** We use that word now for totally different reasons.
- BR** The young of every generation turn words into their own. The classic is 'that's sick' When you or I were growing up that meant we were vomiting down the toilet or weren't feeling well. These guys it's one of the best things going. Every generation invents their own identity I guess