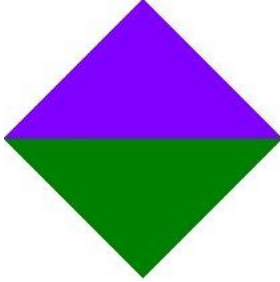




Colour Patch 18th Btn.



Private William Arthur DORWOOD 5793 — 18th Btn, 16th Reinforcements

Born: 1861, Liverpool, UK.

Next of Kin: Sister, Mrs Maggie Cooke, Prahran, Victoria

Occupation: Labourer

District Connection: Cumnock

Enlistment Date: 29 Feb 1916, Cumnock.

Enlistment Age: ?43 yrs.

Embarkation: 7 Oct 1916 - Sydney *HMAT Ceramic A40*

Served: England, France, Belgium

Fate: RTA 10 Mar 1918

Honour Boards: Cumnock Memorial Gates

Biography:

This soldier enlisted in Cumnock under the name of William Arthur Dorwood, stating he was 43 years old, born near Liverpool, UK, and that his next of kin was his sister Mrs Maggie Cooke, of 5 Mount Street, Prahran, Victoria. I have been unable to find any records of anyone of this name working in Cumnock or being in Australia, prior to 1916.

On looking up ancestry records of Mrs Margaret Ann Cooke, nee Crompton, I found that she was born in Wavertree, Lancashire, England (a suburb of Liverpool) and had a brother named Thomas Crompton, born at Wavertree in 1861. Their parents were John and Ellen Crompton. John Crompton was a Publican. Margaret Crompton married George Elliott Cooke at West Derby, Lancashire on 13 Nov 1888. The couple immigrated to Australia in 1889.

William Dorwood was medically examined by Dr Ivie Aird at Cumnock on 29 Feb 1916. His stated age was 43 yrs and 2 mths but he would have been 50 years old. He was 5 feet 9½ inches tall, had blue eyes, fair complexion and had fair hair, going grey. He was of the Church of England religion.

Pte William Dorwood embarked at Sydney on *HMAT A40 Ceramic* on 7 Oct 1916 and disembarked at Plymouth on 21 Nov 1916. He proceeded overseas from Folkestone on 13 Dec 1916 per *Princess Henrietta* and joined the 18th Btn on 27 Jan 1917.

In 1917 the 18th Btn was involved in the follow-up of German forces during their retreat to the Hindenburg Line, and was involved in some particularly heavy fighting around Warlencourt in late February. The battalion took part in three major battles before the year was out: the second Bullecourt (3-4 May) in France; and Menin Road (20-22 September) and Poelcappelle (9-10 October) in Belgium.

Pte Dorwood was charged with the offences of Drunkenness and being Absent Without Leave (AWL) from 9 pm 17 Nov 1917 until apprehended by the Military Police at 3 pm the following day. On 20 November he was fined 6 days pay. The 18th Btn moved from the Wallon Cappel area to Merris, Northern France on the 18 November. On 24 Nov 1917 he was admitted to hospital sick (no other description given) but rejoined his unit the following day.

The 18th Btn were ordered to the Ploegsteert area, Belgium, on 15 Dec 1917, to relieve on the front line. Pte William Dorwood was wounded in action on 15th Dec and admitted to 7th Field Ambulance with shrapnel wounds to the face. He was transferred to the 2nd Australian General Hospital, Boulogne on 17 December and then to England to the General Military Hospital, Colchester on 21 December. The wound was near the mouth area and was septic on admission to Colchester Hospital.

On 9 Jan 1918, Pte Dorwood was transferred to the 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Dartmouth. He was medically examined on 11 January and deemed to be medically unfit for service due to Myalgia (rheumatoid arthritis) and recommended for discharge and a pension.

Pte William Dorwood left England per *Durham Castle* on 10 Mar 1918 for his return to Australia. He had to change ships at Capetown on the *Orontes* on 19 April and disembarked at Sydney on 12 May 1918. A National Archives of Australia record states that while at Orange, NSW, he was granted a Pension of £3 per fortnight on 8 June. He was discharged from the AIF on 11 Jun 1918 and received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

William Dorwood's life post WW1 was one of constantly moving around NSW and Victoria and before the Magistrate Courts in numerous towns for being drunk and disorderly and offensive behaviour. In 1921, newspaper reports from Molong and Dubbo were reported. In 1922, reports are from Wagga Wagga and Geelong. In 1923, he was charged in Ballarat and hospitalised at Geelong and remanded for observation because he had "been making a nuisance of himself about the city for some time." Because William was unable to pay the fines imposed on him for the many offences, he usually spent time in goals.

In 1924 & 1925 there are charges from Hamilton and Ararat, Victoria, but by 1926 William was back in Dubbo at the Magistrates Court. A news report in the *Dubbo Dispatch & Wellington Independent* - 30 Sep 1927, p8, had a humorous account of William's behaviour:

"TOO VENTURESOME. Arthur Dorwood seems to have acquired a liking for the interior of the Dubbo court room. Probably he feels that there is a home atmosphere about it. He was there about last Friday by compulsion and got his freedom on Saturday, but even this was not the first time by any means. He sauntered in on Monday morning while court was on, took a seat, comfortably ensconced himself, and began to make audible, but incoherent remarks. He was told to keep quiet, and he obeyed—for a little time. Then he broke out again, and when a policeman looked sternly towards him, and the P.M. frowned from the Bench, he gathered up his hat and made a hasty exit. But his footsteps, hurried as they were, were leaden compared with the movements of Constable Hillier, and soon Dorwood was in safe, though familiar surroundings, and he had to accept the usual penalty when he came before the court again this morning."

From 1928 - 1931, William was before the courts in Wagga Wagga, Goulburn, Queanbeyan and Geelong. In 1933 he was in Murrumburrah Court and in 1934 at Young and Wallendbeen.

In 1938 William applied for a Certificate of Discharge to the Officer of Base Records from Bethungra, NSW. The reply from his AIF war records stated: "In view of the fact that you have already been supplied with three statements of Service in addition to the original parchment certificate issued on discharge, it has been decided to discontinue the issue of further copies in your case." However, the letter went onto say that any prospective employer would be issued with a copy on application to their office.

William Dorwood spent his last years as a patient of Lidcombe State Hospital and Home, Lidcombe. He died of "Senility" on 13 Jan 1950.

The Sydney Morning Herald - 14 Jan 1950, reported: "The funeral of the late WILLIAM ARTHUR DORWOOD (Pte No 5193, 18th Batt., 1st A.I.F.) will leave Wood Coffill's Chapel, George Street, Sydney, on Monday morning at 9.30, for the Church of England Cemetery, Botany."



If William Dorwood was an alias for Thomas Crompton, he would have been 89 years old. His sister Margaret Cooke, died on 14 Feb 1955 in Melbourne, aged 87 years.

Dianne Strahan & Val McKenzie, June 2022,
www.cumnocknswmemorials.com

