

Extract from "*The Fighting 10th*", Adelaide, Webb & Son, 1936 by C.B.L. Lock; kindly supplied courtesy of the 10th Bn AIF Association Committee, April 2015.

TODD, David Leslie (POW)

Born 29 June 1891 in Adelaide, South Australia.

Son of the late John Todd, and Mother Margaret (nee Hanan), who founded the engineering and blacksmithing firm of J Todd & Son.

He was educated at the Grote Street School, and from 1902 – 1908 resided in Scotland, where he completed his education.

For several years he was employed in a clerical capacity by the firm of Todd and Samuel, and three months before the outbreak of the Great War took up a position in the import department of D & W Murray Ltd.

In 1909 he commenced his military career by joining the South Australian Scottish Corps, and whilst in this regiment became intimate with Lieutenant W S Frayne, who also secured a commission in the original 10th Battalion AIF.

On 1 July 1912, when the universal training scheme was brought into operation he had attained the rank of Corporal, and then voluntarily enlisted with the 76th (Hindmarsh) Infantry, in which he received his first commission as a 2nd Lieutenant on 28 October 1912. He held this commission at the time of joining the AIF.

On 5 August 1914 when news of the declaration of war was officially received in Adelaide, he mobilized his company of the 76th (Hindmarsh) Infantry, and proceeded with it to Fort Largs, where he remained about a fortnight.

On 19 August 1914, he was appointed a 2nd Lieutenant in the 10th Battalion at Morphettville and posted to original D Company.

He embarked with the original Battalion on *HMAT A11 Ascanius* on 20 October 1914, and proceeded to Egypt.

At Mena, Egypt, in January 1915, when his company merged with original G Company and became the new D Company, he was appointed a Platoon Commander in same and promoted to rank of Lieutenant on 1 February 1915.

He re-embarked with the Battalion on the *Ionian* for the Dardanelles, and landed with his company from the destroyer *Scourge*. On 25 May 1915 he was promoted to the rank of temporary Captain, and on 4 August 1915 he was only a few yards from his old associate of the Scottish Corps, Temporary Captain W S Frayne, when he was mortally wounded by a Turkish sniper.

On 3 October 1915, he evacuated the Peninsula with typhoid fever, and proceeded to England, where he was admitted to the 3rd London General Hospital at Wandsworth.

Early in 1916 he entered the Details Camp at Weymouth, when Colonel Weir unsuccessfully attempted to have him placed on the same draft for Egypt as that in which he was proceeding.

In March 1916, he succeeded in getting away with the first draft after Colonel Weir's departure.

He proceeded to Egypt and entered a camp near Giza, and then proceeded to Tel-El-Kebir, and had an interview with Lieutenant-Colonel F W Hurcombe, with the result that he was immediately transferred to the 50th Battalion, then stationed on the Suez Canal Defences at Serapeum.

On 5 June 1916, he embarked on the *Arcadian* and accompanied this battalion as part of the 13th Infantry Brigade, 4th Australian Division to France.

He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 12 June 1916, and remained with the 50th Battalion until 2 April 1917, when at the fighting at Noreuil, with several others of his regiment, he was taken a **Prisoner of War** by the Germans.

His unit suffered severely in this action, losing more than half its strength.

He **remained a Prisoner of War until after the Armistice.**

In December 1918, returned to England.

He then remained in London on non-military employment until November 1919.

On 12 April 1919, at All Saints' Church, Langham Place, London, he married Violet Lilian, daughter of Mrs V L Lawes, of Weymouth, there being two children of the union – John Trevor David (born in 1920) and Rosemary Lesley Trevor (born in May 1923).

He returned to Australia on the *Aeneas*, his services with the AIF terminating on 20 January 1920.

He entered the Public Service of South Australia on 9 February 1920, when he was appointed a Clerk in the Soldier Settlement Department.

On 20 April 1920, he was transferred to the Accountant's branch, Department of Lands and Survey, but subsequently resigned from the Public Service on 30 June 1921.

In July 1921, he entered into partnership with his brother in the firm of J Todd & Son, but in 1930 became sole proprietor of the firm, which then carried on business at 192 Pirie Street, Adelaide.

On 1 October 1918 he was appointed a Lieutenant in the 2nd/43rd Infantry, and on 1 August 1920 was promoted to rank of Captain.

He was transferred to the 10th Battalion on 31 March 1921, and placed on Reserve of Officers on 1 March 1923.

On 28 October 1925, he was transferred to the Active List of the 43rd Battalion, and on 27 September 1926 was again listed on Reserve of Officers.

Captain H W H Seager, under date of 3 May 1915, writing to a friend from Anzac said inter alia:

"Poor little Todd had a leg blown off."

Captain Seager whilst on the *Ionian* during the time of the landing, had been misinformed, but the receipt of his letter in Adelaide caused no little concern to Lieutenant Todd's parents, who immediately dispatched cables in order to obtain verification or otherwise, and no one was better pleased than their son to be able to refute the misrepresentation of facts which had unfortunately occurred.

He attained the rank of Captain on 9 May 1916, and was affectionately known to men of the 10th as "Toddy".

In 1935 he was residing at No.84 Burnside Road, Kensington Gardens.

Prior to the war he was interested in swimming, and was a member of the Glenelg Amateur Swimming Club, and was one of the first South Australians to receive the bronze medallion of the Royal Life Saving Society.