

Two Cobbers' families united 63 years later

Roy (Dick) McDonald was researching the McDonald family tree. During this research, he came across a WW1 photo of his father Clifford (Cliff) Francis McDonald (Service No 6294) who enlisted in the AIF on 21 June 1916, at the age of 19 years. The photo was of the WW1 Mitcham Training Camp in Adelaide, taken in 1916. In the photo was a group of trainee soldiers sitting outside a tent, gathering around and peeling potatoes.



Cliff had written on the back the names of the seven soldiers in the photo. One of those names was Alfred James Pennifold (Service No 3549) who had enlisted in the AIF on 27 April 1916. Alfred is on the end right and Cliff is fourth from the right in the photo. Cliff and Alfred would have known each other for only a short time during their training at the Mitcham Camp and may have never met again.

Cliff left Adelaide for overseas active service on 28 August 1916 and sailed for France via England. He joined the AIF 27th Battalion in France, on the Western Front. On 10 February 1917 Alfred embarked from Adelaide for overseas active service. Alfred was assigned to the 5th Pioneer Battalion and saw action in France and Belgium.

Both Cliff and Alfred survived the war and returned to South Australia to live and continued to go their separate ways.

However, unbeknown to them some 63 years later, after their first meeting at the Mitcham Training Camp, Cliff's granddaughter Kathleen McDonald and Alfred's grandson Kym Pennifold were married on 10 February 1979. This was, exactly 62 years to the day of Alfred embarking from Adelaide.

WOW!! Who would have thought!!

It is very likely Cliff and/or Alfred would have thought that 'peeling potatoes together at the Mitcham Camp' would be the last time the McDonald/Pennifold families crossed paths. Yet, this was not the case and they both shared the same great grandchildren. Alfred Pennifold and Cliff McDonald had passed on, before their grandchildren met. Unbelievable!