

2nd Lieut. Ern Harry Johncock



Played with Adelaide University



Football Club: 1919 - 1922

(IV 1920, 1921 & 1922)

Other Sports: Rowing

Sports Awards: Blue Football (1920)

Student: Arts 1915 & 1919 - 1924, 1926 & 1929

B.A. (1923), M.A. (1924), Dip. Ed. (1929)

High School Headmaster & Inspector

Background

Coinciding with the Centenary of Anzacs our incentive behind the series of biographical publications is the Adelaide University Football and Cricket Club's desire to honour our players who served in the Great War (1914 - 1918). These brave men put on hold their academic, professional and sporting careers for King and Country in the name of peace and freedom. The AUFC/AUCC WW1 Memorial Committee is endeavouring to identify every one of our players who served and prepare life stories on all. This is to ensure their sacrifices and further contributions to society will be recognised by future generations.

On Anzac Day 2015, the Centenary of the Gallipoli landing, a memorial plaque was unveiled on the Adelaide University Oval Pavilion and this was followed by the erection of a picket fence between the pavilion and the scoreboard with each picket bearing a plaque with the name of an AUFC/AUCC player who served.

The following documentation relates to the life of Ern Harry Johncock. It is compilation of information and photographs collected from a variety of historical sources.

AUFC/AUCC WW1 MEMORIAL COMMITTEE



Ern Harry JOHNCOCK

Regimental number 1518

Place of birth Balhannah South Australia

Religion Church of England

Occupation Student

Address Balhannah, South Australia

Marital status Single Age at embarkation 20

Next of kin Mother, Mrs Martha Johncock, Balhannah, South Australia

Enlistment date 14 July 1915 Rank on enlistment Private

Unit name 32nd Battalion, 1st Reinforcement

AWM Embarkation Roll number 23/49/2

Embarkation details Unit embarked from Adelaide, South Australia, on board HMAT A2 Geelong on 18

November 1915

Regimental number from Nominal Roll Commissioned
Rank from Nominal Roll 2nd Lieutenant
Unit from Nominal Roll 32nd Battalion

Fate Returned to Australia 28 February 1919

Date of death 26 November 1943

32nd Australian Infantry Battalion

Collection

type

Unit

Title 32nd Australian Infantry Battalion

Category Unit

The 32nd Battalion was raised as part of the 8th Brigade at Mitcham, on the outskirts of Adelaide, on 9 August 1915. Only two companies were raised from South Australian enlistees - another two were formed in Western Australia and joined the battalion at the end of September. The battalion sailed from Adelaide on 18 November 1915.

The 8th Brigade joined the newly raised 5th Australian Division in Egypt, and proceeded to France, destined for the Western Front, in June 1916. The 32nd Battalion fought its first major battle at Fromelles on 19 July 1916, having only entered the front-line trenches 3 days previously. The attack was a disastrous introduction to battle for the 32nd -' it suffered 718 casualties, almost 75 per cent of the battalion's total strength, but closer to 90 per cent of its actual fighting strength. Although it still spent periods in the front line, the 32nd played no major offensive role for the rest of the year.

In early 1917, the German Army withdrew to the Hindenburg Line allowing the British front to be advanced and the 32nd Battalion participated in the follow-up operations. The battalion subsequently missed the heavy fighting to breach the Hindenburg Line during the second battle of Bullecourt as the 8th Brigade was deployed to protect the division's flank. The only large battle in 1917 in which the 32nd Battalion played a major role was Polygon Wood, fought in the Ypres sector in Belgium on 26 September.

Unlike some AIF battalions, the 32nd had a relatively quiet time during the German Spring Offensive of 1918 as the 5th Division was largely kept in reserve. The Allies launched their own offensive with the battle of Amiens on 8 August, in which the 32nd Battalion participated. It was subsequently involved in the operations that continued to press the retreating Germans through August and into September. The 32nd fought its last major action of the war between 29 September and 1 October when the 5th and 3rd Australian Divisions and two American divisions attacked the Hindenburg Line across the top of the 6-kilometre-long St Quentin Canal tunnel; the canal was a major obstacle in the German defensive scheme.

The 32nd was resting and retraining out of the line when the war ended on 11 November 1918. On 8 March 1919, after the gradual repatriation of men to Australia, the remnants of the 32nd Battalion were merged with the 30th Battalion.



Service Records

https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=7369669

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What is your age?	4. 30
What is your trade or calling t	5. Student.
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Who is your next of kin ! (Address to be stated)	South Australia
	7
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Religious De	momination - 6h of Eng	
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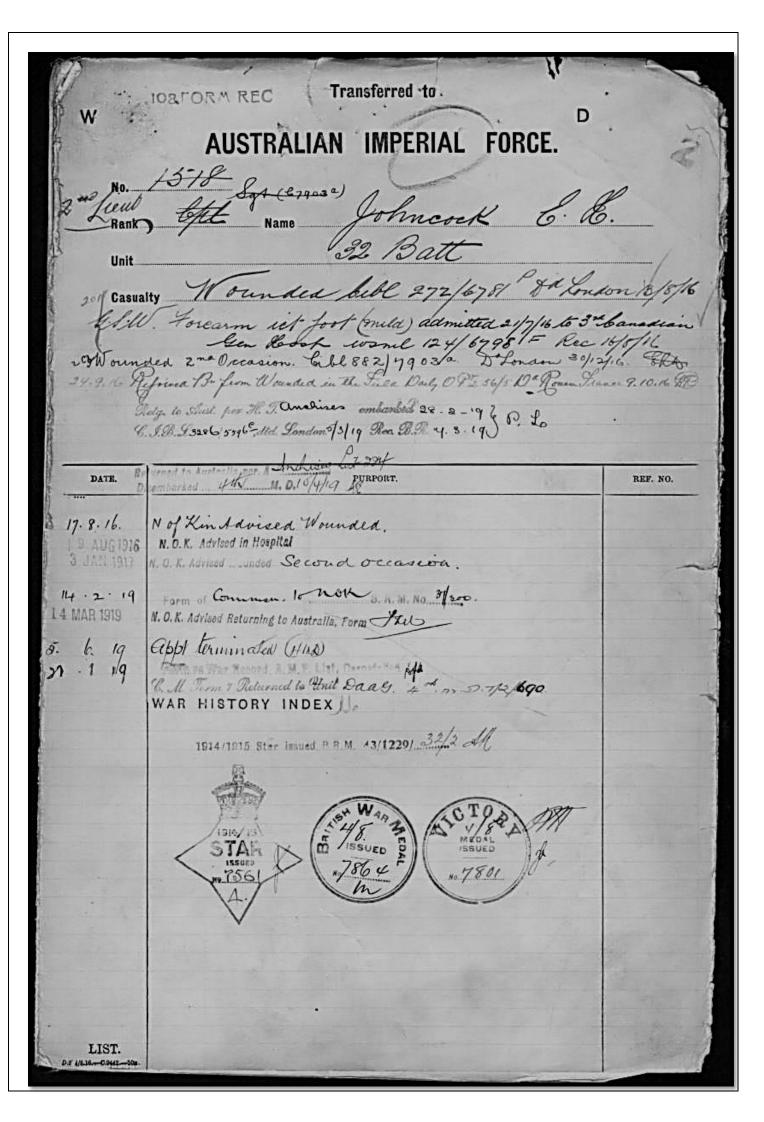
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Letter from Ern's Sister to A.I.F. Enquiring about his health while completing officer training in Cambridge, England.

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19th October 1917.

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Dear Madam.

In acknowledging the receipt of your letter dated 12th instant, I have to state, no recent report to any effect has been received regarding No.1518 Sergeant E. H. Johncock, 32nd Battalion.

27401

Cases of minor indisposition unlikely to develop seriously are not reported to this Office by cable; they are usually embodied in Hospital Lists which come to hand by mail.

The Department is unable to furnish the name of the other Australian soldier whom you state entered Corpus Christie College in June.

Any cable reports which may come to hand will be promptly transmitted to next-of-kin.

Yours faithfully,

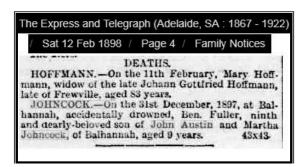
Officer 1/c Base Records.

Miss E. McSharpe, G. P. O., ADELAIDE, S.A.

Biography

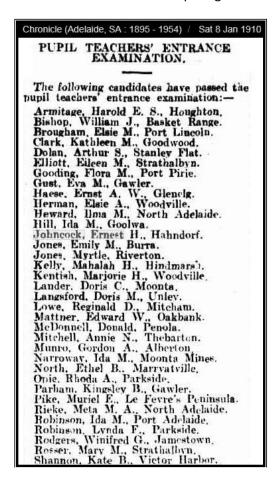
Family and Early Years

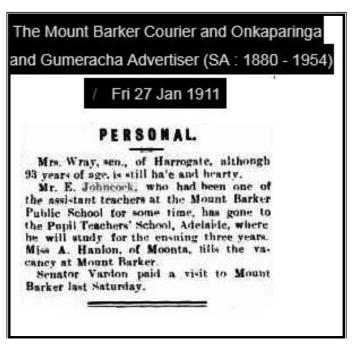
Ern Harry (Ern) Johncock was the youngest of thirteen children of John Austin Johncock (1844-1930) and Martha (1851-1942) née Fuller. He was born at Balhannah on the 29th of December 1894. The Johncock family were early pioneers of the district and were involved in all manners of community activities, church (St Thomas' Anglican Church), sporting, social and cultural gatherings. His father in addition to farm work and bringing up his large family was a member of the Balhannah Rifles, a local militia group formed in 1860. It was a hard country life for the family and at the time of Ern's birth three of their children had already not survived childhood. Tragedy soon struck again when his older brother Ben (9) was tragically drowned in the Onkaparinga River after slipping from the slippery bank.



Early Education - Pupil Teacher - School Sport

It was important for John and Martha that all their children were well educated. Ern's early schooling was at Balhannah State School and Mount Barker High School. At an early age he showed an interest in becoming a teacher following on in the footsteps of his older brother and sister, Charles Fuller Johncock and Edith Alice Johncock. In 1910, he was appointed by the Education Department as a Senior Monitor at the Mount Barker Public School. In 1911, having already passed the entrance examination the previous year, he enrolled at Adelaide High School (formally the Pupil Teachers' School). In his youth he had played sport for the local football teams, playing juniors with Mt Barker and seniors for Onkaparinga.





Adelaide High School

Ern attended Adelaide High School from 1911 until 1913 in the capacity as a junior teacher. While there he completed his Senior Public and Higher Year examinations qualifying for entrance to Adelaide University. In addition, he passed subjects at the Adelaide School of Art and by March 1913 he had been promoted to a 3rd grade junior teacher position at the school.

While at Adelaide High School he played football for the 1st XV111 for 3 years and 1st X1 cricket in 1912 and 1913. In an unusual situation in 1911 both he and his nephew (John Arthur Johncock - son of older brother Charles) were in the same football team. In his final year he was captain of the team and also a Prefect. He was awarded the Rossiter Prize for outstanding sporting achievement in his final year.

1911 First Eighteen Football Team

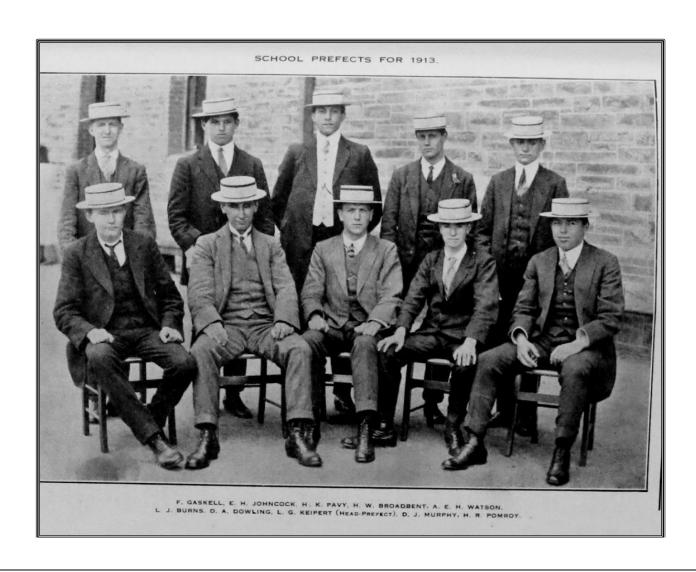


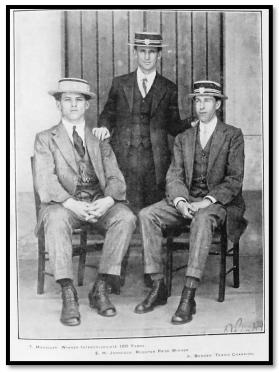
1913 First Eighteen Football Team



1912 Cricket Team







(L - R) Ern Johncock (Rossiter Prize Winner), Thomas Maddigan (Winner Intercollegiate 100Yds), Albert Bawden 1913 (School Tennis Champion)

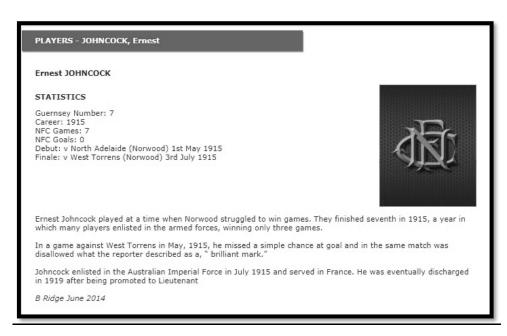
After completion of his Higher Year at Adelaide High School he received a promotion to 4th Grade junior teaching position and received a posting in 1914 to Murray Bridge High School (Continuation School) which had only been established the previous year. While there he also played a season of football for the local Murray Bridge team. It was his intention to enroll at Adelaide University in 1915 and at the end of the year he was farewelled at a school social gathering.

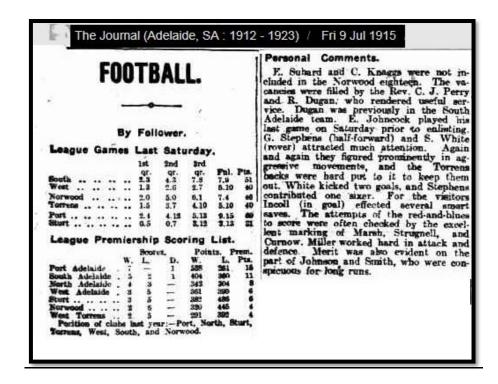
Adelaide University Enrollment

Ern enrolled in the Arts Faculty at Adelaide University in 1915, however, with the outbreak of hostilities and Australia's commitment increasing, like many fellow students, he answered the call to serve. He had already had military training having served for 4 years in school cadets and local Infantry (74th, 76th and 79th Military Units).

Norwood Football Club

After returning to the city from Murray Bridge in 1915, he was recruited by the Norwood Football Club. A number of their players had already enlisted and departed for overseas duty. After playing 7 league matches for the league side his time with Norwood ended, playing his final game on July 3rd, 1915. Like many others who served, it is unknown what the course of his league football career may have taken.



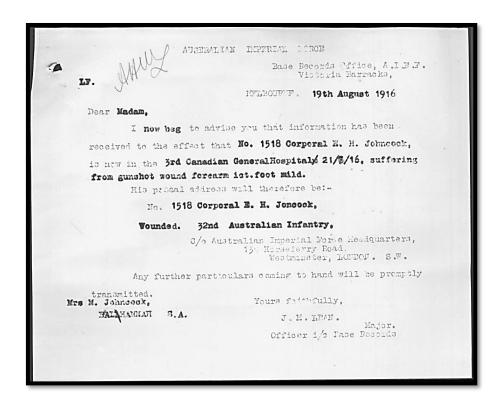


War Service

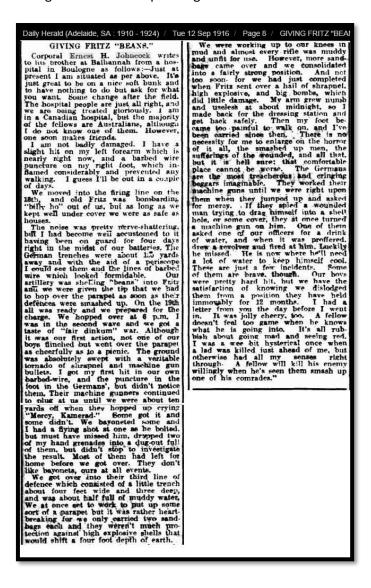
His call to serve King and Country in WW1 interrupted his football and his university studies when he enlisted in July 1915. embarked for overseas service on board HMAT A2 *Geelong* on 18 November 1915. Before departing he attended an assembly at Adelaide High School.

Enlisting on 14th July 1915, he is described and standing 5ft 9in (175cm) and 176lbs (80kg). With the rank of Private he was assigned to the newly formed A.I.F. 32nd Battalion, 1st Reinforcements and attended the Cheltenham Racecourse Camp for initial training. In November his Unit embarked for overseas service from Port Adelaide and arrived at Ismailia, Egypt on the Suez Canal in February. By July 1916 he had been promoted to the rank of Corporal and after arriving in France at the southern port of Marseilles, was soon seeing action at the Front in the North of France.

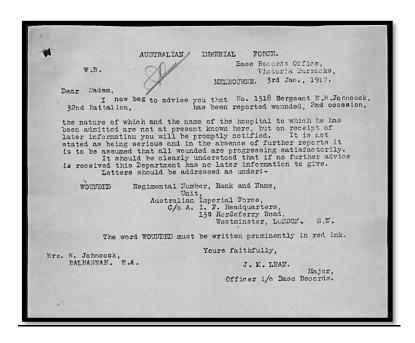
On the 20th July Ern received a gunshot wound to the forearm and was evacuated to the 3rd Canadian General Hospital near Boulogne.



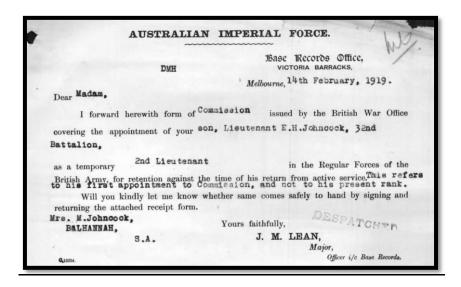
To allow time for full recovery he was furloughed to England for several weeks. He rejoined his Unit in September 1916 at Etaples, France and after time in the field was seconded to the Western Front sniping school "On Command" and a promotion to the rank of Sergeant. While recuperating Ern wrote home:

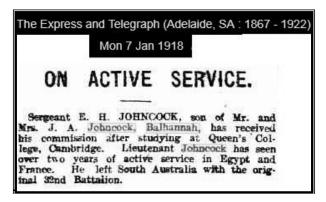


By November Ern had rejoined the 32nd Battalion in the field and in December 1916 was wounded for a second time. This time he received a wound to the head and was evacuated to the 22nd General Hospital Carriers, France. He was then repatriated to the Brook General War Hospital near London.



By April 1917, after four months recovering, Ern rejoined the 32nd Battalion and was back in France. A month later in May 1917 he was transferred back to England to attend Officer Training School at Pembroke College, Cambridge. The high number of officer casualties at the front lines had required a continual influx of replacements and Cambridge University was the location one of the foremost British Officer Training Schools. By November 1917 he had completed his training and qualified for a Commission.





Returning to France at the northern port of Havre later that month, Ern was back in the field again and soon assigned to a small arms training camp (Lewis Gun). Soon after he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and in June 1918 was seconded to the 8th Brigade as a Bombing Officer on the front lines. In September he returned to the UK on leave and on returning to France in October rejoined the 32nd Battalion.

After the Armistice he remained in France until January 1919 and then on to England to await his return to Australia. He boarded the troop carrier HMAT (A68) Anchises at the port of Devonport, England on the 8th of February for the long two-month journey home. He arrived back at Port Adelaide and disembarked on the 10th April 1919 and was discharged on the 5th June 1919.



Adelaide University Enrollment and Football (Adelaide University Football Club)

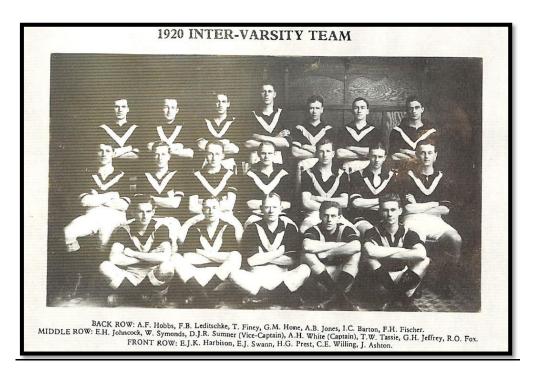
Almost immediately on his return in 1919, Ern enrolled at the University Teachers' Training College and also enrolled for subjects in the Arts Faculty at the University of Adelaide. He gained a Division 1 Pass in Education and Division 2 Pass in 1st year Science. He also gained a Teachers' Primary Certificate in the Art Examination conducted by the Education Department.

By July Ern was back playing football, this time with the Adelaide University team and the following month travelled with the team to Melbourne for the resumption of the Intervarsity contests after a 5-year lapse. In September the University team lost to Semaphore Central in the Grand Final.

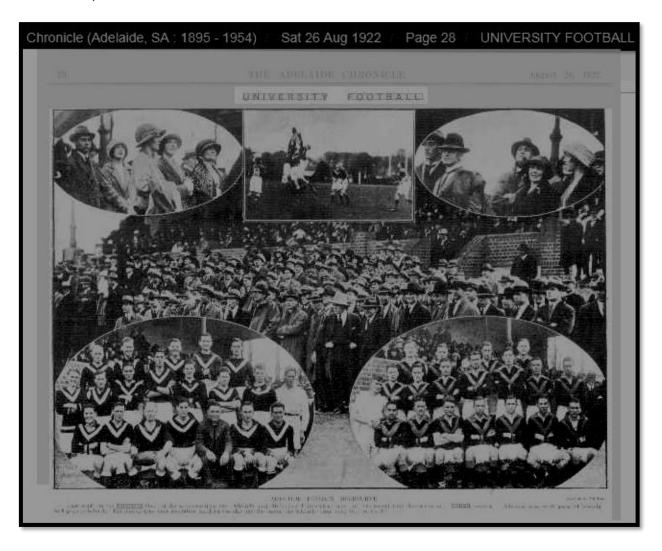


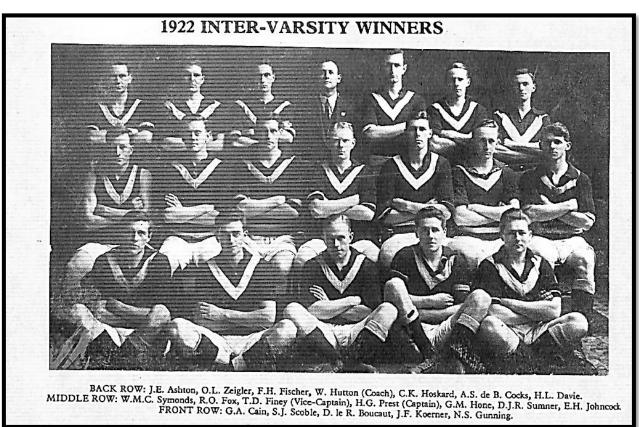
1919 AUFC IV Team - Ern Johncock is first on the left - standing

From 1920 until 1923 Ern completed subjects for his Bachelor of Arts degree in a part time capacity while also teaching at Adelaide High School. In 1922 he was also assisting with the school Cadet Corps. Continued playing football for the Blacks, he was consistently one of their best players and in 1920 was awarded an Adelaide University Sports Blue.



In August 1922 he was a member of the victorious Adelaide University team which defeated Melbourne at the Adelaide University Oval.





His final match for Adelaide University was in September 1922 when the Blacks defeated rivals Semaphore Central in the A1 Amateur League Grand Final.

The Premiership match against Semaphore Central was very close with 'Varsity winning by eleven points, 9.9 to 8.4. Best players in this game were W.M.C. Symonds, A.S. de B. Cocks, H.G. Prest, D.J.R. Sumner, C.K. Haskard, T.D. Finey and E.H. Johncock, with goals being scored by D.J.R. Sumner, N.S. Gunning, W.M.C. Symonds, C. Koerner and Hone. It was noted in the Adelaide University Magazine that this match was poorly patronised by the students in general.

H.G. Prest had an outstanding season and won the Naylor Medal which was awarded to the fairest and best player in Amateur League. Other players who performed consistently well were H.L. Davie, D.J.R. Sumner, W.M.C. Symonds, C.E. Willing, G.M. Hone, T.D. Finey and A.S. de B. Cocks, with the most prolific goal scorer being D.J.R. Sumner.

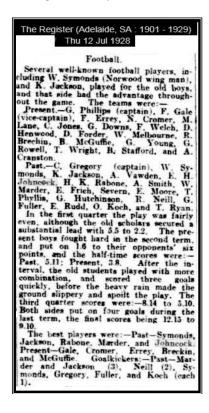
Marriage and Family Loss

Ern married Lorna Maud Bertram (1896 - 1973) in May 1920 at St. Columbas Church, Hawthorn, SA. Shortly after this joyous occasion, the family however, was saddened when his sister Edith passed away at Yorktown, SA. As an older sister (and a teacher), Ern was the very special youngest baby in the family. Shortly after Ern enlisted and had embarked for overseas service in WW1, she had given birth to a boy in December 1915 and named him Ernest John (1915 - 2000). He was no doubt named after her youngest brother.

Rising in the Teaching Profession

In 1923 at 28 years of age, it appears Ern did not play football at all. Married life, teaching and university studies to complete his arts degree part time, were dominating his life. In December that year, Ernest Harry Johncock was presented with his B.A. Degree at the University of Adelaide Commemoration Ceremony. Also, the same month he received notice that he was to be appointed as a Senior Master at Unley High School for 1924.

Ern remained at Unley High School as a Senior Master and Sports Master until the end of 1926. While there, he had continued his studies and in 1924 had completed the requirements and received his Master of Arts Degree. It was back to his old school in 1927 after being appointed to Adelaide High School as a Senior Master. He completed his Diploma in Education (Dip. Ed.) at the University of Adelaide in 1929. In addition to his teaching and studies, he was very much involved in the extracurricular activities which Adelaide High School paid great importance to. Their motto "Non scholae sed vitae" – "Not only for school, but for life" - is indicative of their aim to produce well rounded scholars and future leaders. Ern during his 5 years there, at various times was Sports Master, coached the football team and was rowing coach (he had rowed for Adelaide University before the War). He also regularly donned the old football boots and played for the past scholars against the present students in the annual football match.



In 1926 his mother and father celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary

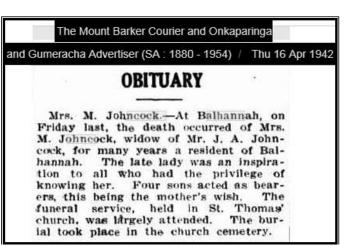
"A DIAMOND WEDDING. Mr. and Mrs. John A. Johncock, who recently celebrated the 60th anniversary of their wedding, have resided at Balhannah during their married life. Mr. Johncock arrived from England in the *Norman* on March 5, 1855. He was born at Sandgate, England, and on October 3, 1866 was married to Miss Martha Fuller at the residence of Mrs. Knight, Langhorne's Creek by the Rev. Henry Howitt. Mr. and Mrs. Johncock both enjoy fair health. They have eight sons and daughters, namely Messrs. Charles F. Johncock of Clare, William G. Johncock of Narridy, John A. Johncock of Netherton, James P. Johncock of Balhannah, George J. Johncock of Balhannah, Allan S. Johncock of Barmera, Mrs. A. Hennington of Dalebank, and Mr. E.H. Johncock of Clarence Park. There are 25 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. Two sons and two grandsons saw active service at the war."



The Advertiser Adelaide, Tuesday 16 November 1926"

Ern's father John Austin Johncock passed away in 1930, however his mother lived a further 12 years passing away in 1942. In 1933 she and some other local Balhannah residents had documented the history of the area in interviews with the Adelaide Chronicle Newspaper in September 1933.





In 1932, Ern received a promotion to Headmaster at Murray Bridge High School where he had previously been in 1914. Remarkably by now there were four members of the family who were headmasters in Education Department Schools. They were oldest brother Charles and his nephews John and Percy in addition to himself. Ern's stay at Murray Bridge was short lived when in 1933 a vacancy occurred in the Education Department for an Inspector of Schools (Northern District) and he was appointed. He took over from Mr. Dinning who then replaced him at Murray Bridge High School. In 1949, Dinning would become Headmaster at Adelaide High School. The Director of Education at the time of Johncock's promotion was Mr W J Adey who had been headmaster at Adelaide High School when Ern had been a pupil teacher before the War and then a teacher there after the War.

Laura Standard and Crystal Brook Courier (SA: 1917 - 1948) / Fri 27 Jan 1933

Back To School.

Teachers of all primary schools of the State Education Department will resume duties after the Christmas vacation on Fuesday next, when all pupils will be expected to be present. Several changes in district staff appointments have been made in Northern schools. Inspector Dinning, who was appointed inspector of the Northern District in July, has resigned from the inspectorial staff and will be succeeded by Mr. Johncock, formerly head teacher of Murray Bridge High Mr. Dinning, prior to School. being promoted to inspectorial staff, was head teacher of the Kadına High School, has accepted the position of head teacher of Murray Bridge High School. Mr. Reg Cole, B.A., an ex-Laura-ite, son of Mr. W J. C. Cole, is head teacher of Kadina High School.

Laura Standard and Crystal Brook Courier

Fri 2 Jun 1939

BOOLEROO CENTRE NEWS

School of Method. At a school of method held at Booleroo Centre recently Inspec tor E. Johncock M.A. Department of Education arranged a most interesting and instructive programme. Oustanding items the programme were Aims of Education by the District Inspector, Observation of Classwork at Arwakurra School in charge of Mr. J. Myatt. Observation of Classwork at Yandish School in charge of Mr. D. Stirling, Blackboard Sketching by Mr. Stirling, Drawing by District Inspector, Geoggraphy by Mr. Hausler, Observa-tion of Classwork at Booleroo entre School (Mr. Marks and Miss Coles), Physical Training (Mr. Tucker) Manual Work (Mr. Turnet), Use of Cimena in Schools (Mr. R. Edwards, Composition (District Inspector). Physical Training (Mr. Carman), Poet (District Inspector), Johncock was the recipient of a crystal salad bowl presented by the teachers in recognition of the advantages placed at the disposal of the teachers due to the school of method organised by the District Inspector.

News (Adelaide, SA: 1923 - 1954) / Wed 30 Jan 1935 / Page 1 / School Inspectors Meet in Annual Conference Today

School Inspectors Meet in Annual Conference Today



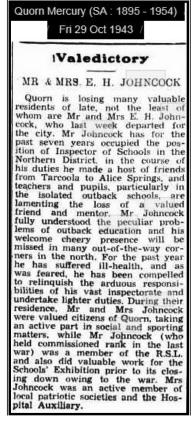
HE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF SCHOOL INSPECTORS to give consideration to the curriculum and syllabus for the ensuing year was held at the Education Department today. Back Row (left to right)—Miss A. L. Miethke, Messrs, W. V. Leach, E. H. Johncock, L. G. W. Caust, P. J. Rofe, I. Y. Daly, G. S. McDonald, J. H. Williams, M. J. Gerlach, Dr. A. J. Schulz, Messrs, H. E. Flint, L. H. Jefferies, F. J. Gartrell. Sitting (left to right)—Hisses E. M. Simpson, E. Campbell, Dr. C. Davey, Messrs, E. C. Higginbottom, W. T. Martin, E. Allen, A. G. Edquist, W. J. Adey (Director of Education), A. W. Pitt, Dr. C. Fenner, and Mr. H. C. Hosking.

1935 Ern Johncock (Standing 3rd from left)

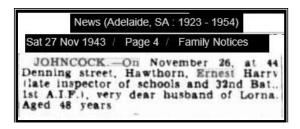


1938 Ern Johncock (Standing 5th from left)

Ern was a very well respected and hardworking Inspector of Schools constantly travelling to the mid and upper northern areas of the State from their home in Clarence Park. In 1939 he and Lorna are recorded as then living at Quorn, north of Port Augusta where they remained until shortly before Ern's untimely ill-health when they moved back to Adelaide.



Ern and his wife had been a well-respected member of the local community. Sadly, his death at only 48 years of age occurred on the 26th November 1943. He was survived by Lorna who died in 1973. They had no children.



Passing of Mr. E. H. Johncock

FAR NORTHERN INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS FOR 11 YEARS.

Mr. Ernest Harry Johnsook, who died in the city on Friday last at the age of 48, will be mourned by a wide circle of friends throughout the State Always cheerful, courteous and help ful, his was a personality whose charm of manner brought brightness and encouragement to teacher, friend and scholar. Illness compelled his departure from the North a short time ago, and hopes were cherished that an improvement in health would ultimately enable him to return to Quorn and complete his term in the Far Northern Inspectorate. The late Mr. Johnsook joined the Education Department as a junior teacher at the age of 17. He enlisted fer service in the Great War, where he served with distinction, and on his return be entered the Teachers' College, and then the Adelaide University, where he graduated M.A. He was a senior master at the Adelaide High School and headmaster at the Murray Bridge High School. He was first appointed inspector in the Far North in 1988, and made Quorn his headquarters. In the limited time at his disposal Mr. Johncock took an interest in local affairs He had a deep affection for the back country, i s people and its scenery, and had an abiding interest in its welfare He is survived by a widow, to whom the sympathy of all is extended in her bereave-

Quorn Mercury (SA: 1895 - 1954) / Fri 3 Dec 1943



Profile Compiled by: - Rob O'Shannassy AUFC/AUCC WW1 Memorial Committee

Acknowledgments:

- The AIF Project University of NSW
- Adelaide University Football Club Photo Collection
- Adelaide High School Magazine
- With additional information from the National Library of Australia Trove (Digital Newspapers)
- National Archives of Australia WW1 Service Records
- Postcard photograph by Marchant Adelaide of Lt. Ern Johncock of the 32nd Battalion AIF.
 Photograph by Marchant Adelaide courtesy of Virtual War Memorial Australia