



# **Pte Eric Douglas Meldrum**



**Played with Adelaide University**



**Football Club: 1914 (B)**

**Other Sports: Athletics**

**Arts Student: 1912 - 1914**

## **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 Eric Douglas Melville who was one of the earliest students from Adelaide University to enlist. It is compilation of information and photographs collected from a variety of historical sources.*

## The AIF Project

<https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/showPerson?pid=206162>



### Eric Douglas MELDRUM

Regimental number	41
Place of birth	Huonville Tasmania
Religion	Presbyterian
Occupation	Civil servant
Address	Goodwood Road, Millswood, South Australia
Marital status	Single
Age at embarkation	23
Next of kin	Father, A S Meldrum, Millswood, South Australia
Enlistment date	19 August 1914
Rank on enlistment	Private
Unit name	<a href="#">10th Battalion, A Company</a>
AWM Embarkation Roll number	23/27/1
Embarkation details	Unit embarked from Adelaide, South Australia, on board Transport A11 <i>Ascanius</i> on 20 October 1914
Rank from Nominal Roll	Private
Unit from Nominal Roll	10th Battalion
Fate	Returned to Australia 21 December 1917
Date of death	8 April 1922
Age at death	29
Place of burial	AIF Cemetery (Path 4 E, Grave 11), West Terrace, Adelaide, South Australia

### RSL Virtual Memorial

<https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/people/55797>

### MELDRUM, Eric Douglas

Service number 41  
Private  
10th Infantry Battalion

AIF WW1  
Born 23 Aug 1891<sup>ii</sup>

41

**Service Number:**

**Enlisted:** 4 August 1914, Morphettville, South Australia

**Last Rank:** Private

**Last Unit:** [10th Infantry Battalion](#)

**Born:** Hobart, Tasmania, 23 August 1891

**Home Town:** [Millswood](#), City of Unley, South Australia

**Schooling:** St. Andrew's College, Naracoorte, South Australia and University of Adelaide

**Occupation:** Civil Servant

**Died:** Suicide, Adelaide, South Australia, 8 April 1922, aged 30 years

**Cemetery:** [AIF Cemetery, West Terrace Cemetery, Adelaide](#)  
Path 4 E, Grave 11 Section: LO, Road: 4N, Site No: 11

**Memorials:**

## RSL Virtual Memorial Biography

Eric Meldrum was a 23 year old Civil servant and a well regarded sprinter in the athletics community, living in Millswood south of the Adelaide CBD when war broke out. He was among the men who enlisted almost as soon as Morphettville Racecourse camp opened, as evidenced by his two digit service number. Next in the queue was another man to feature in this story; Francis Herbert Stokes.

Enlisted into A Company of the 10th Battalion, he trained and embarked with them on 20 October 1914, bound for the Middle East. He became one of the A Company Scouts, who were to perform the role of skirmishers advancing forward of the main part of the Battalion.

Eric Meldrum survived the Gallipoli landing and fought in the trenches and gullies at ANZAC for nearly three months, before having his forearm fractured by a piece of shrapnel that would leave him unable to fight.

He was invalided off the Peninsula and sent back to Egypt in July 1915 to recuperate. His injuries prevented him from returning to the front and he was repatriated home to Australia.

He is one of nine men photographed together at what appears to be Mena Camp in Egypt. These men and their stories typify the fate of the men who were landed at Gallipoli on ANZAC Day 1915. The Scouts were charged with striking out to seize Gun or Third Ridge following the landing. That task proved harder than could have been imagined.

Four of the mates were killed at or soon after the Landing. Guy Fisher was wounded and evacuated. Three of the survivors of ANZAC were commissioned. Of the three, one, Wilfred Jose was to die in action two years later. Arthur Blackburn went on to win a Victoria Cross at Pozieres. John Gordon transferred to the Australian Flying Corps and became an Ace (i.e. 5 or more victories) air gunner and later as a pilot as well.

Eric Meldrum, arguably the most enigmatic and least well known member of the section, survived the war but not the peace, taking his own life in 1922. He is buried in the AIF Cemetery at West Terrace Adelaide.

Their story is described in an article held in the SA State Library entitled "*The Flowers of the Forest*", the men of this group are as follows:

[Arthur BLACKBURN \(/explore/people/930\)](#)

[Guy FISHER \(/explore/people/373586\)](#)

[John GORDON \(/explore/people/198723\)](#)

[Wilfred JOSE \(/explore/people/173634\)](#)

[Eric MELDRUM \(/explore/people/55797\)](#)

[Philip ROBIN \(/explore/people/9135\)](#)

[Francis STOKES \(/explore/people/60171\)](#)

[Malcolm TEASEDALE-SMITH \(/explore/people/190689\)](#)

[Thomas WHYTE \(/explore/people/170704\)](#)




*Informal group portrait of nine members of the 10th Battalion, all of whom enlisted in 1914, and embarked from Adelaide, SA, on 20 October 1914 aboard HMAT Ascanius and served at Gallipoli. All of these men, except Private (Pte) Guy Fisher and Pte Eric Meldrum were students at St Peters Anglican College in Adelaide, and five of them died during the First World War. Identified, left to right, back row: Sergeant (later Lieutenant) John Rutherford Gordon, invalided to Australia with slight enteric fever, after which he joined the Australian Flying Corps and served as a rear gunner/observer with the 62 Squadron. He was awarded a Military Cross for his courage and returned to Australia (RTA) 6 May 1919; 40 Pte Francis Herbert 'Bertie' Stokes, killed in action on 27 April 1915 at Gallipoli after saving many lives on the day of the landing by rescuing those who fell into the water on the beach and carrying them to the relative safety of the cliff face; 33 Pte Guy Fisher, discharged on 2 January 1916; 41 Pte Eric Douglas Meldrum, returned to Australia on 21 December 1917; 638 Lance Corporal (LCpl) Philip de Quetterville Robin, killed in action at Gallipoli, on 28 April 1915. Front row: 47 Pte Thomas Anderson Whyte, died of wounds at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915; 31 Pte (later Lieutenant) Arthur Seaforth Blackburn, awarded the Victoria Cross on 9 September 1916 for his actions on the night of 23 July 1916; 38 Pte (later Lieutenant) Wilfred Oswald Jose, transferred to the 50th Battalion, and was killed in action at Noreuil, France on 3 April 1917; 286 Pte Malcolm St Aiden Teesdale Smith, killed in action on 27 April 1915 at Gallipoli, while rescuing fellow soldiers who were wounded.*

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P04633.001>

# Service Record

<http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=8012195>

**A** 47130

AUSTRALIAN  MILITARY FORCES.

**AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.**

**Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.**

41. Name Meldrum, Eric Douglas  
 21 Unit 10th Batt. A.I.F. ✓  
 Joined on 19th August 1914

**Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.**

What is your Name? ... 1. Meldrum, Eric Douglas

or near what Parish or Town were you born? ... 2. In the Parish of Hatfield in or  
 near the Town of H  
 in the County of Tasmania

Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown.) ... 3. Yes

What is your age? ... 4. 22 1/2 years

What is your trade or calling? ... 5. Civil Servant

Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? ... 6. No

Are you married? ... 7. No

Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) ... 8. Fuller Meldrum, Alex. Lindsay  
Melkwood, S. Aust.  
225 Goodwood Road, Melkwood, Sth Aust.

Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? ... 9. No 3801/3/3

Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Incurable and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with Disgrace from the Navy? ... 10. No

Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge ... 11. Scottish Infantry  
Imprisoned (Detained)

Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? ... 12. Yes

Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? ... 13. No

For married men and widowers with children—  
 Do you understand that no Separation Allowance will be issued to you either before or after embarkation during your term of service? ... 14. Yes

3. Eric Douglas Meldrum do solemnly declare that the above answers made to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to allot not less than two-fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during my service support of my wife and children.\*

Date 19 Aug 14 Signature of person enlisted. E. D. Meldrum

14.—G.10220. \*This clause should be struck out in the case of unmarried men or widowers without children under 18 years of age.

## Additional Biography

### Early Life

Eric Douglas Meldrum was born in Tasmania on the 23 August 1892, the son of Alec Stevenson and Edna Meldrum. Eric's father was a minister with the Parkin Congregational Mission and the family moved to South Australia in about 1895<sup>iii</sup> living at Bookabie<sup>iv</sup>, Bordertown<sup>v</sup>, Narracoorte.<sup>vi</sup>

### Education

Eric attended Narracoorte Primary School<sup>vii</sup> and enjoyed athletics from an early age, coming second in the Under 14's boy's race at the Presbyterian Picnic in 1904.<sup>viii</sup> Eric also had a good academic record passing his University of Adelaide "junior certificate" exams in 1905, with a credit in English history and passes in Latin, arithmetic, algebra, geometry and physiology; he was attending St Andrew's College, Narracoorte at the time<sup>ix</sup>. In 1906 Eric passed his "senior certificate".<sup>x</sup> Eric then attended the Pupil Teacher's School (later Adelaide High School).<sup>xi</sup>

### Career

"Private Eric D. Meldrum was a pupil teacher at the school in 1907. He was transferred to the Civil Service, and has been in the office of the Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages."<sup>xii</sup>

*(Note: The Pupil Teachers' School was in Grote St., Adelaide and in 1908 became the States first public High School)*

### Adelaide University

Eric studied for a Bachelor of Arts at Adelaide University from 1912-1914. In the 1914 season he played football for the Adelaide University B Team in the newly formed "Students Association". In August of 1914 he was a member of the team which defeated Adelaide High School in the Premiership Match.



As Adelaide High School had finished minor premiers at the end of the regular season they were entitled to play a rematch against the University team in the "Challenge Final". The game was held in September and Adelaide University B Team were victorious again to be undisputed champions of 1914. Meldrum was unable to play in this match as he had enlisted in the A.I.F. in August, shortly after the earlier match.

Eric also competed in the Universities annual Amateur Athletics meeting in 1912-14<sup>xiii</sup>, coming second to LB Pender for the "cup" (he was second in the 100 yards, 200 yards hurdles, broad jump and 440 yards flat) in 1913.<sup>xivxv</sup> Eric represented the University Club at the first carnival held by the South Australian Amateur Athletics Association in 1913.<sup>xvi</sup>



## World War I

Eric's WWI career is described above. Two letters from Eric were published during his war service. The first<sup>xvii</sup>, published in August 1915, mentioned many of his Adelaide University friends from the War Memorial photo see above.



The second<sup>xviii</sup> was written by Eric (published in October 1915) from Malta where he was hospitalised after he suffered a serious wound. On one hand Eric commented on the "war of butchery" but on a lighter note Eric was "anxious to get news of the results of the 'Varsity sports'".





## Post War

Eric was repatriated back to Australia as a result of his wounds. He arrived on 21 December 1917. On 1 October 1918 Eric re-enlisted but was not called up for duty and was discharged 18 November 1918 at the end of hostilities.

In 1922 Eric was working for a Mr S.H. Harvey of Yacka. Eric had formed some views on a modern Utopia; these were published in The Advertiser on 11 March 1922.<sup>xix</sup>

**A MODERN UTOPIA.**  
From ERIC D. MELDRUM:—Let us subdivide the land within 150 miles' radius of Adelaide, already served by rail, and millions of people should be enabled to obtain a living in this area. Let us all be engaged in the actual work of production and manufacture of the necessary commodities of life. These will be our only means of exchange. All duties, Governmental and so on, downwards, will be honorary. This will give expert agriculturists, architects, and engineers a chance to come forward to help to make the land beautiful. Those living in idleness may be inspired to work. Others engaged in financial matters may volunteer to help the producers. The scheme should appeal to all high-souled returned soldiers and citizens as the best way to erect a memorial to our dead comrades. The leaders, as there will be no money, and therefore no ambition for money, will be appointed by their manner of living and work, viz., the standard will be morality—no drinking, smoking, or immorality. The hours of work will necessarily be long, for a start, but in time should be reduced to six or seven. Of course, by the healthy life we shall lead we shall have more energy, and no limit will be made to the time we shall devote to making the place beautiful. We shall take care of the sick and aged, and help them towards a quick recovery. The next generation should be practically free from disease. The establishment of this modern Utopia would have a beneficial and far-reaching effect, in that it would give work to all unemployed here and in England. We, by producing and manufacturing more than we require, could pay off the national debt by goods to England, who needs them so urgently to distribute to her starving millions, and to send to the Russians. The plea that land is only available on the West Coast, Pinbaroo, the Murray, or the MacDonnell Ranges, is ridiculous. If the land I have mentioned, viz., within 150 miles' radius of Adelaide cannot be subdivided, Australia must be a land of poor potentiality indeed. Each man entering this State should swear to defend his country in time of war, and voting and administrative powers will be confined to these. There will be one religion, every act of our daily life being an act of worship. Religious instruction would be therefore carried out in the schools. Both capitalist and unionist have been shown lately to be animated by love of Mammon, and not of the people. This scheme would test their sincerity of purpose. The standard will be morality. This scheme here differs from the idea of socialisation, where there is to be equal distribution, irrespective of merit. This is a constructive policy, offering a real and practical solution of the League of Nations problem, vastly differing from the present one pursued, which is mainly concerned in a negative way with what should not be done.

## Death

Sadly less than a month after the above article was published Eric took his own life on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1922.<sup>xx</sup> He was 29 years of age. Eric is buried at the AIF Cemetery, West Terrace Cemetery, Adelaide, Path 4 E, Grave 11 Section: LO, Road: 4N, Site No: 11.

*The Narracoorte Herald* newspaper made the following commentary<sup>xxi</sup> -

"The young men of Australia who went to the war made a great sacrifice even though some of them had the good fortune to return. They incurred many scars, both mentally and physically, which handicapped them greatly".

**Profile Compiled by: Beth Filmer AUFC/AUCC WW1 Memorial Committee**

## References:

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<sup>i</sup> [https://rslvwm.s3.amazonaws.com/l/images/78170/photo/zoom\\_19926347242\\_02b1ac6e5c\\_o.jpg](https://rslvwm.s3.amazonaws.com/l/images/78170/photo/zoom_19926347242_02b1ac6e5c_o.jpg)

<sup>ii</sup> Actually 23 August 1892 per <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=8012195>

<sup>iii</sup> "SHIPPING NEWS." *The Express and Telegraph* (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922) 25 January 1895: 2 (SECOND EDITION).

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article208834070>

<sup>iv</sup> "THE COUNTRY." *South Australian Register* (Adelaide, SA : 1839 - 1900) 2 August 1898: 7. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article54391636>

<sup>v</sup> "MOUNT MONTER." *The Narracoorte Herald* (SA : 1875 - 1954) 7 October 1898: 2. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article146810599>

<sup>vi</sup> "TUESDAY, JULY 2, 1901." *The Narracoorte Herald* (SA : 1875 - 1954) 2 July 1901: 2. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article147105662>

<sup>vii</sup> "NARRACOORTE SCHOOL CONCERT." *The Narracoorte Herald* (SA : 1875 - 1954) 24 December 1901: 3. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article147107316>

<sup>viii</sup> "PICNIC DAY." *The Narracoorte Herald* (SA : 1875 - 1954) 11 November 1904: 3. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article147303246>

<sup>ix</sup> "THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE." *The Advertiser* (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931) 13 December 1905: 10. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article4989609>

<sup>x</sup> "UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE" *Evening Journal* (Adelaide, SA : 1869 - 1912) 26 December 1906: 2. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article201891949>

<sup>xi</sup> "B. PASS LIST." *The Register* (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929) 24 December 1907: 7. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article56479832>

<sup>xii</sup> World War 1 from the AHS Magazines.pdf

<sup>xiii</sup> "UNIVERSITY ATHLETIC CLUB" *Daily Herald* (Adelaide, SA : 1910 - 1924) 20 June 1912: 7. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article105239929>

<sup>xiv</sup> "UNIVERSITY SPORTS" *Daily Herald* (Adelaide, SA : 1910 - 1924) 26 June 1913: 7. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article124953703>

<sup>xv</sup> "UNIVERSITY SPORTS." *The Advertiser* (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931) 6 June 1914: 14. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article6419575>

<sup>xvi</sup> "AMATEUR ATHLETICS." *The Journal* (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1923) 13 October 1913: 2. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article204647882>

<sup>xvii</sup> THE WAR. (1915, August 6). *The Advertiser* (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), p. 11. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5476765>

<sup>xviii</sup> "Warrior and Varsity Sports." *The Register* (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929) 20 October 1915: 8. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article59613713>

<sup>xix</sup> "A MODERN UTOPIA." *The Advertiser* (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931) 11 March 1922: 18. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article49085880>

<sup>xx</sup> "FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 1922." *The Narracoorte Herald* (SA : 1875 - 1954) 14 April 1922: 2. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article146838693>