

Privates Frantz Albert and Lionel Theodore Claude Docking

"When we see the boys returning
Our hearts do ache with pain,
To think that you boys are not there,
And will never come again."

This touching insert in *The Advertiser* on May 5th 1919 was the opening to a death notice by James and Marie Docking, parents of Privates Frantz Albert and Lionel Theodore Claude Docking. When telling a story, most choose one person and tell the story of their spirit, however in this instance it is only appropriate to tell their story as one. These are the brothers who lived by each other's side and died by each other's side. This is their story.



Figure 1.

Claude and Frantz were born at Nantawarra. Their first home was on the York Peninsula, living with their 12 other siblings. In 1908 the family left for Pinnaroo, 243km east of Adelaide near the border with Victoria. James and Marie Docking had previously inspected the land in 1906 and Mrs Docking was very impressed and thought it quite beautiful. They waited until 1908 when the railway line reached Pinnaroo to finally make the move to the small community of Rosy Pine. The family set off for Pinnaroo by car, traveling to Adelaide in a peculiar fashion. The younger children were perched on top of the family sofa strapped on top of the load, an innovative way to travel!

On Frantz's 26th birthday, May 1st 1916, he and 23-year-old Claude entered the Kadina recruiting office to enlist in the Great War. The boys' service numbers reflected their relationship as the numbers were consecutive, 6236 and 6237, respectively. Their numbers could not physically be any closer, much like their mateship. Claude and Frantz, the simple farmers from Rosy Pine, were about to become Privates in a war like no other.

Figure 2.

Figure 3.

Before leaving, a farewell social was held on May 25th to wish the brothers luck. The party at Rosy Pine hall was filled with speeches, dancing and music, and was well attended. Supper was shared at the end of the day and for many this was the last time that they would see the two boys.

Frantz and Claude left on the Monday train to Adelaide after the social. Both brown-haired, brown-eyed boys were appointed to C Company of the 2nd depot Battalion of the Australian Imperial Forces (AIF). They departed Outer Harbour on board HM Troopship *Anchises* with two officers and 148 other ranks as the 20th reinforcements to the 10th Battalion. The 10th Battalion, recruited in South Australia, was one of the first infantry units for Australia after the official outbreak of World War I. The 10th battalion along with the 9th, 11th and 12th Battalions made up the 3rd Brigade.

The brothers said their final farewell to Australia on August 28th 1916, feeling pride and belonging to their country. Privates Frantz and Claude arrived in Plymouth, England, on October 11th and finished the last leg of their travels in France on December 17th. There, the Docking brothers marched to meet the 10th Battalion, ready to serve their country. After fighting the Turks at Gallipoli the 10th Battalion had arrived in France for the Somme offensive against the Germans. On the Western Front the Fighting 10th had already supported the 9th Battalion in the attack on Pozieres.

The Docking brothers arrived to the Battalion's first and worst winter in France. The rain and constant traffic churned the earth into mud. In one week 150 men were evacuated for feet trouble alone. "Men with feet aching beyond endurance had to give in, dragging themselves back to the aid post for treatment and evacuation. Many having removed their boots to rub their feet found that they could not get them on again and had to walk out without them." (Compendium: 10th Battalion)

During most of February 1917 Frantz was parted from his main source of company and support—his brother—when he was hospitalised due to influenza. By the time he regained his health and re-joined his Battalion on March 6th, the Germans had established their 'Hindenburg Line'.

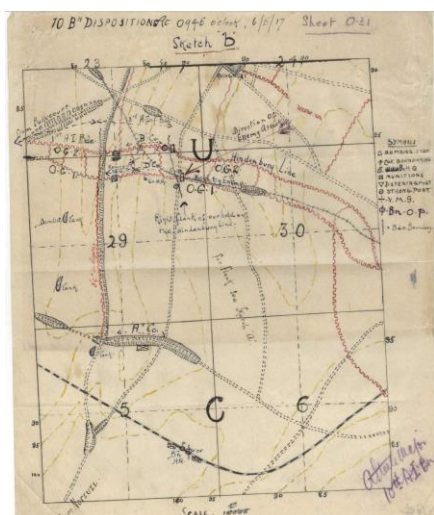


Figure 4.

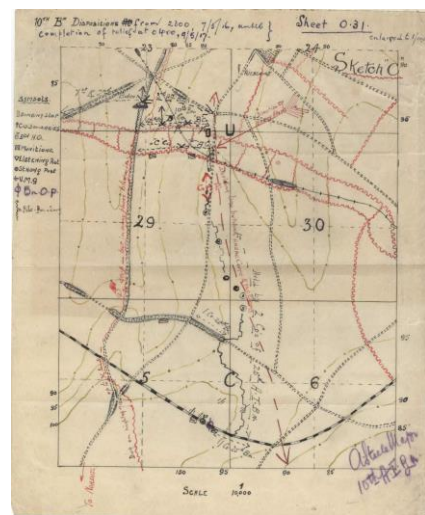


Figure 5.

On May 5th, the 10th Battalion moved into the trenches at Bullecourt. The enemy shelling was heavy and accurate. At 04:30 May 6th, C Company was in the front line assisting the 11th and 12th Battalions in repelling the enemy counter-attack. The Docking brothers, along with fellow Pinnaroo boy Private Eric Edwards and others of the 10th Battalion sheltered as best they could. They squeezed their bodies against the wall of the little dugouts that had been cut in the bank, trying to make sure they were protected from the shells and bullets. Claude and Frantz crouched together trying to catch what little breath they could. But as the fatal shell fell from the sky there was nothing else to be done but lie with your brother, your best mate, your small scrap of family.

"The two boys, who were always together, were lying side by side, and were killed instantaneously just where they lay," Private Edwards wrote in a letter to his parents back home in Pinnaroo, which was published in the *Pinnaroo and Border Times* July 6th 1917. "I was able to see that they were buried, and went, last night and marked the grave, so that as soon as we advance it will be properly marked with a cross".

In less than five hours, two officers and nine other soldiers from C Company were killed. On May 8th and 9th the 10th Battalion was relieved by the 53rd. But it was too late for Claude and Frantz. While the remainder of their Company proceeded to camp and rested, the two Docking boys lay silent in their muddy graves.

Meanwhile back home in Pinnaroo locals read in the newspaper of Jenkins' furniture sale and Sheenan's tailoring service. Little did they know that two of their own had perished. Frantz Albert Docking and Lionel Theodore Claude Docking are buried at Villers-Bretonneux Memorial in France.

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THE REGISTER OF
VILLERS-BRETONNEUX MEMORIAL, M.R. 26.
PART II. C-F.

DOCKING, Pte. Frantz Albert, 6236. 10th Bn. 5th May, 1917. Age 27. Son of James and Marie Clara Docking, of Pinnaroo, South Australia. 2643

DOCKING, Pte. Lionel Theodore Claude, 6237 A. 10th Bn. 5th May, 1917. Age 24. Son of James and Marie Clara Docking, of Pinnaroo, South Australia. 2644

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Figure 6.

ANZAC Spirit

There are four words that embody the Anzac Spirit: courage, endurance, mateship and sacrifice. These words are important to the Anzac Spirit because without courage there would be no spirit, no bravery, no bounding into the unknown. Without endurance the soldiers of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps would not have persevered to support England in her hour of need. Without mateship there would be no one watching your back, no one at your side, nothing and no one to fight for, and without sacrifice there is no chance of victory, no triumph of good over evil.

The Docking brothers of Pinnaroo had the *courage* to join the war, they *endured* the separation from their loved ones and in the end they *sacrificed* their lives for their country, but the spirit that really defined them was their mateship.

Today, mateship means to stand up for your friends, to help them through hard times, to speak out against bullies. For the Docking brothers in 1916 it meant to risk your life for each other, to protect your fellow soldiers and to provide all the support you could muster. The dictionary also describes a mate as: *one of a pair; a duplicate, match or companion*. Each of these words is true for the Docking brothers, Frantz and Claude. They complimented each other in every way. In Pinnaroo, they were at each other's side in the fields as farmers and in France they were at each other's side in the fields as fighters. They were the two boys who lived as one.

Mateship defines Frantz and Claude's story. They signed up together, joined the same Battalion and sailed across the world together, they fought together and died together. In the fear and uncertainty that is war the one thing they knew they could rely on was each other.

The brothers' strong sense of mateship transferred to those around them including fellow Pinnaroo private Eric Edwards who marked their grave in the trenches of Bullecourt and wrote to the Docking family in deepest sympathy.

Back home in Pinnaroo the community came together to honour the Anzac Spirit of their fallen sons. To make sure no one ever forgot about the boys who fought for their country they built lasting memorials like the 'Lest We Forget' clock.



Figure 7.



Figure 8.



Figure 9.

Frantz and Claude's family grieved for their loss and honoured them with loving tributes in the local paper such as this sorrowing poem from sisters Vene, Amy and Renna published in *The Advertiser* on May 4th 1918.

Just as their lives were brightest
The ring was laid on their breast;
Just, as their hopes were dearest
They were laid forever to rest.

The ultimate expression of mateship—brothers in arms who died together. I am proud to be part of their family.

Bibliography

Field Trip April 18th 2018

Visit to Pinnaroo Museum and Heritage Centre

Interview with Pinnaroo Museum and Heritage Centre President Max Wurfle

Visit to Pinnaroo Institute to see Roll of Honour plaque

Visit to Pinnaroo War Memorial

Visit to RSL "Lest We Forget" clock and plaque

Visit to Pinnaroo War Memorial Hospital

Visit to Rosy Pine School site

Visit to Docking family farm site

Websites

A.I.F. record Lionel Theodore Claude Docking
<https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/showPerson?pid=80208> Accessed - April 1st 2018

A.I.F. record Frantz Albert Docking
<https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/showPerson?pid=80204> Accessed - April 1st 2018

Australian War Memorial, Private Frantz Albert Docking
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P10330333> Accessed - March 29th 2018

Australian War Memorial, Private Lionel Theodore Claude Docking
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P10330443> Accessed - March 29th 2018

Australian War Memorial, AIF unit war diary May 1917

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1341850?image=1> Accessed – April 15th 2018

Connecting Spirits, Private Frantz Albert Docking

<http://connectingspirits.com.au/pages/soldiers/2012-soldiers/frantz-albert-docking.php> Accessed - March 29th 2018

Connecting Spirits, Private Lionel Theodore Claude Docking

<http://connectingspirits.com.au/pages/soldiers/2012-soldiers/lionel-theodore-claude-docking.php> Accessed - March 29th 2018

Department of Veterans' Affairs

<https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/special-features/great-war-memories/commemorative-photo-frame> Accessed - March 31st 2018

National Archives of Australia, service record, Lionel Theodore Claude Docking

<https://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/browse/records/147987> Accessed - April 17th 2018

National Archives of Australia, service record, Frantz Albert Docking

<https://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/browse/records/124745/1> Accessed - April 17th 2018

Newspaper Articles

Advertiser May 5th 1919, p6 Family Notices

Advertiser May 4th 1918, Family Notices

Pinnaroo and Border Times June 2nd 1916, p3 Soldiers' Farewell

Pinnaroo and Border Times July 6th 1917 p2 Soldier's Letter

Pinnaroo and Border Times May 11th 1917

Books

A Compendium of: *10th Battalion AIF 1914-1918 Egypt, Gallipoli, France, Belgium (History of the 10th Battalion AIF)* By Arthur Limb originally published in 1919 & *The Fighting 10th* By Cecil BL Lock originally published in 1936. Presented by the 10th Battalion AIF Association, Morphett Vale SA, March 2013.

Heartbreaks and Happiness: the history and family tree of the Docking family of South Australia, Compiled by Donald and Marjorie Docking, Ridgehaven SA, November 1989.

Pinnaroo: Hub of the Mallee, published by the Pinnaroo Historical Society, September 2006.

Pinnaroo: Miracle of the Mallee, published by the Pinnaroo Historical society, October 1983.

Appendix 1: Figure legends

Part A

Figure 1. Photo Franz Albert and Lionel Theodore Claude Docking, 10th Battalion AIF
<https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/special-features/great-war-memories/commemorative-photo-frame> Accessed - March 31st 2018

Figure 2. Enlistment Papers Lionel Theodore Claude Docking, service No. 6237
<https://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/browse/records/147987> Accessed - April 17th 2018

Figure 3. Enlistment Papers Franz Albert Docking, service No. 6236
<https://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/browse/records/124745/1> Accessed - April 17th 2018

Figure 4. Map, sketch B, Details of Operations carried out by 10th Infantry Battalion during period 4th-9th May 1917, AIF unit war diary May 1917, Australian War Memorial
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1341850?image=1> Accessed – April 15th 2018

Figure 5. Map, sketch C, Details of Operations carried out by 10th Infantry Battalion during period 4th-9th May 1917, AIF unit war diary May 1917, Australian War Memorial
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1341850?image=1> Accessed – April 15th 2018

Figure 6. Register of Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, Enlistment Papers Franz Albert Docking
<https://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/browse/records/124745/1> Accessed - April 17th 2018

Roll of Honour plaque, Pinnaroo Institute, Lila Weidenbach field trip April 18th 2018



Soldiers' Memorial Hospital plaque, April 18th 2018