

# The Witheridge Family



*Mrs Annie Elizabeth Witheridge*



*(L to R) 4558 Private Harold Hinley Witheridge; SS112681 Acting Leading Stoker Frederick John Witheridge [KIS 09.07.1917 – HMS Vanguard]; 6403 Private William Henry Witheridge [KIA 20.09.1917 – Belgium].*

The tragedy of war struck hard on Mrs Annie Witheridge of Lincoln Street, Campsie. Following the death of her husband in March 1915, she was to lose two of her three sons who served in the Great War. In July 1917, Acting Leading Stoker Frederick John Witheridge who had enlisted in the Royal Navy was killed when the magazine of his ship, HMS Vanguard, accidentally exploded at Scappa Flow killing 843 of the 845 men aboard, whilst on 20 September 1917 in Belgium, Private William Henry Witheridge of the 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF was killed in action. Mrs Witheridge also claimed on several occasions, both in newspapers and in correspondence to Base Records, that another son named Private James A. Witheridge of the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF had been killed during the Gallipoli landing – no record of a soldier of this name can be found. Interestingly her third son, Private Harold Hinley Witheridge who enlisted in 1916, was recalled from the front by virtue of a Defence Cable and discharged early in 1918 – the circumstances surrounding the reason for his return to Australia is unclear.