

Published 20 February 2018

Michael Francis Ryan

Michael Francis Ryan was born in 1880 in Broadmeadows, the son of Martin and Bridget Ryan (nee Ryall) of Darraweit Guim. By the early 1900s Michael's parents had moved to Kilmore.

For some unknown reason Michael enlisted under the name Joseph McKinley in Murwillumbah, NSW on December 16, 1914, giving his place of birth as Seymour, VIC, and his father as James McKinley of Seymour. The use of the name McKinley was later proved to be false. Later his service papers recorded his next of kin as his father Martin Ryan of The Camp, Kilmore.

On his attestation form, Michael (aka Joseph) a labourer, said he had served in South Africa for 22 months. He was 33 years of age and 6 feet 1 inch tall.

Under the name Michael Francis Ryan, he had first served in the Boer War with the Victorian Imperial Bushmen and then with the 2nd Battalion, Australian Commonwealth Horse. In both units he was a sergeant, indicating he was a very good horseman and leader.

During training at Enoggera in Queensland, Michael was allocated as a sergeant 1530 to 15th Battalion, and he embarked from Brisbane on HMAT Seang Choon on February 13, 1915 for Egypt. At his request, Michael was demoted to corporal in April. Then he was promoted to sergeant on April 30.

By late May Michael was serving on Gallipoli, Having been wounded, he was transferred to Lemnos then to Gezirah Palace in Cario then used as a hospital. Michael returned to his Battalion on Gallipoli on August 2, 1915.

In early August the 15th Battalion took part in a drive to seize the high ground between Hill 971 and Chunuk Bair with the aim to capture the forts guarding the Straits. The advance made slow progress and on Sunday, August 8, an assault on the summit proved a costly failure.

Michael, together with a party of men, was sent to draw the Turkish fire near Hill 60. The men fell under heavy fire and Private Costello later reported that Michael went down and did not move. He was not seen again.

The Public Curator of Brisbane placed an advertisement in the Kilmore Advertiser on August 31, 1918 in relation to Michael's estate. As his next of kin, Michael's father Martin Ryan of Kilmore, received in 1922 his personal effects, the British War Medal, Victory Medal and 1914/15 Star, together with a memorial Scroll and Plaque.

Michael's name is recorded on the Lone Pine Memorial, Gallipoli, and on the Kilmore War Memorial.

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