

## Doug Morton (Coochiemudlo Pioneer) at War

### World War 1

Douglas Herbert Harrison Morton enlisted in the AIF on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 1915. He listed his trade as 'farmer.'

He needed his mother's permission to join up as he was only 18 years old.

Private Morton joined the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, which was raised in Queensland, and was an ANZAC.

Doug was sent to Gallipoli, arriving on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1915. After 2 months on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1915 Doug was transferred to a hospital ship suffering from Pyrexia (or elevated body temperature – a fever,) and Diarrhoea. His condition must have been sufficiently bad as he was then transferred to a hospital in Malta, and then to Gibraltar. He eventually finished up in an Army hospital in Birmingham, UK on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1915.

Doug re-joined his Battalion in France on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 1916.

The battalion's first major action in France was at Pozières in the Somme valley. The 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion attacked on the extreme right of the line and it was during this action that Private John Leak won, with the bayonet, the battalion's only Victoria Cross. Later the battalion fought at Ypres, in Flanders, before returning to the Somme for winter. In 1917 the battalion moved back to Belgium for the advance to the Hindenburg Line,

Doug was promoted to Lance Corporal on the 18<sup>th</sup> August 1916

On the 21<sup>st</sup> day of August 1916 Doug was 'Wounded in Action' with a gunshot wound to the head and right arm. The head wound was classified as 'severe'. He was also suffering concussion. He was sent to the 3<sup>rd</sup> auxiliary hospital Boulogne.

Doug's service records note that he was awarded the Military Medal on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 1916 for 'Gallantry in the field.'

The Citation reads as follows:

**Military Medal for 'Exceptional bravery and capability at Pozieres.'**

**Recommendation date: 7 September 1916**

*'At MOUQUET FARM, FRANCE, on 22nd August 1916 this N.C.O. was in charge of a party went out to raid a strong point in front of our lines in which the enemy were supposed to be in occupation. He carried out the work with exceptional coolness and capability and though the enemy was not in occupation he and his party were subjected to Machine Gun and Artillery fire as the operation was carried out at 4 pm. He not only made sure of the strong point but afterwards proceeded along the trench or what remained of it to MOUQUET FARM and discovered that this post was also unoccupied. The information obtained was of extreme value.'*

Source: 'Commonwealth Gazette' No. 62

Date: 19 April 1917

Lance Corporal Morton arrived at the Military hospital in Dartford, England on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 1916.

After a 3 month period of recuperation in a military hospital, Doug embarked on the 'Ulysses' for Australia on the 13<sup>th</sup> of February 1917. He was still 'suffering concussion from an old fracture of the skull.' Doug was used as a recruiting sergeant, for a few months, but was eventually discharged from the army on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1917 as medically unfit for duty. Doug was given a small military pension while recuperating.

Doug was obviously starting to feel like his old self again; because on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 1918 Doug was passed as fit to enlist by the principal medical officer. On the 7<sup>th</sup> day of November 1918 acting Sergeant Morton once more embarked for France on the 'Carpentaria.' Two Days before armistice and the end of the war.

Doug Morton leased land on Coochiemudlo Island in 1919. He had studied agriculture at Gatton College and was keen to start his own place. In 1923 Doug married Victoria Point early settler Daniel Colburn's daughter (Beatrice) Mary; and they had their honeymoon on Coochie!

**World War 2**

Captain Douglas Morton, once again felt he was called to serve his country and enlisted in Cleveland on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1942. The locality of enlistment is noted down as Coochiemudlo Island, Queensland. Doug joined the 2/4 Infantry Battalion, a part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Brigade. Doug served in New Guinea. The 2/4 Battalion was disbanded at Chermside on the 12<sup>th</sup> November 1945.

During the Second World War, Coochiemudlo Island was home to the 42<sup>nd</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> Landing Craft Companies which trained on the Island from 1943 to 1944, serving with distinction in New Guinea and Bougainville in 1945. Many of the men of these companies who trained on Coochiemudlo Island (near where the present Golf Links now stand,) went on to become leaders in peacetime communities and businesses, for example, Sir Frank Packer, Sir Ninian Stephen and Sir Nigel Bowen.

He set up a five-acre farm near where the present Aminya Gardens now stand. He grew Custard Apple, Avocado and Pawpaw orchards, some of them still stand today. Doug built the Jetty at the 'Red Rock' end of the island, and with his wife Mary managed a small Kiosk . Doug was also responsible for many island improvements. He would leave a sign that said: 'Rob Roy was here!' (Perhaps a tribute to his Scottish heritage.)

Doug Morton passed away on 23 May 1980  
Aged 83 years.





## Douglas Herbert Harrison MORTON

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Regimental number                   | 2190  |
| Religion                            | Church of England   |
| Occupation                          | Farmer  |
| Address                             | Brisbane, Queensland  |
| Marital status                      | Single  |
| Age at embarkation                  | 18  |
| Next of kin                         | Mother, Mrs E A Morton, Corinda, North Quay, Brisbane, Queensland                         |
| Enlistment date                     | 31 March 1915   |
| Rank on enlistment                  | Private   |
| Unit name                           | 9th Battalion, 6th Reinforcement  |
| AWM Embarkation Roll number         | 23/26/2   |
| Embarkation details                 | Unit embarked from Brisbane, Queensland, on board HMAT A63 <i>Karoola</i> on 12 June 1915 |
| Rank from Nominal Roll              | Lance Corporal  |
| Unit from Nominal Roll              | 9th Battalion   |
| Recommendations (Medals and Awards) | Military Medal (awarded)  |

Exceptional bravery and capability at Pozieres.  
Recommendation date: 7 September 1916

Fate Returned to Australia 13 February 1917

Medals Military Medal

'At MOUQUET FARM, FRANCE, on 22nd. August 1916 this N.C.O. was in charge of a party went out to raid a strong point in front of our lines in which the enemy were supposed to be in occupation. He carried out the work with exceptional coolness and capability and though the enemy was not in occupation he and his party were subjected to Machine Gun and Artillery fire as the operation was carried out at 4 pm. He not only made sure of the strong point but afterwards proceeded along the trench or what remained of it to MOUQUET FARM and discovered that this post was also unoccupied. The information obtained was of extreme value.'

Source: 'Commonwealth Gazette' No. 62

Date: 19 April 1917

# World War Two Service

CAPTAIN  
DOUGLAS HERBERT HARRISON MORTON  
Q202607



|                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| SERVICE                | AUSTRALIAN ARMY           |
| DATE OF BIRTH          | 16 MARCH 1898             |
| PLACE OF BIRTH         | BRISBANE, QLD             |
| DATE OF ENLISTMENT     | 11 APRIL 1942             |
| LOCALITY ON ENLISTMENT | COOCHIEMUDLOW ISLAND, QLD |
| PLACE OF ENLISTMENT    | CLEVELAND, QLD            |
| NEXT OF KIN            | MORTON, BEATRICE          |
| DATE OF DISCHARGE      | 21 OCTOBER 1945           |
| POSTING AT DISCHARGE   | 4 BATTALION               |



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs



Military Medal



The landscape of Mouquet Farm, October 1916