



KALGOORLIE-BOULDER

WALK OF FAME

JOHN CARROLL, VC

1891 - 1971

John Carroll, a prominent member of the local football club, enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) from the Goldfields. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for his fearlessness and courage during the battle of Messines Ridge during WWI.

John Carroll was born on 16th August, 1891, at Brisbane, Queensland.

His parents were John and Catherine Carroll, both Irish born.

When John was two years old, his family moved to Donnybrook, W.A. and then to Yarloop. Then in about 1905, the family settled in Kurrawang. His father and John both worked for the Goldfields Firewood Supply Co. John was a good athlete and a prominent member of the local football club.

He enlisted in the AIF on the 27th April, 1916 (25 years old).

Carroll embarked for England, in the August, with reinforcements for the 44th Battalion. On 14th November, he was transferred to the 33rd Battalion. He served on the line at Armentieres, France, until April, 1917, when his unit moved into position for the Messines Offensive. In the battle at Messines Ridge, on 7th June, he rushed an enemy trench, bayonetting four men, and rescued a comrade who was in difficulties. Later in the advance he attached a machine gun crew, killing three men and capturing the gun. In spite of heavy shelling and machine gun fire, he rescued two of his mates who had been buried by a shell explosion. His battalion was in the line of fire for ninety six hours and Carroll 'displayed most wonderful courage and fearlessness' throughout. He was awarded the Victorian Cross and in September promoted to Lance Corporal. He was severely wounded in the second battle of Passchendaele, on 12th October, and did not re-join his unit until June, 1918. In July he was transferred to AIF headquarters in London, and returned to Australia in August.

Carroll resumed work as a guard on the Kurrawang line, after demobilisation.

He married Mary Brown on 23rd April, 1923. They had no children.

In the mid 1920's he moved to the Yarloop district. While working as a railway truck examiner at Hoffman's Mill, in November, 1927, he slipped boarding a train during shunting



operations, and his right foot was crushed, and had to be amputated. He continued working for the railway for many years.

In 1956 he went to London, for the Victorian Cross Centenary Celebrations.

He retired to the Perth suburb n Bedford Park.

He died on 4th October, 1971, in the Repatriation General Hospital, Hollywood, W.A. and was buried at Karrakatta cemetery, with full military honours. His wife predeceased him.

He had a happy go lucky nature, and was known by his AIF comrades as 'the wild Irishman'. He was also known as 'Referendum Carroll', because he rarely said anything but yes or no.

Two of his brothers also served in the AIF.

Recognition

The Victorian Cross

A ward at Repatriation General Hospital, Hollywood, was named in his honour.

A Street in the Canberra suburb of Hughes, also carries his name.

A plaque in his memory was to be placed on the South West highway, near Boyanup, as part of the Commemoration Way, that was to be established in 2016.