



## Lance Corporal Charles GRIMSON 582 - 1st Light Horse Regiment

**Born:** 1876 Yullundry, Cumnock, NSW.

**Parents:** Parents - Edmund & Mary Ann Grimson, Yullundry.  
**NOK:** Wife – Ethel Grimson, Hornsby, Sydney.

**Occupation:** Farmer

**Enlistment date:** 8 Sep 1914, Sydney

**Enlistment age:** Stated 28yrs, actually 38yrs.

**Embarkment:** 20 Oct 1914, *HMAT Star of Victoria A16*  
Sydney

**Honour Boards:** Molong RSL Club;  
Cumnock War Memorial Gates.

**Awards:** Distinguished Conduct Medal, Gallipoli.

**Previous Service:** Boer War

### Biography:

Charles Grimson was born in 1876 at Yullundry, Cumnock, to Edmund and Mary Ann Grimson, and was the eldest of six children. The family lived at Norfolk Farm, on the Yullundry Creek.

The Grimson family in Cumnock originated from Stephen and Lydia (nee Brown) Grimson, from Norfolk, England. They had eight children – Stephen (born 1827), Robert (born 1828), Charles (born 1830), Samuel (born 1832), James (born 1833), Rachel (born 1835), Lydia (born 1838) and John (born 1840). Stephen Grimson and his 24 year old son, Stephen, worked as agricultural labourers when the 1851 England Census for Norfolk/Toft Monks was recorded. In 1852 Stephen Grimson (Jnr) married Sarah Simmons in the county of Norfolk. They had one child, Edmond Grimson, born in 1853, in Norfolk. Sarah Grimson died in 1855.

Stephen Grimson, aged 29 years, along with his 3 year old son, Edmund, were Assisted Immigrant Passengers on the ship *Lloyds*, arriving at Sydney on 4 September 1856. The ship's records state that his brother Samuel was living at Newtown, Sydney. Samuel, aged 21 years, had arrived in Australia on 21 October 1854, on the *Anglo Saxon*. Another brother, Robert, also came to Australia, around the same time as Samuel and Stephen. The three Grimson brothers started the St Peter's (Sydney) brickworks. Stephen later purchased horse teams and around 1872, started carrying trade between Sydney and Bourke. His son Edmund accompanied him with a second team. Leaving the road, father and son settled on land on Yullundry Creek, near Cumnock. Robert eventually settled in Wellington, and Samuel at Crookwell, – both married with children.

Stephen Grimson married Mary Ann Townsend at Molong in 1876, and they had five children. An unnamed son (born and died 1877), a daughter (born 1879), Mary (born and died 1881), Robert (born 1883 died 1887), and Samuel (born and died 1886). In 1893 Stephen Grimson bought 320 acres of land along Yullundry Creek which he called *Norfolk Farm*, in the parish of Buckinbah, county of Gordon, and a further 40 acres in 1896. They grazed sheep and farmed wheat, and won several competitions at local shows. Mary Ann Grimson died, aged 54 years, on 17 September 1898, at Yullundry Creek. Stephen Grimson sold his Yullundry farm in 1904 and died, aged 85 years, on 3 September 1912. The couple are buried in the Anglican portion of the Cumnock Cemetery.

Edmund (variously spelt as Edmond or Edward) married Mary Ann Maguire at Bathurst in 1875. They had six children: Charles 1876-1938; Lydia 1878-1879; Stephen born 1880; Edmond 1884-1961; Robert 1887-1963; and Frederick 1890-1917.

Edmund took up a selection adjoining his father's, at Yullundry. In 1918 Edmund Grimson was reported in local newspapers as having built new sale yards, held a license to run billiards in Cumnock, and was the local news agent – stocking pipes, tobacco, fancy goods, phonographs and other articles.

Edmund took an active part in community activities. He died aged 67 years at his Yullundry farm, on 8 February 1921, having lived there for 47 years. The farm was then managed by his son, Robert. Mary Ann Grimson moved to Orange to live in 1922. She died aged 95 years, in 1949, at Kiama.

Charles Grimson would have attended school at Yullundry and later worked on farms around the district. According to a newspaper report *The Wagga Wagga Advertiser* – 19 October 1901, p5, he also worked in the Brucedale district, near Wagga Wagga, prior to 1901.

Charles, aged 25yrs, enlisted in the second Boer War in 1901 and served with the 3<sup>rd</sup> NSW Mounted Rifles, 'C' Squadron. 'A', 'C' & 'E' Squadrons, 3rd Mounted Rifles left Sydney on 21 Mar 1901 and arrived at Durban, South Africa on 17 Apr 1901, on the transport ship *British Princess*. His regiment was attached to Colonel Remington's column from 2 May 1901 to 28 Apr 1902.

The regiment took part in operations in the Eastern Transvaal and Eastern Orange River Colony in 1901-1902. It also took part in several drives in the early part of 1902; the principal one, the Harrismith drive, resulting in the capture of 251 prisoners, 26,000 head of cattle, and 2,000 horses.  
[www.bwm.org.au/Murray.php - pages 123, 124, 130]

*The Wagga Wagga Advertiser* – 19 October 1901, p5, published a letter to Mr J Shephard, of Brucedale, from Corporal C Grimson, dated 12 September, from Heilbron:

*"Whilst chasing a Boer convoy [Trooper Charles] Wilson and a few others were forced into a corner, where Wilson was shot in the face with an explosive bullet. Wilson, although only wounded at the time, was picked up by a flying column, who immediately sent on word that Wilson was seriously wounded, and a subsequent message stated that he was dead and that part of his jaw, teeth, and tongue were blown away. Corporal Grimson further states that on the day Wilson was shot his company succeeded in capturing 72 waggons and 18 prisoners. They were hard worked, and most of their travelling was done at night. He had escaped injury so far, but had had two horses shot dead under him, and one of his horses was burnt to death in a fire started by Boers in a veldt for the purpose of cutting off the retreat of the British. Corporal Grimson was for some time resident in the Brucedale district, whilst Trooper Wilson was for seven years in the employ of Mr J Shephard."*

Corporal Grimson returned to Australia along with other Cumnock soldiers - Christian Miller, James McRae, William Hughes, Patrick Nolan and Henry Sherringham - on board the *SS Drayton Grange* which left Durban on 11 Jul 1902.

The ship was overcrowded with troopers as it had been rumoured that the *SS Drayton Grange* was the last ship returning to Australia. Due to a chain of mismanagement by both the military and civilian authorities, it was discovered once at sea that the ship was grossly overcrowded and very quickly disease broke out amongst the troops. Measles, enteric fever, influenza and pneumonia swept through the ship and totally overwhelmed the medical facilities and staff on board. Conditions were appalling and as a result five men died on board and another 12 on landing after reaching Australia. Henry Sherringham was one of the men who died of pneumonia on 12 August 1902, aged 20 years, after being transferred to Port Franklin Hospital, Melbourne.

A Royal Commission about the *Drayton Grange* voyage was conducted and some of the findings were: "There was no isolation hospital and no disinfecting apparatus, and as more men fell ill, hospital beds took up space encroaching on healthy troops' quarters, resulting in more unhealthy overcrowding. No sea kits were issued so clothing was inadequate and blankets, two per man, were soon vermin infested. The men were issued with hammocks stored in communal bins, making it impossible to retain one's own hammock throughout. Sleeping quarters doubled for living and eating with overcrowding hammocks slung over mess tables.

The weather was continually wet and cold; the ship's log reporting heavy seas causing rolling and pitching. Strong gales and dangerous seas were noted on sixteen of the nineteen-day trip. Ventilators were kept closed for warmth and with no spittoons as laid down in Regulations for His Majesty's Transport Service, men 'expectorated' onto the floor. Latrines although officially adequate, proved insufficient for gastric conditions and despite plenty of water, showers were in the open so most preferred not to wash."

(The Drayton Grange Royal Commission - [http://www.bwm.org.au/site/Drayton\\_Grange.php](http://www.bwm.org.au/site/Drayton_Grange.php))

*The Sydney Morning Herald* – 12 Sep 1902, p7, Returned Soldiers:

*"The soldiers recently returned from South Africa were accorded an enthusiastic public reception at Cumnock today [10 Sep]. At night they were entertained at a banquet, where they were presented with gold medals. The returning soldiers were William Hughes, S Grimson [Charles Grimson], C Miller, P Nolan. Trooper Sherringham, who was also returning by the Dayton Grange, died at Port Franklin of pneumonia. A sympathetic reference was made to the sad event at the reception of his former comrades. [Joseph George Sherringham was absent, being detained in the Narrandera district]*

The gold medal, which was nearly an ounce in weight, was in the shape of a Maltese Cross surmounted by the British Lion. On the front was the monogram of the recipient, while on the other side was the inscription "Presented to --- --- by his Cumnock friends for his patriotic services in South Africa, 1899 to 1902."

The *Molong Argus* – 12 Sep 1902, p8, printed an article about the reception and Corporal Grimson response speech:

*"He was glad to be back at Cumnock once again among his old friends, for, after all, life at home was preferable to that which had been experienced in South Africa, where frequently the marches had been long and dark, and where a man for striking a match was liable to the death penalty. There were those who sneered at the soldier and said it was not all patriotism that took them to South Africa. Be that as it may, his object in going to the front was to gain experience – experience that possibly may be of some future benefit to his country. Regarding the souvenir with which he had been presented by his Cumnock friends, he would always remember it and wear it honorably."*

Charles Grimson married Ethel Portia Robinson at Newtown, in 1902. He left Cumnock in April 1908 to open a fruit and green grocery store at Yeoval. He later voluntarily sequestrated his estate in the Bankruptcy Court in September 1908 and moved to Hornsby to live.

### **Lance Corporal CHARLES GRIMSON - 582- 1st LIGHT HORSE REGIMENT**

Charles Grimson enlisted for WW1 service on 8 Sep 1914 in Sydney, aged 38 yrs, but stated he was 28yrs and 5 mths on his enlistment form. His medical examination stated that he was 5 feet 7½ inches tall, had blue eyes, light brown hair and a sallow complexion. He had several tattoos – emblem of faith, hope & charity on his right arm; the Union Jack and Stars and Stripes on his left arm; and a bunch of flowers on his chest. He was of the Church of England religious denomination..

He embarked from Sydney on *HMAT Star of Victoria* A16 on 20 Oct 1914. This ship was also part of the first detachment of the Australian and New Zealand Imperial Expeditionary Forces, which left Albany on 1 Nov 1914, and disembarked in Egypt on 8 December.

The 1st Light Horse left Alexandria for Gallipoli without their horses, on 12 May 1915. The regiment was deployed near Gaba Tepe, at Quinn's Post. There were many casualties over the coming days and on the night of 28-29 May, the Turkish Army attacked Quinn's Post in earnest.

### **582 L/Cpl Charles Grimson was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM),**

*"For conspicuous gallantry on the night of the 28-29 May, 1915, near Gaba Tepe (Dardanelles). Owing to the explosion of a mine which destroyed a portion of our parapet the enemy was able to occupy a portion of our trenches, thus dividing the defending force into two. Lance-Corporal Grimson crawled over the broken ground towards the enemy, capturing successively three Turks. He then, with the greatest courage, entered the remaining portion of the trench held by the enemy, about 12 in number, compelling them all to surrender, thus enabling the defending forces to reunite".*

Quote from the *London Gazette* on 6 Sep 1915.

L/Cpl Grimson received a gunshot wound to the foot on the 5 Jun 1915 and spent several months in hospitals in Alexandria and Cairo before returning to Australia on 9 Sept. He was discharged on 22 Nov 1915. As well as the Distinguished Conduct Medal, he was awarded the 1914-15 Star Medal, the British War Medal 1914-20, and the Victory Medal.

The Cumnock Recruiting Association also presented L/Cpl Grimson with a purse of sovereigns and a gold medal after his return. The *Leader* (Orange) – 15 Nov 1915, p1:

*"Cumnock Recruiting Association are presenting Corporal Grimson, DCM, with a gold medal. The medal, which is of a very handsome design, is a truly fine sample of the goldsmith's art. It is of 18ct. gold*

and is ornamented with a Crown on the top, followed by piled arms as a centre with the word 'Dardanelles' riveted on the base; on the back it bears the following inscription: 'Presented to Corporal Grimson, DCM. by the residents of Cumnock and district as a token of esteem for his gallantry of the Dardanelles on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 1915.'

Charles was attached to the Holdsworthy Army Barracks for a short time after his return and also promoted enlistment to the AIF at many community functions around New South Wales. He renamed his property at Hornsby as "Quinn's Post".

His brother, 6055 Pte Frederick Daniel Grimson, 23rd Btn, died of illness in April 1917 while serving in France. (See WW1 profile)

In the 1930 and 1936 NSW Electoral Rolls, Charles Grimson is recorded as living at Gardiner Road, Orange and his occupation was a farmer. Charles and his wife Ethel would have received a shock when they were told that the murdered body of a man whose charred body was found at Julia Creek in October 1931 may be that of their third son, Frank Robinson Grimson, who had disappeared the year before when taking horses to a station in North Queensland. However, the identification was in error as later that month, Frank turned up living at Kuridala, near Cloncurry, Queensland. Frank was reportedly one of ten children of Charles and Ethel Grimson.

Charles Grimson died, aged 62yrs, on 20 Oct 1939 and is buried in the Orange Cemetery. His mother, Mary Ann Grimson, died at Kiama in 1949, aged 95yrs. Ethel Portia Grimson died in 1957 and her death registered at Chatswood, NSW.

One of Charles' sons, Pte Frank Robinson Grimson, served with 2/28 Btn during WW2, and died of wounds at El Alamein, Egypt, in November 1942. The *Sydney Morning Herald* – 5 Dec 1942, p16:

*"GRIMSON – 1 November 1942. died of wounds, Egypt, Nx72860. Pte Frank Robinson Grimson, dearly beloved son of Mrs EP Grimson and the late Cpl. Charles Grimson, DCM of Hornsby; dearly loved brother of Gordon, Osborne (AIF), Olive, Mary, Ernest (AIF), Phyllis, Prtoccla Bdr [??] Frederick (AMF). Rest in peace."*

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**Profile photo: The Governor General, Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson, awarding the DCM to Lance Corporal Charles Grimson, 1915. ([www.awm.gov.au/collection/P09485.001](http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P09485.001))**

**Left: Cpl Charles Grimson, 1901.**

**Photo courtesy of the Banjo Paterson Museum, Yeoval, NSW.**

**Below: Medal presented to the local Boer War soldiers from the residents of Cumnock.**



*Below: 'C' Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> NSW Mounted Rifles, in Sydney prior to leaving for the Second*



*Above left: Queen's South Africa Medal*

*Above right: Distinguished Conduct Medal.*

*Left: Grave of Charles Grimson, Orange Cemetery.*