

Herbert Hector ASHBY

Olive (Heather) ASHBY, nee HANCOCK

Biography as published in 1995

Herbert Hector Ashby b. 12/10/1921 at Kongorong, S.A. His childhood nicknames were "Dud" and "Scrub Bull".

Parents : Maria Mabel (Mary) ASHBY (nee McLEAN) & James Edward ASHBY

Grandparents : Maria Elizabeth McLean (nee Kruger) & Charles Soward McLean

G-Grandparents : Anna Soward McLean (nee Janeway) & Archibald McLean

G-G-Grandparents : Christina McLean (nee McPhee) & Donald McLean

Marriage: to Olive (Heather) Hancock (b. 25/11/1923).

Residence: Mt Gambler

Herb always wanted to do things before he was old enough. At five he had one day at school before he was kicked out. His Mum got up and told him he could go to school. He was thrilled and off he went with Doog, Jean, Mary, Dig and Chas. When they came home Eakie was born and Herb had to wait until he was 6 (the starting age) before he could return to school.

Herb joined up in 1940, he came home and told his parents who were horrified and told him they would refuse to sign the papers as he was only 17. Herb wasn't worried about that as he had put his age up to 23 and didn't need their consent. He joined up in June but wasn't called until November and went to the Middle East in February. His unit had very little training here, very little at all really as they arrived in Palestine and were sent straight away to Alexandria as a reserve. At that stage the battalion they were going to was in Tobruk so they were put on the first boat. The battalion comprised nearly all country lads. They started off with 1000 men and walked out with 41 of which Herb was one.

From the booklet "Tobruk to Tarakan" concerning July 22nd 1942. Herb. Ashby was with the 2/48th Battalion, D. Company. The company commander was killed and the two platoon commanders wounded so Private Herb. Ashby took over his section which had become isolated from the remainder. In spite of heavy fire from the front and flank he refused to consider withdrawal and kept vigil for 14 hours with his men. Late in the afternoon a Valentine tank was knocked out nearby and the crew were taken prisoner by the Germans as well as two members of Herb's section. He however, opened fire on the Germans and all were killed allowing the prisoners to escape. For his part in this action Herb. Ashby was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

An "Adelaide News" of August 1984 had a photo of Herb. with his medals and an article which stated that Herb. Ashby, 63, retired farmer of Mt Gambier was "off to Windsor Castle on the following Sept. 11th" to commemorate his membership of a very exclusive club for the D.C.M League Muster at London to celebrate the 130th anniversary of the awarding of the first D.C.M by Queen Victoria in 1854 Since then 30,741 of the medals have been handed out but of the 1904 awarded during W.W.2 only 199 went to Australian soldiers, several to the 2/48th Battalion. Herbs old unit, the most decorated in the Australian Army. The Duke of Kent was to review the gathering.

When he came home he went to O.B. Flat with Uncle Lloyd Ashby. He was there from 1945 - 1948 before Herb and Heather bought their farm in Mingbool which was a soldier settlement farm. Herb took Grandfather (Soward) to Mingbool when he first went up there and he looked around. "I know this country". Grandfather said. "Seventy years ago I used to ride a horse through here and shear at Mirigbool homestead. We just about had to swim the horses all the way from Tarpeena through here "

Herb bought another property. They retired from farm life to the Mount in 1974 and Herb worked for the government for B years from 1975-83 in water resources.

Heather was a nursing sister and continued her occupation.

Herb is an untiring worker for the RSL in Mount Gambler. He is involved in all aspects, gaining great recognition for his work with Legacy (pensions and the like) and the Soldiers ex servicemen in fact every aspect of RSL. Herb says every person needs something to get up for in the morning and his voluntary work keeps him active.

They have 5 children :-

1. Jillian Heather Ashby b. 12/3/1946 at Mt Gambler. Occupation: Registered Nurse, Adelaide. Residence: Previously of Blackwood. S.A. Unmarried.
2. Sandra Kaye Ashby b. 12/6/1947, at Mt Gambier, S.A. Married: Donald William Milne (b. 5/5/1939). Residence: Yacka, S.A. His occupation Farmer. Children - Donna (b. 10/11/1970), Paul (b. 16/11/1971) & Anna (b. 11/9/1976).
3. Herbert Dean Ashby b. 11/4/1950. Occupation: Shearer of Mt Gambier, SA Married: Heather Jean McElroy (b. 20/1/1949). Children - Melony (b. 29/5/1973), Benjamin (b. 16/11/1975) & Toni (b. 13/7/1977).
4. Russell (Keith) Ashby b. 3/3/1952., Married: Christine Faye Gleed (b. 28/6/1953). Occupation: of Keith, Stock Agent of Mt Gambier. Children - Daniel (b. 26/8/1972) & Kylie (b. 30/6/1974).
5. Jennifer Ruth Ashby b. 19/10/1961 - unmarried. Occupation: Nurse of Mt Gambier.

- SOURCE : This biography is an extract from "The History of Donald & Christina McLean and Their Descendants" which was published in 1995 – page 440 & 441.
- COLONIALISTS : Christina and Donald McLean and their ten children migrated from Argyllshire to South Australia in 1837. This was in the earliest years of the colony. The McLeans initially settled near Adelaide where they grew the first wheat crop in SA. Then in about 1840 they pioneered the Strathalbyn area. There are now well over 20,000 descendants spread across Australia and elsewhere.
- CHANGES : Please contact us with additions, corrections or suggestions about any part of this family tree.
- CONTACT : Visit our website www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com or Strathalbyn Museum phone 08 8536 2656 to discover more about your family – and about privacy and copyright.