

George Lawrence Boniface

George was born 19 June 1892 at “Spring Cottage”, Bland Street, Kiama. He was the youngest child of Ben and Mary Boniface.



After attending Kiama Public School, it is believed George worked at local farms and quarries. When the family moved to “Happy Villa” he became involved with his brother Harry in the farm and milk vending business established by them.

At some time prior to the outbreak of WW1, George was a member of the Kiama Militia Unit “E” Company. The results of a monthly shoot shows that he was graded as a “B” class shooter.

George was of a genial nature with a keen sense of humour, generous to a fault and slow to anger.

Enlisting in August 1915, aged 23, George embarked with the 12th reinforcements to the 3rd Battalion in January 1916.



GEORGE WITH HIS BROTHERS HARRY & HERB

George suffered wounds on two occasions, one being a serious gunshot wound to the neck. During his convalescence in England, he visited his mother's relatives, the Holdens, at Kendal in the County of Westmoreland (now Cumbria).

Returning home to Kiama on 12 June 1919, George was given a welcome at the railway station by the Mayor, and later a welcome home by his family at "Happy Villa".

PTE. GEORGE BONIFACE.

On Thursday night it was easily seen a Kiama boy was coming home, as toward 8 o'clock a stream of people went stationwards.

That George was a general favourite was evident, as had been the night before when another Digger and old Kiama boy came home, Pte. W. Ran-yard.

The engine did its part and as she came out of the tunnel, wild "toots" and crowing announced there was one to be honoured aboard and "bungers" at the station gave a regular bombardment.

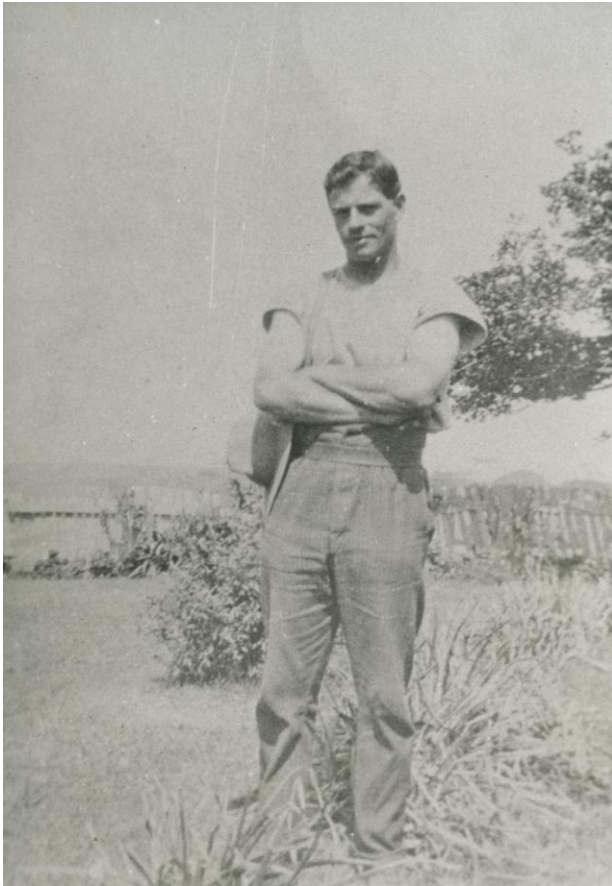
The Band gave welcome and concert; fell in showers, until the genial George, whose old-time smile so many were glad to see looked as if he had encountered "some" snow storm.

The Mayor awaited the Returned Hero at the Town Hall steps and extended a hearty welcome from the people of Kiama. He was sorry their friend George had not been present the night before to be welcomed by the Chief Secretary, Sir George Fuller, and he felt his own remarks felt rather flat after the splendid address of welcome given on that occasion.

by one who himself had been an old Kiama boy, and had received merited honour from the King in Knighthood. The Mayor said he had welcomed so many, it was difficult not to repeat himself, but that took nothing from the sincerity of their welcome. They were truly glad for Mr. and Mrs. Boniface, that the joy was theirs, of welcoming their boy home, for they knew how dear he was to them, and how they longed for his safe return. He had passed through hard times during his service, in wounds and illness, but they were glad and proud of what he had done, with the other brave lads for his country, and glad indeed to see him return with the good measure of health that seemed to be his after all he had passed through.

Pte. Boniface was received with cheers and a hilarious "He's a Jolly Good Fellow" from the Band, the crowd joining in.

He thanked them for the great reception they had given him and for all the kind things said by the Mayor, also expressed gratitude for the parcels sent by the local Red Cross and War Chest Societies.



GEORGE AFTER THE WAR

After being discharged, George again became involved in the milk vending business which had been conducted by his brother Harry during the war years and who had moved to "Belmont" on the foothills of Saddleback Mountain. This farm bought as "Happy Villa", had been sold without the Boniface family being offered the choice to purchase.

In 1920, Harry, dissatisfied with financial arrangements, moved to Wollongong. George and his parents moved to "Belmont" and continued with the milk vending business.

On 11 June 1921, George married Pauline Anslow at Marrickville. A city girl with a bright, cheery disposition, Pauline returned to "Belmont" and became involved in house and farm activities for the rest of her life.

SOCIAL & PRESENTATION.

On Wednesday evening the Oddfellows' Hall was filled on the occasion of a social evening and presentation given in honour of Mr. George Boniface by a number of well-wishers and friends on the eve of his marriage.

The function was the outcome of a kindly thought, to give the popular George a good send-off into the ranks of matrimony, and the idea grew until most of the young people were enthusiastic in the idea.

The hall was nicely decorated with Mr. Boniface's battalion colours, also the supper tables laden with good things provided by the ladies the catering arrangements supervised by Mesdames Marley and Gibbs and managed by a band of willing lady helpers.

As the guest of the evening entered the hall with his fiancée, Miss Ouston, and his mother, the company stood and sang "They are Jolly Good Fellows."

The Mayor (Ald. Price) presided, and in making the presentation of an oaken tray with silver surround, suitably inscribed, as a memento of the occasion—together with a wallet containing notes of a substantial amount—spoke highly of Mr. George Boniface

and the esteem in which he had been held from boyhood—a popularly earned one, by his willingness to do a service and his unfailing kindness and good nature. Reference was made to his creditable war service, and every good wish expressed on behalf of those present for future success and happiness in married life. A tribute was also paid to the worth of Mr. and Mrs. Boniface who had also been known from youth in the district and were generally esteemed.

Mr. A. N. Craig, President of the R.S. & S.I. League, also spoke of their guest in high terms as a soldier and a man. Mr. C. Marsden supported.

In a neat little speech Mr. Boniface returned thanks on behalf of his future wife and himself for their kind expressions of good-will and handsome gifts.

The evening took the form of a dance and right heartily were festivities kept up until about 2 p.m., Messrs. Marsden and Townsend, Mrs. Walker, Mrs. Higgs, Miss Pratt and Mr. F. Carroll kindly provided the music for the occasion.



PAULINE AND GEORGE

George and Pauline had five children. Esma Jean, Cecil George, Kenneth William, Violet Mary, and Leslie Paul.

About 1926 the milk run was sold and George concentrated on dairy farming, over the years gradually adding to the size of the farm.

Dairy farming gave George little scope for any sport, although he had played football in his early years and was a member of the Kiama Rifle Club. He found an outlet in fox shooting. He was an excellent shot and rarely missed bagging a fox. This activity enabled him to gain an intimate knowledge of the mountain area west of Kiama, as he ranged far and wide in pursuit of the fox.

George was often prevailed upon by the Police for assistance in guiding them through or giving information about the rainforests of Saddleback Mountain, one notable instance being to the crash site of a R.A.A.F. plane on the escarpment at Foxground.

George and his family were of a most hospitable nature, generous to a fault with a large circle of friends and were widely known throughout the area.

Pauline, who had developed into an excellent cook, had on occasions during the years up to 1945, to cope with 18 to 25 persons for a midday dinner and evening meal. As well, during the Depression years up to 1935, cared for Herb Boniface and his sons Albert and Geoff.

On the death of George's mother in 1936, he and Pauline undertook the unenviable task of caring for his father Ben who was suffering from a heart ailment and confined to bed for most of the time. This continued until his death in 1943.

The arrival of electricity to "Belmont" in the late 1940's led to the installation of milking machines and other appliances to make George and his family's way of life more comfortable.

Up until the 1950's George would have been one of the best known and respected persons in Kiama, however, with the increase in Kiama's population and his increasing age, he became less known.

Misfortune happened in 1965 when his wife was involved in an accident as a passenger in a car driven by her niece, Phyllis Brown. She suffered a fracture

of the hip and lived on for some time in hospital and died of pneumonia on 29 January 1966, at Bankstown Hospital, aged 72.

George's son Leslie gradually took over the farm while he himself suffered an illness and died in Baringa Hospital, Wollongong, on 28 April 1974, aged 81. His brother Harry was a patient in the adjacent bed and died two months later.

George was cremated at Wollongong after a funeral service in the Kiama Methodist Church. His ashes were placed with Pauline's in the gardens at Wollongong Crematorium.

Kiama Library acknowledges the research of the Boniface family in the production of this brochure.



GEORGE AND LASSIE



GEORGE WITH SISTERS MARGARET & LILLIAN



MARGARET BONIFACE



LILLIAN BONIFACE

SOLDIERS' LETTERS FROM FRANCE.

During the week Mrs. B. H. Boniface received a letter from her son, George, who is now with the Expeditionary forces in France. He writes:

Dear Mother,—I received two letters from you last mail. We had not been getting any for about seven weeks but are now getting them all in a heap. I received about 30 letters and a dozen papers in the last few days. I am glad to hear all are well at home as it leaves me at present. Lieut. Colonel O. G. Howell-Price is over our Battalion here and when he asked us where we came from and our names he said: "I suppose you remember me." George Weir is in a different company to me but he is trying to get a transfer to mine. This is a lovely place, the fruit trees have all young fruit on them, especially the cherries. We only wish they were ripe. Well, Mum, we have had a taste of the trenches. It is not too bad, and better than I thought it would be. At first it felt a bit funny but you soon get used to that. We are not allowed to write much about what is happening here, but don't worry we are as happy as can be.

Writing to his sister (Mrs. N. Carson) by the same mail says: I suppose things are pretty lively in Kiama now with all the soldiers down there. There seems to be a lot of Kiama boys enlisting too, and so Fred Ding, is one of them. It was very sudden about Mr. Pratt and must have been a great shock to them all. This is a bosker place and it is pleasant walking along through the fields, for the crops are so green and the grass grows that long you would just think it was a crop of oats. There are no fences here, only hedges, which grow very thick. Tell Jack Carson that "Brownie," a chap in the same platoon as I, wishes to be remembered to him and Bill. He was with them in New Zealand, and before enlisting was on the Saturday night train running to Kiama. His name is J. Wilson.

KIAMA INDEPENDENT. 15 JULY 1916