

THE SAVAGE BROTHERS

Richard Savage followed his brother, Percival's lead in enlisting to serve his country. Instead of soldiering, though, he served in England working in munitions. He returned to Australia in 1924 and lived in Queensland until his death in 1971. Both his sons, Richard (who died fighting with Bomber Command in WW2) and Keith, attended Ipswich Grammar.

PERCY

RICHARD



PERCIVAL JAMES DSO MBE MID^{XS}

Date of Birth:	22 October 1894
Student Number:	1166
Enrolment:	February 1908
Age Entered IGS:	14 years
Final Day at IGS:	April 1909

Unit:	1 st Div. Engineers
Regimental Number:	2 nd Lieutenant
Enlistment:	26 August 1914
Age at Enlistment:	20 years
Final Day of Service:	12 December 1918

RICHARD FRANCIS

Date of Birth:	22 August 1893
Student Number:	1165
Enrolment:	February 1908
Age Entered IGS:	15 years
Final Day at IGS:	September 1908

Unit:	Munitions Worker
Regimental Number:	1992
Enlistment:	1917
Age at Enlistment:	24 years
Final Day of Service:	1919

Making personal connections has been a very welcome added bonus while writing this book. Through research, contact was made with Percival Savage's daughter, Bettina, and grand-daughter, Anna. Bettina was an absolute treasure trove of information about her father, and I could listen to her stories for hours. It is with great pleasure that I am able to share snippets of her stories here, and also display the pictures that she so generously shared, to ensure that 'Perc's' story is passed down through the IGS generations.



Savage, after enlisting with the Engineers, fought at Gallipoli, the Somme, Pozières, Passchendaele and Amiens. He most notably became Australia's youngest Major, at the age of 21 (a birthday that he celebrated on the cliffs of ANZAC Cove while being the acting Commander of the Royal Engineers - a fact that Bettina only discovered on her own 21st birthday). He was Mentioned in Despatches three times and was awarded a DSO for his actions at Pozières (on the 14 December 1916) by King George V, his recommendation reading:

"For conspicuous gallantry and ability during a period of operations under very heavy shell fire. The good work done by his Company was due to his untiring energy and fine powers of leadership."

Bettina recalled her father's desire to always put his men first:

"In Suez, during 12 to sometimes 14 hour slogs, his engineer-working men, digging hard (with him at the head) would still receive only the meagre soldier issue of rations. So he would scout around & source soup, rice and eggs for his men. On the Somme one Christmas, he located a brace of turkeys - for safety he placed them in a pit under planks into the mess-hut that everyone walked over - till Christmas dinner!"

A letter from Percival, published in the Queensland Times (15 March, 1915) reads:

"Queenslanders...They are splendid chaps to work with. Jim Lindsay is one of my best men for doing anything. When the 2nd Div. passed through I heard the name of the boat that the Queenslanders were on, and I called out for Sergt. Maurice Little [another IGS Old Boy]. He came over to the side and I signalled who I was, and we waved to each other. I may see him some time, but I doubt it...Tell Dick to tell the chaps at the shop that I have no time to write."

The Jim Lindsay to whom he referred was another IGS Old Boy, who left in 1901. Only months after 'Perc' wrote this letter, Jim was dead. It was the Major's sad responsibility to let his family know... His letter was published in the Queensland Times (10 July, 1915), he wrote:

"Dear Mr Lindsay - I deeply regret having to inform you of the death of your brother on May 10th. He died whilst doing his duty. His death leaves a gap in our ranks which cannot be easily refilled. His soldierly bearing, the quality of his work, and the spirit in which it was done early won the respect of his officers, and throughout his whole service he was more and more appreciated. Several of his fellow-sappers carried him to his last earthly resting place..."



Ipswich Grammar School Archives

In the years following the Armistice, 'Perc' married Majorie and together they had Donald, Mary and Bettina. He used all his accrued savings from being an officer (an estimated thousand pounds) and bought land that he affectionately called the 'Purple Patch' (after his colour patch on his uniform in WW1). 'Perc' spent the next 54 years growing fruit, most notably bananas. He rose to be the chairman of the Committee of Direction (COD) for 30 years, alongside his schoolmate, Bernie Flewell-Smith. During those years, they made their mark on the state in many ways. 'Perc' was awarded an MBE in 1969 for services to the Queensland fruit and vegetable industry.

