

Codford War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



7455 PRIVATE

H. D. FLETCHER

13TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

29TH JULY, 1917

Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte H. D. Fletcher is located in Row that contains the single grave in the Australian Section (Right hand side)

Grave Plot # 1 of Codford War Graves Cemetery (Using Map by Brian Marshall)

(CWGC Reference - Grave # 80)

Harry David Fletcher was born in Sydney in 1885. He attested originally under the name of Harry Conway on the 26th February, 1917 - his father being Daniel Conway. He was a 31 year old, married Labourer from Alexandria, NSW when he enlisted with the 13th Infantry Battalion, 25th Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 7455 & his religion was Church of England. To the question of "are you married?" "Harry "Conway" had replied – "No". However, Harry D Fletcher had married Lily M Bosworth in the district of Marrickville, NSW in 1911. A birth was registered in 1912 for Harry D Fletcher, parents Harry & Lily in the district of Paddington, NSW. (No other births can be checked due to the 100 year rule regarding births). His next of kin was listed as his sister Miss Ellen Conway of 3 Wyndham St, Alexandria. When the Embarkation Rolls were completed, Harry's next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs L. M. Fletcher, address unknown.

Pte Harry Conway/ Fletcher was absent without leave for 2 days whilst encamped at Liverpool, Sydney, NSW on 21st & 22nd April, 1917. He was fined for the offence.

Pte Harry David Conway/Fletcher embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Marathon (A74)* on 10th May, 1917 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 20th July, 1917.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. These were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Pte Fletcher's Will was made out on 1st May, 1917 in the name Harry David Fletcher. A letter in Pte Fletcher's Service Record file, dated 8th August, 1917, to the Officer in Charge of Base Records advising of the change of address for Miss E. Conway, Pte Fletcher's sister is the first indication of Private H. D. Fletcher being known by this name rather than the "alias Conway H". All forms prior to this were in the name Pte Harry Conway then at a later date this had been crossed out & replaced with "Harry David Fletcher". No reason has been located in his file for the name change. No birth registration in NSW could be located in either Harry Conway or Harry Fletcher around the years 1885/1886.

Pte Harry Fletcher had been marched in to the 4th Training Battalion at Codford, Wiltshire on his arrival in England.

Pte Harry Fletcher was admitted sick to Group Hospital at Codford on 21st July, 1917 with abdominal pain.

Pte Harry David Fletcher died at 5.30 a.m. on 29th July, 1917 at No. 3 New Zealand Hospital, Codford of septicaemia following cholecystitis.

A death for Harry D Fletcher, aged 31, was registered in the September quarter, 1917 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

From the burial report of Pte Harry David Fletcher – he was buried on 31st July, 1917 at St. Mary's Cemetery Codford, Grave No. 80 in the Australian Section. *Coffin was good, Elm with*

Brass Mountings – Six personal friends of Pte Fletcher's reinforcement (25/13) acted as pall-bearers and placed a wreath on grave.

The funeral was carried out with full Military Honours, and a small oak cross was erected over the grave.

The Red Cross Missing and Wounded file for Harry David Fletcher has a letter written by Lieut. Col. Off. Com. No. 3 N.Z. General Hospital, Codford to the Secretary of the Red Cross:

Pte Fletcher was admitted to this hospital on the 21st July and during the ensuing days I regret to say his condition did not improve. In spite of every attention administered by Doctors and nurses he died at 5.50 a.m. on July 29th.

He was accorded a Military Funeral at which honours were paid to his memory and his remains were interred in the Australian Portion of the soldiers cemetery at Codford St. Mary.

I would like to take this opportunity of expressing through yourself my deepest sympathy with the relatives of Pte Fletcher in the bereavement which has fallen upon them.

Pte Harry David Fletcher requested in his Will, dated 1st May, 1917, that his property and effects be given to his sister – Ellen Conway of 3 Wyndham St, Alexandria.

Private H. D. Fletcher is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 69.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)

Pte Harry David Fletcher was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Fletcher's widow – Lily May Fletcher (September, 1922 & October, 1922). Pte Harry Fletcher's father was listed as Daniel Conway of Sandgate, Newcastle, NSW.

A War pension was granted to the Widow of Pte Harry David Fletcher – Lilian May Fletcher of 36 Iredale St, Newtown in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 2/10/17. A War Pension of £1 per fortnight was also granted for Pte Fletcher's son – Harry David (Jnr) from 2/10/1917.

(56 pages of Pte Harry David Fletcher's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives

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Newspaper Reports

330th CASUALTY LIST

NEW SOUTH WALES

DIED OF ILLNESS

Pte HARRY DAVID FLETCHER, address not known, 29/7/17

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW Tuesday 14th August, 1917)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone at Codford War Graves Cemetery. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)

Pte H. D. Fletcher does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Photo of Pte H. D. Fletcher's Headstone at Codford War Graves Cemetery (below)



(Photo by Andrea Charlesworth)