

Durrington War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



1002 PRIVATE

D. McM. SPICER

37TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

24TH SEPTEMBER, 1916 Age 29

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte D. McM. Spicer is located in Grave Plot # 108
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

Donald McMillan SPICER

Donald McMillan Spicer was born at Arthur's Creek, Victoria in 1887 to parents Alexander Humphrey Spicer and Martha Spicer (nee McMillan). He was a 28 year old, single, Labourer from Queenstown, Victoria when he enlisted on 1st February, 1916 with the 10th Infantry Brigade, 37th Infantry Battalion, "C" Company of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 1002 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Alexander Humphrey Spicer of Queenstown, Victoria. Donald Spicer had previously been rejected from enlisting in July, 1915 due to his teeth.

Pte Donald Spicer was admitted to No. 5 Australian General Hospital while in Training Camp at Broadmeadows, from 20th March, 1916 until 7th April, 1916 with Influenza.

Pte Donald McMillan Spicer embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Persic* (A34) on 3rd June, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 25th July, 1916. He was been admitted to the Ship's Hospital twice on the voyage to England – from 9th June to 13th June & again from 30th June to 3rd July, 1916. Both times Pte Spicer had been admitted with Bronchitis.

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

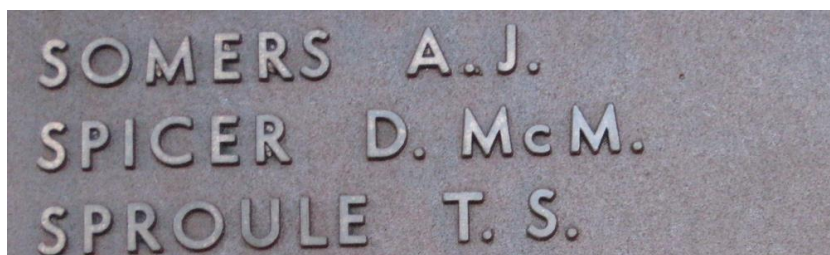
Private Donald McMillan Spicer was admitted to 10 Field Brigade Hospital on 16th September, 1916 for 2 days with Influenza & Measles before being transferred on 18th September to Brimstone Bottom Isolation Hospital, Tidworth, Wiltshire. He was reported dangerously ill (date shown incorrectly as 25th September, 1916).

Private Donald McMillan Spicer died on 24th September, 1916 at Brimstone Bottom Isolation Hospital, Tidworth, Wiltshire from Measles & Broncho Pneumonia. Another Australian soldier – Pte William James Supple who also embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Persic* also died at Brimstone Bottom Isolation Hospital, Tidworth, Wiltshire from Measles & Broncho Pneumonia but 2 days earlier – on 22nd September, 1916. Both soldiers are buried next to each other in Durrington Cemetery, Pte Supple in Grave no. 107.

A death for Donald McM. Spicer, aged 29, was registered in the December quarter, 1916 in the district of Pewsey, Wiltshire.

Private Donald McMillan Spicer was buried on 28th September, 1916 at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire – Plot number 108 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Private D. McM. Spicer is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 129.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Pte Donald McMillan Spicer 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 Spicer's father – Mr A. H. Spicer (sent March, 1922 & Jul, 1922)

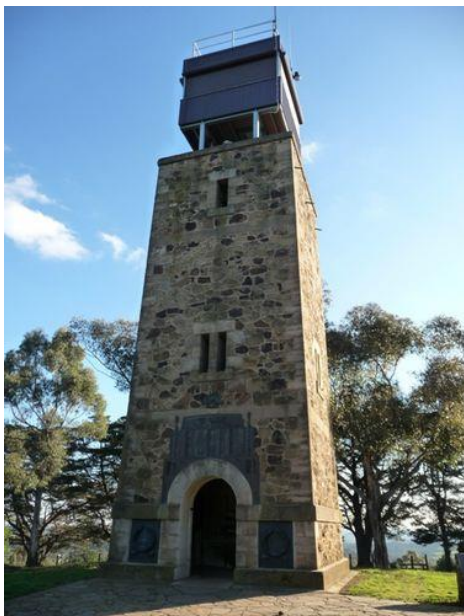
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Donald McMillan Spicer – service number 1002 as being 29 years old & served with 37th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Alexander Humphrey Spicer and Martha Spicer. Born at Arthur's Creek, Victoria.

Donald Spicer & his brother William Spicer are both named on the Panton Hill Primary School Honour Board. The Honour Board was originally erected in 1917 to recognise the local men who had enlisted to fight in World War One.



Panton Primary School Honour Board

Pte Donald Spicer is also included on the Shire of Eltham's Memorial Tower located at Eltham War Memorial Park, Kangaroo Ground, Victoria. The Memorial was erected to honour all within the Shire boundaries that had paid the supreme sacrifice.



Eltham Memorial Tower

(41 pages of Pte Donald McMillan Spicer's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll) & National Archives

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Newspaper Reports

The 235th CASUALTY LIST

The Victorian Names are:

DIED OF OTHER CAUSES

Private D. McM, Spicer, Queenstown.

(The Mildura Cultivator, Victoria – Wednesday 18 October, 1916)

IN MEMORIAM

SPICER. — In fond memory of our dear brother Donald, who died 24th Sept., 1916, in England.

Remembered, yes and always will be
By the ones you left behind,
For though dead, your acts are living,
Always honest, always kind.

— Inserted by his fond brother and sister-in-law, J. and D., Kinglake.

(Eltham and Whittlesea Shires Advertiser and Diamond Creek Valley Advocate – 27 Sep 1918)

QUEENSTOWN

(From a Correspondent)

A social evening was held in the Queenstown Hall last Saturday evening to welcome home Privates E. and W. Spicer, who have returned after nearly four years of active service. The hall had been converted into a veritable fern bower splendidly garnished with the flags of the Allies, and the effect was most pleasing and appropriate to the occasion, thanks to those members of the Committee who had devoted so much time and pains to that object. Fortunately the weather favoured the brave, and it was a large and representative gathering. The chair was taken by Mr Herbert Hewitt, J. P., to whose energy and tact is due the credit for the perfect harmony and smooth running of the function. No other guarantee of the musical portion of the programme is required than to mention that Mrs A. Gellet had kindly undertaken to preside at the piano. Mr P. Brennan also kindly officiated in his usual efficient manner as M.C. Musical items were rendered in a most pleasing style by the Misses Muller, Fitch and Hirt, Mr T. Thompson contributed several items in his most humorous style. At the request of the Chairman the guests of the evening stepped on to the stage to the strains of "Home, Sweet Home," feelingly rendered on the piano and taken up by all present. With a short but most sincere and well-chosen address, the Chairman presented the two "boys" each with a gold medal, suitably inscribed, and both recipients responded in good style in spite of the fact that one stated he would rather go through shell fire than the present ordeal. The Chairman then requested Mr A. Spicer to step forward, and in a most feeling reference to his late son (Donald), presented him with a gold medal, inscribed as follows:-" Presented by the residents of Queenstown to Mr A. Spicer in memory of his son, Pte Donald McMillan, who died while serving his King and Country, 1916" Mr A. Spicer faced the very trying position bravely, and responded most suitably. All present then accorded the recipients musical honours enthusiastically. Refreshments were then dispensed by the young ladies, and those ladies who had charge of that department were amply recompensed for their labours by the appreciation shown. Mr S. Spicer, in a short address, then sincerely thanked the residents for the way they had honoured his family, and said it was proof the old spirit of friendship and hospitality for which Queenstown was always noted still prevailed. A few more dances then brought a most successful evening to a happy termination.

(Eltham and Whittlesea Shires Advertiser and Diamond Creek Valley Advocate – 20 June, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

SPICER.-In fond memory of our dear brother Donald, who died on the 24th September, 1916 at Tidworth, England.

Ever remembered.

-Inserted by his brother and sister-in-law, J. and D. Spicer.

(Eltham and Whittlesea Shires Advertiser and Diamond Creek Valley Advocate – 26 Sep 1919)

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 Durrington 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 D. McM. Spicer does not have a personal inscription on his headstone. Nor does he have the Christian cross as many of the other Australian soldiers have on their headstones.

Photo of Pte D. McM. Spicer's Headstone at Durrington War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire.



(Photo © Ian King - with permission)