

**St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard,  
Harefield, Middlesex, England**

**War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**3047 PRIVATE**

**R. CONNOR**

**4TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**29TH APRIL, 1918 Age 25**

*Sacred Heart Of Jesus*

*Have Mercy On His Soul*

## Roy CONNOR

Phillip Roy Connor was born at Wellington, New South Wales, Australia on 23rd December, 1892 to parents James Nicholas & Johanna Jane Connor (nee Mylecharane).

Roy Connor was educated at Sisters of Mercy Convent School, Wellington, NSW.

Roy O'Connor (name as listed on Embarkation Roll) was a 23 year old, single, Carter from 38 Great Buckingham Street, Redfern, NSW when he enlisted at Holsworthy, Sydney, NSW (listed as "Holdsworthy") on 7th September, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 3047 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr J. O'Connor, (name as listed on Embarkation Roll) of 38 Great Buckingham Street, Redfern, NSW.

Private Roy Connor was posted to 19th Battalion for recruit training (no date).

Private Roy O'Connor (name as listed on Embarkation Roll) embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Suevic* (A29) on 20th December, 1915 (as per Embarkation Roll & Purport form, however the Casualty Form – Active Service & Statement of Service form both recorded he embarked on 23rd December, 1915) with the 5th Infantry Brigade, 19th Infantry Battalion, 7th Reinforcements & disembarked at Egypt (no date recorded.)

### 19th Battalion

The 19th Battalion was raised at Liverpool in New South Wales in March 1915 as part of the 5th Brigade. A large number of the 19th's original recruits had already served with the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF) in the operations to capture German New Guinea in 1914. The 19th left Australia in late June, trained in Egypt from late July until mid-August, and on 19 August landed at ANZAC Cove.....

*(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

Private Roy Connor was transferred to 4th Battalion & was taken on strength of 4th Battalion on 22nd February, 1916 at Tel-el-Kebir from 19th Battalion.

### 4th Battalion

The 4th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. Like the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions it was recruited from New South Wales and, together with these other battalions, formed the 1st Brigade.....

*(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

Private Roy Connor was transferred to 1st Pioneer Battalion on 10th March, 1916 & was taken on strength of 1st Pioneer Battalion at Serapeum on 11th March, 1916.

### 1st Pioneer Battalion

The 1st Pioneers were raised in Egypt, on 10 March 1916, from volunteers drawn from New South Wales who were subsequently assigned to the 1st Division. The battalion was formed in the aftermath of the failed Gallipoli campaign when the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) was expanded as part of plans to transfer it from the Middle East to Europe for service in the trenches along the Western Front. This expansion saw several new infantry divisions raised in Egypt and Australia, as well as specialist support units such as machine gun companies, engineer companies, artillery batteries and pioneer battalions. Trained as infantrymen, the pioneers were tasked with light combat engineer functions in the field, with a large number of personnel possessing trades from civilian life. The concept had existed within the British Indian Army before the war, but was adopted by the Australian Army in early 1916 to meet a need for troops with construction and engineering skills to assist with digging trenches, labouring, constructing strong points and undertaking battlefield clearance. At the same time, they could be pressed into the line to fight alongside regular infantry where required.

*(Pioneer Battalion information from Wikipedia)*

Private Roy Connor was admitted to 1st Australian Casualty Clearing Station on 19th March, 1916 with Influenza then transferred & admitted to No. 1 Australian Stationary Hospital at Ismalia the same day. The cause was then recorded as constipation. Private Connor was discharged to duty on 11th April, 1916.

Private Roy Connor was admitted to No. 3 Auxiliary Hospital at Heliopolis on 11th April, 1916 with Debility.

Private Roy Connor was transferred from 4th London General Hospital on 20th November, 1916 for Perham Downs.

[Note: Several entries above this were crossed out & deleted as incorrect. A total of 5 entries were crossed out from 2nd July, 1916 to 22nd December, 1916]

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 Roy Connor was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire, England on 23rd November, 1916 & medically classified "A" – medically fit.

Private Roy Connor was marched in to 1st Training Battalion, Lark Hill, Wiltshire on 24th November, 1916 from Brigade Hospital at Perham Downs.

Private Roy Connor was marched in to 1st Training Battalion, Lark Hill, Wiltshire on 15th December, 1916 from Brigade Hospital at Perham Downs.

Private Roy Connor was transferred back to 4th Battalion on 15th February, 1917 from 1st Pioneer Battalion.

Private Roy Connor proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 15th February, 1917 per S.S. *Victoria* to reinforce 4th Battalion. He was marched in to 1st A.D.B. Depot (Australian Divisional Base) at Etaples, France on 16th February, 1917. Private Connor was marched out to 4th Battalion on 22nd February, 1917 from A.D.B. Depot & joined 4th Battalion from Reinforcements on 24th February, 1917 in the Field.

Private Roy Connor was detached to C.R.E. for duty from 11th September, 1917 & rejoined 4th Battalion from C.R.E. on 16th September, 1917.

Private Roy Connor proceeded on Leave to UK from 19th January, 1918. He rejoined 4th Battalion from Leave on 7th February, 1918.

Private Roy Connor was sent sick to Hospital on 24th February, 1918. He was admitted to 3rd Australian Field Ambulance on 24th February, 1918 P.U.O. (Pyrexia (fever) of unknown origin) then transferred the same day to 1st Australian Divisional Rest Station. Private Connor was transferred & admitted to 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station on 4th March, 1918. He was transferred to Ambulance Training 17 on 8th March, 1918 & admitted to 55th General Hospital at Boulogne, France the same day with P.U.O. Private Connor marked for transfer to England on 16th March, 1918 & embarked for England on Hospital Ship *Pieter de Coninck* on 17th March, 1918 with Trench Fever.

#### **4th Battalion**

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the battalion returned to Egypt. In March 1916, it sailed for France and the Western Front. From then until 1918 the battalion took part in operations against the German Army, principally in the Somme Valley in France and around Ypres in Belgium. The battalion's first major action in France was at Pozieres in the Somme valley in July 1916. Later the battalion fought at Ypres, in Flanders, before returning to the Somme for winter.

The battalion participated in a short period of mobile operations following the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line in early 1917, but spent much of that year fighting in increasingly difficult conditions around Ypres. In 1918 the battalion returned to the Somme valley and helped to stop the German spring offensive in March and April.....

*(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

Private Roy Connor was admitted to Kitchener's Military Hospital, England on 17th March, 1918 with P.U.O. (Pyrexia (fever) of unknown origin). The Hospital Admission form recorded that he had Trench Fever.

Private Roy Connor was transferred to 1st Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield Park, Harefield, Middlesex on 28th March, 1918.

Private Roy Connor died at 9.55 pm on 29th April, 1918 at 1st Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield Park, Harefield, Middlesex, England from 1. Tubercle of Lungs & 2. Tubercular Meningitis.

A death for Roy Connor, aged 26, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Uxbridge, Middlesex, England.

Private Roy Connor was buried at 10.30 am on 2nd May, 1918 in St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England – Grave No. 51. Now recorded by CWGC as Grave number - Aust. 48 and now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private Connor – *Oak coffin – new good condition. Firing Party and Bugler from A.I.F. Headquarters, London. No Gun Carriage available – ambulance used. Funeral was held at 10.30 am and a small number of the Staff also attended: also a few patients. Captain C. S. Renwick, A.A.M.C. was in charge. Service conducted by Rev. Father Caron part-time Roman Catholic Chaplain attached to No. 1 A.A.H.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Roy Connor contains a letter from Major Anderson, A.A.M.C., Registrar, to The Secretary, Australian Red Cross Society, London in regards to 3047 Private Roy Connor, 4th Battalion, A.I.F. which reads: *"In reply to your enquiry of 13th inst. I have to report that above soldier died at this Hospital from (1) Tubercle of lungs, (2) Tubercular Meningitis, at 9.55 pm on 29.4.18. He was buried at 10.30 am on Thursday May 2nd, in the Harefield Parish Churchyard: Australian Section, Grave No. 51; and the officiating Clergyman was Father Octavien Caron, (R.C.) of the Presbytery, Rickmansworth.*

*In due course a Headstone will be erected at the grave out of funds subscribed by the Staff and Patients of this Hospital, and in the meantime arrangements are being made for the erection of an Oak Cross. The grave will be photographed by a Member of the A.I.F. and copies sent to the next of Kin. We have no preserved record of the soldier's last days, but both Father Caron and the Church of England Chaplain, I understand, wrote to his people in Australia. The sister at the time i/c ward probably did so as well. The late soldier's effects are dealt with by a special Department of the A.I.F. and will no doubt reach the proper person in due course."*

Mrs J. Connor, 38 Great Buckingham Street, Redfern, mother of the late Private Roy Connor, wrote to Base Records on 10th August, 1918 to say *"I am in receipt of particulars in a letter from you about my son Private R. Connor 3047 lately deceased soldier & I am deeply grateful to the Department for same & accept thanks from myself & family. I also wish to know why the Department never notified me of my son's illness as he was in Hospital for 6 weeks first in Kitcheners Hospital he was admitted there on 17th Marched. I received a letter from him why I was never acquainted of his illness & I would deem it a favour of you could let me know at any time."*

Base Records replied on 16th August, 1918 to advise *"a cable message was received at this Office, subsequent to that which reported the death of your son, the late No 3047, Private R. Connor, 4th Battalion, intimating that he was admitted to the 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital on 28.3.18 suffering from trench fever and meningitis. Consequently this advice, being of a later date than that which reported the death of the soldier, was not transmitted."*

[Note: a copy of the cable message that Base Records referred to above is located in the Service Record file for the late Private Roy Connor & was dated 17th April, 1916.]

Private Roy Connor requested in his Will dated 4th June, 1917 that he bequeathed all his real & personal estate to his mother – Mrs J. Connor of 38 Great Buckingham Street, Redfern, Sydney.

Jennie Connor, 38 Great Buckingham Street, Redfern, mother of the late Private Roy Connor, wrote to Base Records on 1st February, 1920 stating she had seen in Sunday Times advertising for claimants of personal belongings & effects of deceased soldiers. She stated she had applied several times for her deceased son's personal effects without success.

Base Records replied on 9th February, 1920 to advise *"It is regretted one package of effects of your son, containing articles as enumerated on the attached inventory, was included in a consignment shipped from England per S.S. "BARUNGA", which vessel was lost at sea, with all cargo, as a result of enemy action."*

Jennie Connor, 38 Great Buckingham Street, Redfern, mother of the late Private Roy Connor, wrote to Base Records (not dated but received by Base Records on 19th August, 1921) to state that all of *"his belongings were lost as sea & I have not received the Princess Mary Box or Star or Long Service Medal or any other letters from the King & I see that lots of other Mothers received them.....& let me know if I am entitled to them.."*

Base Records replied to Mrs J. Connor on 6th September, 1921 to inform her that the 1914/15 Star would not be issued as her son did not enter a theatre of war prior to 31st December, 1915. *"So far as is known at present, the mementoes due in deceased's name comprise: British War Medal, Victory Medal, Memorial Plaque, Memorial Scroll, Brochure "Where the Australians Rest" and they will be forwarded to his father as they become available. That portion of your communication in connexion with Princess Mary's Gift has been referred to Headquarters, Victoria Barracks, Sydney, for necessary action."*

Private Roy Connor was entitled to British War Medal & Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Connor's father – Mr J. Connor, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent November, 1921 & Plaque sent October, 1922 – signed for as receipt of 26th April, 1923).

Mrs J. Connor wrote to Base Records on 9th April, 1923 stating she was *"writing with reference to War Medals due to me for my son (deceased) Private R. Connor 3047 4th Battalion. I have received one medal only & you informed me the last time I wrote that I would receive a Brittish Medal, Victory Medal, Memorial Plaque & Memorial Scroll & Brochure – Where the Australians Rest & your letter was dated 6th Sept 1921 so I have been expecting to receive them. I wish to inform you that I have changed my address since then but I left my address at the Redfern Post Office, awaiting your answer.....my address Mrs J. Connor, 377 Anzac Parade, South Kensington."*

Base Records replied to Mrs J. Connor on 20th April, 1923 to advise that they were *"forwarding the Victory Medal issuable on account of the service of the late No. 3047 Private R. CONNOR, 4th Battalion, to his father at the address from which you write.....A communication regarding the Memorial Plaque was addressed to Mr Connor at 38 Great Buckingham Street, Redfern, but was returned to this Office unclaimed; hence the delay in the despatch of the Victory Medal. This, no doubt, will also account for the fact that the British War Medal, which was forwarded to Headquarters, Victoria Barracks, Paddington, N.S.W. on 18/11/21, for transmission to the late soldier's father, has not been received by him. I am, therefore, referring your enquiry regarding this item to that Office for attention. The Memorial Scroll and Brochure "Where the Australians Rest" were despatched to Mr Connor at Redfern but neither had been returned to this Office. In the circumstances I would suggest that enquiries be made at the local Post Office; failing any satisfactory result, upon receipt of your advice to that effect, investigations will be made through the G.P.O. Melbourne."*

Jane Connor, 377 Anzac Parade, South Kensington, wrote to Base Records on 26th April, 1923 to inform them that she had never received the Memorial Scroll & Brochure but had received the British War Medal. She stated she had enquired at Redfern Post Office but they advised that they knew nothing about the Memorial Plaque addressed to Mr J. Connor, 38 Great Buckingham Street, Redfern.

Base Records wrote to the Deputy Postmaster General, Melbourne on 5th May, 1923 to advised that a Memorial Scroll No. 343799 was despatched on 28th November, 1922 addressed to Mr J. Connor, 38 Great Buckingham Street, Redfern, Sydney. *"Mr Connor, who is now resident at 377 Anzac Parade, South Kensington, NSW, advises that this memento has never been received by him, and has made enquiries from the local Post Office at Redfern without result. I should therefore be glad of investigations could be made regarding its disposal."*

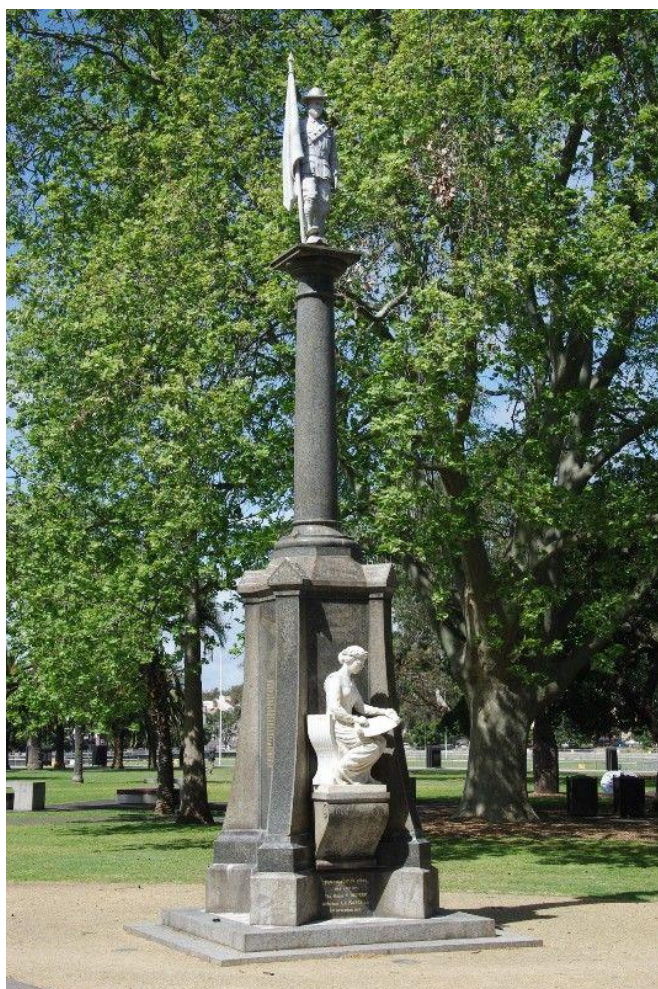
Base Records replied to Mrs J. Connor, 377 Anzac Parade, South Kensington on 5th May, 1923 to advise that an enquiry was being made by the Deputy Postmaster General, Melbourne, regarding the Memorial Scroll issued in connection with her son, the late No. 3047 Private R. Connor.

The Post Master General's Department, Melbourne, wrote to Base Records on 5th June, 1923 in regards to the inquiry on 5th May about the "missing packet containing a Memorial Scroll No. 343799, on account of the late No. 3047 Pte R. Connor, 4th Battalion, addressed to Mr J. Connor, 38 Great Buckingham St., Redfern, Sydney (present address – 377 Anzac Parade, South Kensington, NSW). I beg to inform you that careful search has been made, but it is regretted no trace of the article in question can be found in this Department....."

Base Records replied to Mr J. Connor, 377 Anzac Parade, South Kensington on 13th June, 1923 concerning the Memorial Scroll issued to his son, the late Private R. Connor "If you will complete the attached Declaration before a Justice of the Peace and return it to me I shall take the necessary steps to obtain a fresh issue of this memento. As stated in the Declaration, however, it would only be on the distinct understanding that, should the original at any time turn up, one of the Scrolls will be returned to this office for cancellation. This is essential, as the British Authorities have made it a rigid rule that only one Scroll may be issued in connexion with each deceased soldier."

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Roy Connor – service number 3047, aged 25, of 4th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of James and Jane Connor, of 38 Great Buckingham St., Redfern, Sydney.

P. R. Connor is remembered on the Redfern War Memorial, located at Redfern Park, 51 Elizabeth Street, Redfern, Sydney, NSW.



**Redfern War Memorial** (Photos from Monument Australia)

P. R. Connor is remembered on the Redfern Town Hall First World War Honor Roll located in Redfern Town Hall, 73 Pitt Street, Redfern, Sydney, NSW.



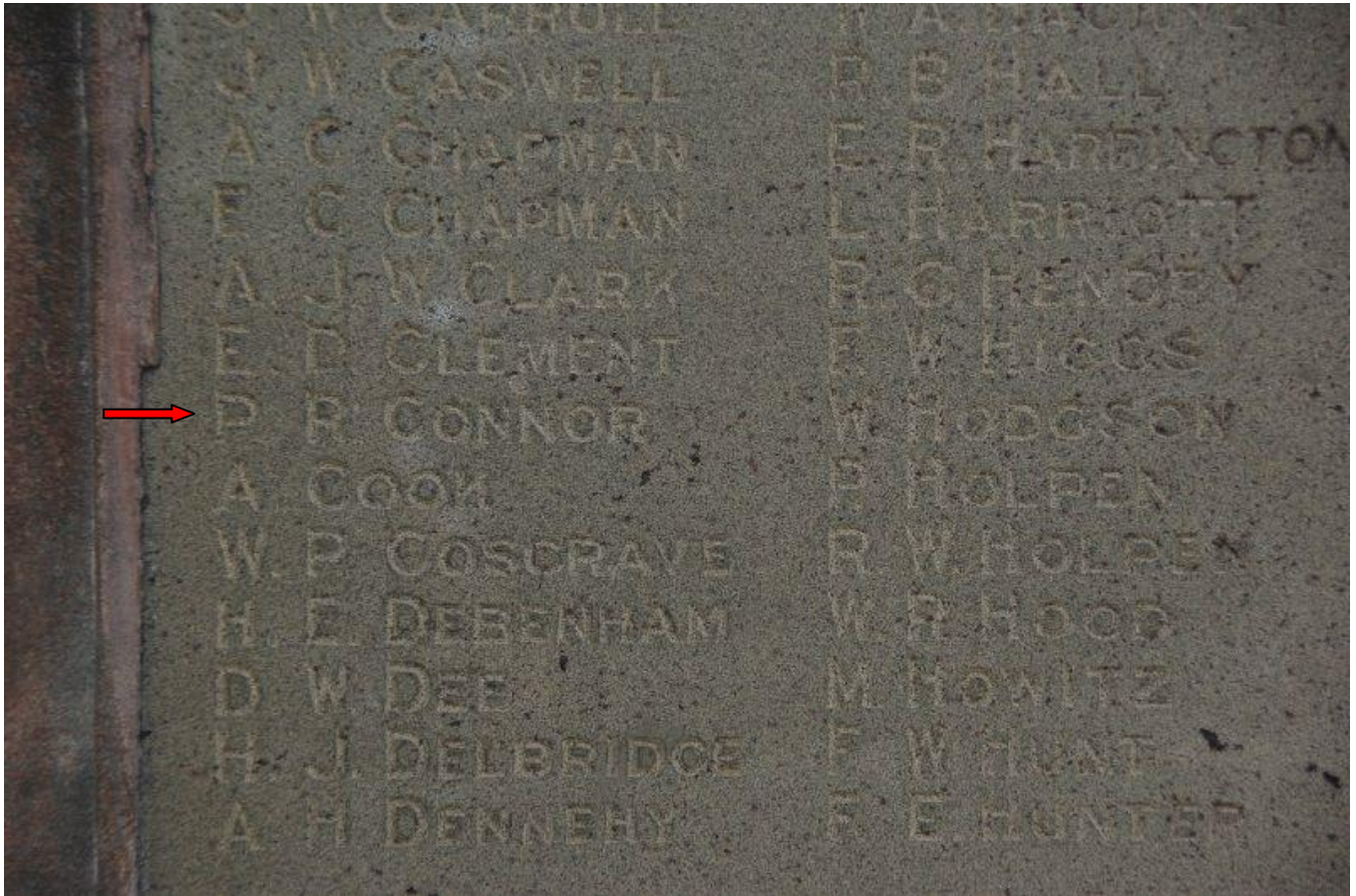
**Redfern Town Hall First World War Honor Roll** (Photo from City of Sydney, NSW Gov)

P. R. Connor is remembered on the Redfern Memorial Gates (left pillar), located at the former St. Paul's Anglican Church, now Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 242 Cleveland Street, Redfern, Sydney, NSW.



**Redfern Memorial Gates** (Photos from Monument Australia)





**Redfern Memorial Gates (left pillar)**

Private R. Connor is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 39.

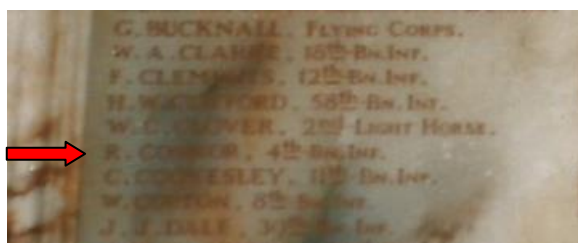


*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

R. Connor is remembered on the Australian Soldiers' Memorial in St. Mary the Virgin Church, Church Hill, Harefield, Middlesex, England.



Australian Soldiers' Memorial, Harefield (Photo from War Memorials Online – B. Wood)



(81 pages of Private Roy Connor'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, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



**Connor Family**



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **MOSTLY ILL**

### **166TH CASUALTY LIST**

### **NEW SOUTH WALES**

### **ILL**

Pte R. CONNOR, Redfern

*(The Daily Telegraph, Sydney, NSW – 29 April, 1916)*

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### **ROLL OF HONOUR**

CONNOR – Private Roy Connor died of illness, April 29, 1918, son of Mr and Mrs J. Connor, 38 Great Buckingham street, Redfern.

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 8 May, 1918)*

## **PERSONAL**

Word was received in Tamworth yesterday that Pte Roy Connor, brother of Mrs H. Allsopp, of Napier-street, had been killed in action.

*(Daily Observer, Tamworth, NSW – 8 May, 1918)*

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## **PERSONAL PARS**

Mrs R. Best, of Percy Street, received the news yesterday that her brother, Private Roy Connors, had died from sickness in France. The deceased soldier, who was a native of Wellington, was 26 years of age, and the fourth son of Mr and Mrs James Connors, of Redfern, but late of this town. He sailed from Australia on his 24th birthday, and was in the fighting line for two years. The late soldier was well-known and respected in Wellington, and his many friends will grieve to hear of his death. Mr P. Connors, in the employ of Mr F. C. B. Smith, is a brother of the deceased soldier.

*(Wellington Times, NSW – 9 May, 1918)*

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## **ROLL OF HONOUR**

CONNOR – Private Roy Connor, died of illness in England, April 29, 1918, on active service two years and four months. Inserted by father, mother, sisters and brothers. R.I.P.

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 11 May, 1918)*

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## **APRIL FIGHTING**

### **HEAVY CASUALTY LIST**

#### **MANY MEN GASSED**

A big batch of men who were killed in action or who died of wounds received during the heavy fighting last month are included in casualty list No. 401, issued to-day.

#### **NEW SOUTH WALES**

#### **DIED OTHER CAUSES**

Pte R. CONNOR, Redfern, illness

*(The Sun, NSW – 20 May, 1918)*

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## **WAR CASUALTIES**

### **DIED OF ILLNESS**

Mrs R. Best, of Wellington, New South Wales, has received news that her brother Pte R. Connors, has died of illness at the front. He had seen over two years' service. He was the fourth son of Mr and Mrs James Connors, of Redfern, and was 26 years old.

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 30 May, 1918)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

CONNOR – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Private R. Connor, 4th Batt., died of illness, Harefield, England, April 29, 1918.

You are not forgotten, my son,

For true love never dies.

The dearest spot on earth to us

Is where our son and brother lies.

Inserted by his loving father, mother, sisters and brothers.

CONNOR – In loving memory of my dear nephew and our cousin. Pte Roy Connor, who died of illness, Harefield Hospital, England, April 29, 1918, aged 26.

God claimed one of Australia's best.

Inserted by his fond aunt and cousins, Mollie and Stewart.

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 29 April, 1919)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

CONNOR – In loving memory of Private Roy Connor, 4th Battalion, who died of illness on April 29, 1918, in Harefield Hospital, England. Father, not my will but Thine be done. Inserted by his fond mother and sister, Eileen.

CONNOR – A tribute to the memory of Private Roy Connor, died at Harefield Hospital, April 29, 1918. Inserted by his sister and brother-in-law, M. and S. F. O'Brien.

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 29 April, 1920)*

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### 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. 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)*

Private R. Connor does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*Sacred Heart Of Jesus Have Mercy On His Soul*

## St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England

St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield contains 126 Commonwealth War Graves.

During the two world wars, the United Kingdom became an island fortress used for training troops and launching land, sea and air operations around the globe. There are more than 170,000 Commonwealth war graves in the United Kingdom, many being those of servicemen and women killed on active service, or who later succumbed to wounds. Others died in training accidents, or because of sickness or disease. The graves, many of them privately owned and marked by private memorials, will be found in more than 12,000 cemeteries and churchyards.

Harefield (St. Mary) Churchyard contains war graves from both world wars. There are 120 First World War graves, mostly those of Australians who died in No. 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Harefield Park. Uniquely, their graves are marked by scroll shaped headstones, chosen by the staff and patients at the hospital. In the centre of the Australian plot stands a memorial obelisk which was erected by Sir Francis Newdegate, late Governor of Tasmania and of Western Australia, and Mr. C.A.M. Billyard-Leake, of Harefield Park. The churchyard also contains six graves of the Second World War.

*(Information & photos from CWGC)*





**St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield**



Photo of Private R. Connor's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England.

*(Note: The headstone for Private R. Connor has the incorrect date of death – should be 29th April, 1918. CWGC were advised at the time of researching (April, 2021) of the error)*



*(Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)*



**UPDATE:** The following photo was sent to me (June, 2021) from CWGC showing that Private R. Connor's headstone had been amended.



*(Photo courtesy of CWGC – June, 2021)*



**St Mary the Virgin Church, Harefield** (Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)



**St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield** (Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)



St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield (Photos courtesy of Peter Bennett)

