St. Mary's New Churchyard, Codford, Wiltshire, England

War Graves

Lest We Forget

World War 1

7455 PRIVATE

H. D. FLETCHER

13TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

29TH JULY, 1917

Harry David FLETCHER

Harry David Fletcher was born in Sydney, New South Wales around 1885.

[Note: No birth registration in NSW could be located in either Harry Conway (name used when he attested) or Harry Fletcher around the years 1885/1886.]

Harry D. Fletcher 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.

Harry Fletcher was a 31 year old, married, Labourer from Alexandria, NSW when he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). He attested originally under the name of Harry Conway on the 26th February, 1917 - his father being Daniel Conway. His religion was Church of England. To the question of "are you married?" "Harry Conway had replied – "No". 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.

Private 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.

Private Harry David Conway/Fletcher, Service number 7455, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Marathon (A74)* on 10th May, 1917 with the 13th Infantry Battalion, 25th Reinforcements & 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.

[Private Fletcher's Will was made out on 1st May, 1917 in the name Harry David Fletcher. A letter in Private 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, Private 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 Private 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.]

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

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

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

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

Private Harry David Fletcher was buried on 31st July, 1917 in St. Mary's New Churchyard, Codford, Wiltshire, England - Grave No. 80 in the Australian Section.

From the burial report - *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.

Private 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.

A War pension was granted to the Widow of Private 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.

Private 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 Private Fletcher's widow – Lily May Fletcher (September, 1922 & October, 1922). Private Harry Fletcher's father was listed as Daniel Conway of Sandgate, Newcastle, NSW.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Harry David Fletcher – service number 7455, of 13th Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

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

(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)

Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

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(56 pages of Private 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)

N.S.W. HONOR ROLL

PTE H. FLETCHER

Of Sydney, died of illness

(*Evening News*, Sydney, NSW – 1 September, 1917)

<u>Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones</u>

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)

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

St. Mary's New Churchyard, Codford, Wiltshire, England

The New Zealand Command Depot was established at Codford in June 1916 and the No 3 New Zealand General Hospital followed in July. The New Churchyard was established by deed of gift as the "Military Burial Ground," with a small part reserved for future burials from the parish. The war graves plot contains 98 burials, mostly of New Zealand and Australian forces. There is only one burial of the Second World War in the New Churchyard.

(Information from CWGC)

There are 31 WW1 Australian War Graves & 66 WW1 New Zealand War Graves located here. There is one WW1 British Royal Army Medical Corp Grave & one WW2 Welsh Guards grave located in this Churchyard.

(Photos by Romy Wyeth 2013)

New Zealand Section of Codford Anzac War Graves Cemetery *(Photos by Romy Wyeth 2013)*

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL   D00275

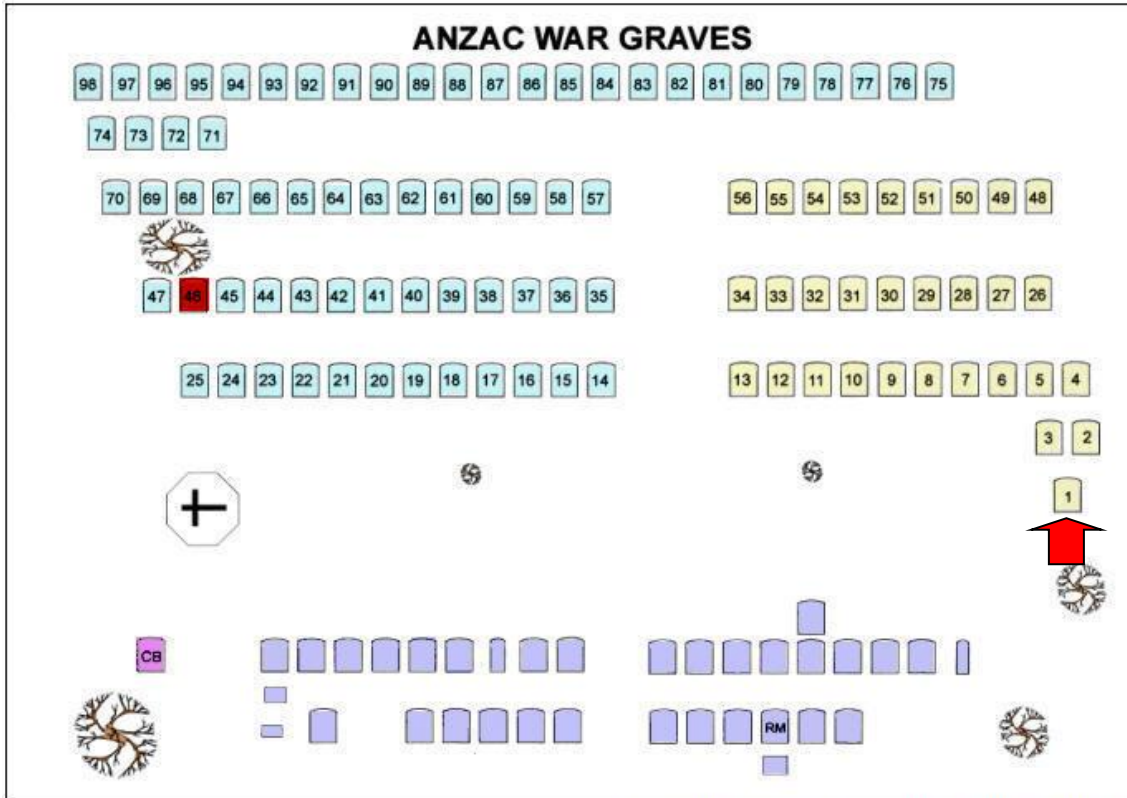**Private H. D. Fletcher's Original Cross** *(marked with red arrow)*

Photo of Private H. D. Fletcher's Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone in St. Mary's New Churchyard, Codford, Wiltshire, England. Also known as Codford Anzac War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire.

(Photo by Andrea Charlesworth)

Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Private 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 (CWGC Reference - Grave # 80)

ANZAC WAR GRAVES

Codford War Graves map adapted from Brian Marshall courtesy of Romy Wyeth

Australian Soldiers

Welsh Soldier

New Zealand Soldiers

Local Burials

UK Soldier