

**Moorgate Cemetery,
Rotherham, Yorkshire**

War Grave



Lest We Forget

World War 1



14604 DRIVER

W. H. GOWER

AUST. FIELD ARTILLERY

4TH NOVEMBER, 1918 Age 23

William Harold GOWER

William Harold Gower was born on 17th November, 1894 at Latrobe, Tasmania to parents James Henry and Sarah Ann Gower (nee Pugh).

William Harold Gower attended Latrobe State School, Tasmania.

William Harold Gower was a 21 year old, single, Labourer from Kardella Road, Korumburra, Victoria when he enlisted on 28th February, 1915 with the 4th Field Artillery Brigade, 5th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 14604 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr J. H. Gower, of Cotton Street, Latrobe, Tasmania.

Private William Harold Gower was posted to "B" Company, 23rd (Depot) Battalion at Royal Park on 5th January, 1916. He was transferred to 5th Reinforcements, 4th Field Artillery Brigade as Gunner on 7th January, 1916.

Gunner William Harold Gower embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Port Lincoln (A17)* on 4th May, 1916.

Gunner William Harold Gower joined the Artillery Training School at Tel-el-Kebir, Egypt. (no date recorded).

Gunner William Harold Gower embarked overseas from Alexandria to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) on *Lake Manitoba* on 1st August, 1916.

Gunner William Harold Gower was marched out to Cosham Hutments, Cosham, England on 10th September, 1916.

Gunner William Harold Gower proceeded overseas to France from R.B.A.A. (Reserve Brigade Australian Artillery) at Larkhill, Wiltshire via Folkestone on 2nd January, 1917 on *Princess Henrietta*.

Gunner William Harold Gower was marched in from England to A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 3rd January, 1917.

Gunner William Harold Gower was transferred to 2nd Division Artillery at Etaples on 24th January, 1917 & was taken on strength of 2nd D.A.C. from A.G.B. (Australian General Base) Depot on 27th January, 1917 in France.

Gunner William Harold Gower was mustered as Driver on 1st March, 1917.

Driver William Harold Gower was written up for an offence in France on 5th June, 1917. On 30th May, 1917 "1. *When on active service being on private premises for the purpose of obtaining intoxicant during prohibited hours.* 2. *Giving a false number & name to M.P.*" He was awarded 48 hours Field Punishment 2 & forfeited 2 days pay.

Driver William Harold Gower was transferred to 5th F.A.B. (Field Artillery Brigade) from 2nd D.A.C. (Divisional Artillery Column) on 22nd July, 1917. He was taken on strength of 5th F.A.B. & posted to 105th Battery on 22nd July, 1917.

Driver William Harold Gower proceeded on leave to UK on 16th November, 1917 & rejoined from leave on 2nd December, 1917.

Driver William Harold Gower was sent sick to Hospital on 18th February, 1918. He was admitted to 7th Australian Field Ambulance on 18th February, 1918 then transferred to 6th Australian Field Ambulance on 19th February, 1918 with Scabies. He was discharged to duty on 26th February, 1918 & rejoined his Brigade from Hospital on 27th February, 1918.

Driver William Harold Gower was sent sick to Hospital on 6th March, 1918. He was admitted to 9th Australian Field Ambulance on 7th March, 1918 with Adenitis then transferred to 11th Australian Field Ambulance on 11th March, 1918. He was discharged to duty on 18th March, 1918.

Driver William Harold Gower was transferred & taken on strength with 2nd D.A.C. on 22nd March, 1918.

Driver William Harold Gower was transferred back to 5th F.A.B. (Field Artillery Brigade) in France on 10th April, 1918 & taken on strength with 105th Battery.

Driver William Harold Gower was wounded in action in France on 31st August, 1918. He was admitted to 15th Australian Field Ambulance on 31st August, 1918 with shrapnel wounds to head. Driver Gower was transferred to 41st Casualty Clearing Station the same day then transferred to Ambulance Train. He was admitted to 12th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 1st September, 1918. Driver Gower was invalided to UK on 3rd September, 1918.

War Diary 5th Australian Field Artillery Brigade – 31st August, 1918:

5 am. to 6.45 am. In support of the Infantry attacking towards Mount ST. QUENTIN our Batteries fired on to areas in squares I. 14, 15, 16, 20 and 21. Batteries have been kept solidly carting ammunition since coming into action yesterday, and approximately 7,000 rounds of 18-pounder and 1,200 rounds 4.5 Howitzer were expended during the first 24 hours in action.

5 pm. Instructions received from 2nd D.A.H.Q. to move all batteries up to the Western side of the River SOMME to support further attack tonight.

5.20 pm. An enemy Field gun and Machine gun troubling the Infantry from ANVIL WOOD in L. 21.c. The 105th Battery and three guns of 14th Battery fired for half an hour on I. 21c. 13th. 15th. and a section of 14th. Battery ordered to search and sweep the Eastern portion of I. 21.b. and all on I.22.a.

(Information from the Australian War Memorial)

Driver William Harold Gower was admitted to Lord Derby War Hospital, Warrington, England on 4th September, 1918 with shrapnel wounds to head.

Driver William Harold Gower was on furlo from 24th October, 1918 to 7th November, 1918 where he was to report to No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.

Driver William Harold Gower died on 4th November, 1918 at 62 St. John's Rd, Rotherham, England from Influenza & Pneumonia whilst on leave in England.

A death for William H. Gower, aged 23, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Rotherham, West Riding of Yorkshire, England.

Driver William Harold Gower was buried at 10 am on 11th November, 1918 in Moorgate Cemetery, Rotherham, Yorkshire – Plot number B3. N.G. 24. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Driver William Harold Gower - *Coffin was Pine (brass mountings). The deceased soldier was accorded a full Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and surmounted by wreaths sent from friends. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside, and the Rev. Thomas Morton conducted the burial service. The grave will be turfed and an oak cross will be erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London was represented at the funeral. Names of Relatives & friends present at the funeral – Mr & Mrs Hedley Shay, Mrs Helps.*

The following newspaper article was located in the Service Record file for Driver William Harold Gower. No newspaper name or date is included.

VICTIMS OF THE INFLUENZA SCOURGE

AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER'S DEATH

The Borough Coroner, Mr W. J. Bradford, held inquest on Wednesday respecting the death of two victims of the influenza epidemic. The first case was that of Driver Wm. Henry Gower (23), of the Australian Field Artillery, whose home is stated to be in Tasmania, and who died at 62, St. John's road, Eastwood, on Monday.

Hedley Shay, 62, St. John's road, Eastwood View, said deceased was no relation to his, but came with a friend, also an Australian soldiers, who was a relation of Mrs Shay. Deceased came from the Lord Derby War Hospital at Warrington. Gower had no relations in England, and persuaded his friend to bring him to Rotherham to spend his leave. Deceased was discharged as convalescent on October 25th, and should have reported in London on November 7th. On Friday, November 1st, deceased complained of illness. He appeared short of breath. He went to bed and remained there, but was not seen by a doctor. He died on Monday. Witness went for a doctor on Sunday afternoon, but the doctor could not then get to see the man. He was given a bottle of medicine, and the doctor went

to deceased at 4 o'clock on Monday afternoon, but the man was then dead. Deceased was a cattle dealer in civil life. The other soldier had to be taken to hospital with bronchitis but was now improving.

Dr. Slack, who had examined the body, said the cause of death was pneumonia following influenza.

The Coroner recorded a verdict of "death from influenza followed by pneumonia."

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Driver William Harold Gower contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of the relatives in Australia to obtain the details into the death of Driver William Harold Gower. A letter was received from Hedley Say, of 62 St. John's Road, Eastwood View, Rotherham, Yorkshire on 20th December which reads: "*Dear Madam, In reply to your letter of the 17th we are only to pleased to give you information relating to the death of Driver William H. Gower. We would have wrote to his relatives in Australia and sent his few effects such as Pocket Wallet and ciggerette case only we have no address there being none in his wallet. His Military pay book was taken by the Australian Officers who came to see the body and attend to the burial, he said he would call and see us again for the expenses but we have heard nothing further about it. Gower came on sick furlough with a friend who is a slight relative of my wife. He was taken ill with the influenza epidemic pneumonia following, the doctor was sent for but he died before the doctor could see him all was done for him that could possibly be done he could not have had more attention if he had been at home if you would send us Gowers Parents address we will write them and send his few belongings.*"

Miss Dorothy Hancock, of Korumburra, wrote to Base Records on 14th February, 1919 enquiring into the death of the late Driver W. H. Gower & also to obtain a photo of the grave. Base Records replied that "*Driver W. H. Gower died on 4.11.18 at 62 St. John's Road, Rotherham, England, The cause of his death is not stated, but investigations are being made, and when further particulars are to hand they will be promptly communicated to next-of-kin (father) and will also be available to any enquirer. Your request for a photograph of the grave of the late soldier has been referred to Australian Imperial Force Headquarters, London, for compliance if possible.*" Miss Dorothy Hancock was the fiancée of the late Driver William Harold Gower.

Driver W. H. Gower signed on 20th July, 1917 that he did "*not desire to make a Will.*"

Mrs Sarah Gower, of 94 Landridge Street, Collingwood, Victoria, mother of the late Driver W. H. Gower, wrote to Base Records on 13th November, 1922 asking to "*please forward to Sarah Ann Gower, late of Tasmania, the medals of my late two sons William Harold Gower, Number 14604 Private of the Field Artillery & John Donald Gower, Number 2838, Private Twelfth Battalion. All I have received is the Star and Mother Badge.*" Base Records replied on 23rd November, 1922 that the "*British War Medals, Nos. 22699 and 40120, of your sons, the late Nos. 2838 Private J. D. Gower, 12th Battalion, and 14604 Driver W. H. Gower, 5th Field Artillery Brigade, were forwarded to Headquarters, 6th District Base, Anglesea Barracks, Hobart, for transmission to their father – if he has not yet received them, he should communicate with the authorities there on the subject, quoting the serial numbers of the medals shown above. I shall be much obliged if you will inform me whether your husband, Mr J. H. Gower, is also residing at the undermentioned address so that the Victory Medals may be transmitted to him.*"

Driver William Harold Gower was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Driver Gower's father – Mr J. H. Gower, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent February, 1922 & Plaque sent September, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Driver William Harold Gower – service number 14604, aged 23, of Australian Field Artillery. He was the son of James Henry and Sarah Ann Gower, of Latrobe, Tasmania. Born at Latrobe. His brother John Donald Gower also fell.

Driver W. H. Gower is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 14.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

W. H. Gower & his brother J. D. Gower are both remembered on the Latrobe Roll of Honour located in the Latrobe RSL Club, 160 Gilbert Street, Latrobe, Tasmania.



Latrobe Roll of Honour (Photo from Monument Australia – Arthur Garland)

W. H. Gower & his brother J. D. Gower are both remembered on the Latrobe War Memorial located at Gilbert Street, Latrobe, Tasmania.



Latrobe War Memorial (Photos from Monument Australia – Kent Watson & Chris McLaughlin)

(53 pages of Driver William Harold Gower'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



Connected to Driver William Harold Gower:

Younger brother - Pte John Donald Gower, 2838, 12th Battalion. Enlisted 10th August, 1915. Died of wounds received in action in France on 29th July, 1916. Buried in Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, France. Entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal.



Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, France (Photo above from CWGC; below by Geoffrey Gillon)



Newspaper Notices

TASMANIAN CASUALTIES

PERSONAL NOTES

Mr J. Gower, of Latrobe, is in receipt of a communication from the Base Records, informing him that his son, Driver W. H. Gower, has been admitted to the Lord Derby War Hospital, Warrington, England, suffering from gunshot wounds in the head.

(The North Western Advocate and The Emu Bay Times, Tasmania – 7 October, 1918)

LATROBE COUNCIL

Roll of Honour

The Council Clerk (Mr J, Chamberlain) was instructed to forward letters of condolence to the relatives of the following soldiers who have been killed at the front since the last meeting of the council:- Mr James Gower, Latrobe, in the loss of his son. Pte W. H. Gower; Mrs H. L. Thompson, Latrobe, in the loss of her husband, Pte Herbert Lewis Thompson.

Thanks for Victory.

(The North Western Advocate and The Emu Bay Times, Tasmania – 3 December, 1918)

ROLL OF HONOUR

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

DIED – OTHER CAUSES

Dvr. W. H. Gower, Latrobe – 4/11/18.

(Zeehan and Dundas Herald, Tasmania – 7 December, 1918)

DIED ON SERVICE

GOWER – Died of wounds, on the 4th November, in England, after 2 years 6 months' service, Dvr. William Harold Gower, second son of Sarah Gower, Tasmania, and dearly beloved fiancé of Dorothy Hancock, Korumburra.

No one knows the silent heartache,

Only those can tell

Who have lost their best and dearest,

And could not say farewell.

Also my darling brother Pte Harold Eugene Hancock. (Inserted by his sorrowing fiancée and sister.)

GOWER – In sad and loving memory of Dvr. William Harold Gower, also my darling son and brother Pte Harold E. Hancock.

We pictured you safely returning, dear Bant and Billie,

And were longing to clasp your hands,

But Got has postponed our meeting,

'Twill be in a better land.

-(Inserted by Mrs Merrett and Hancock family, Korumburra)

(The Argus, Melbourne – 25 December, 1918)

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)

Driver W. H. Gower does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Moorgate Cemetery, Rotherham, Yorkshire, England

Moorgate Cemetery, Rotherham, Yorkshire contains 52 Commonwealth burials of the First World War & 32 from the Second World War, all scattered throughout the cemetery. The Cross of Sacrifice is situated at the main entrance.

(Information from CWGC)



Entrance to Moorgate Cemetery, Rotherham, Yorkshire *(Photo by Stephen Farnell)*

Photo of Driver W. H. Gower's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Moorgate Cemetery, Rotherham, Yorkshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of Geoffrey Gillon)