

**Brookwood Military Cemetery,  
Brookwood, Surrey, England  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**2195 PRIVATE**

**L. MCDONALD**

**54TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**7TH JULY, 1917 Age 29**

## Lawrence McDONALD

Lawrence McDonald was born at Ballarat, Victoria (details from Attestation Papers) to parents Alexander (Alex/Alick) & Sarah McDonald (nee Marks).

[According to several Family Trees on Ancestry - Lawrence McDonald was born in 1892 at Lexton, Victoria. One tree has his date of birth as 21st August, 1892. There is no record of a birth for a "Lawrence McDonald" with father Alexander listed on Victorian Births, Deaths & Marriages between 1880 & 1900. There is however a birth for a "Linden McDonald" with parents Alex & Sarah McDonald registered in Lexton in 1892.]

Sarah McDonald, mother of Lawrence McDonald, died on 23rd September, 1906 in Victoria.

Alexander (Alex/Alick) McDonald, father of Lawrence McDonald, died on 13th July, 1915 at Doctors Creek, Victoria. (Death registered in 1915, however his headstone has 1914).

Lawrence McDonald stated he was a 28 year old, single, Labourer from Court House Hotel, Cobar, NSW when he enlisted at Dubbo, New South Wales on 15th April, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Presbyterian & his next of kin was listed as his father – Mr Alick McDonald, Ballarat, Victoria.

Private Lawrence McDonald was posted to A.I.F. Camp at Dubbo, NSW on 15th April, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 54th Depot Battalion at Bathurst, New South Wales on 26th April, 1916.

Private Lawrence McDonald, Service number 2195, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Boorara* (A42) on 19th August, 1916 with the 54th Infantry Battalion, 4th Reinforcements. He missed his Transport at Capetown on 21st September, 1916 & re-embarked on *Botanist* at Capetown on 29th September, 1916. Private McDonald was written up for a Crime while at Sea on 29th September, 1916 "*Absenting himself from H. T. Boorara for 144 hours.*" This was admonished by O/C Troops & he forfeited 6 days' pay. Private McDonald disembarked at Plymouth, England on 19th October, 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 Lawrence McDonald proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on *Princess Henrietta* on 14th December, 1916 from 14th Training Battalion. He was marched in to 5th D.B.D. (Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 15th December, 1916 from England. Private McDonald was marched out from 5th Australian Divisional Base Depot on 23rd December, 1916 & joined 54th Battalion in France on 24th December, 1916 from Reinforcements.

Private Lawrence McDonald was wounded in action in France on 15th May, 1917. He was admitted to 8th Field Ambulance with "H.E. Legs & Arm" then transferred the same day to 3rd Casualty Clearing Station. Private McDonald was transferred to 2nd Australian General Hospital at Wimereux on 17th May, 1917 with "H.E. Legs & L. Arm." He was transferred to Boulogne on 20th May, 1917 & embarked for England on Hospital Ship *St. Patrick* on the same day.

### 54th Battalion

The 54th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 16 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 2nd Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 2nd, the 54th was predominantly composed of men from New South Wales. The battalion became part of the 14th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

Moving to France in June 1916, the 54th fought its first major battle on the Western Front at Fromelles, on 19 July. It was a disaster.....

After a freezing winter manning trenches in the Somme Valley, in early 1917 the 54th Battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line. It was spared the assault but did, however, defend gains made during the second battle of Bullecourt.....

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

Information from War Diary of 54th Battalion for 15th May, 1917:

*During the early morning our front line and support trenches were subjected to a heavy bombardment from enemy artillery, also their minenwerfer and pineapple bombs.....*

*The total count of casualties was : Killed 61, Wounded 201 (including 4 officers), Died of wounds 9, missing 11.....*

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Lawrence McDonald was admitted to Horton County of London War Hospital, Epsom, England on 20th May, 1917 with G.S.W. (gunshot wounds) to both Legs & Right Arm – severe. The Hospital Admissions form recorded: “G.S.W. R & L Leg & L Arm.” “GSW \_\_ leg 1. Frac Fibula 2. Haem \_\_\_\_ \_\_. \_\_leg went gangrenous. Amp R joint 21st. Septicaemia....”

A letter was sent from Base Records, Melbourne, Victoria on 2nd June, 1917 to Mr A. McDonald, Ballarat, Victoria advising him that Private L. McDonald had been admitted to Horton County of London War Hospital, Epsom, England on 20th May, 1917 “suffering from gunshot wound legs and left arm, severe.” This communication was returned unclaimed to Base Records.

Result of an Xray on 4th June, 1916 on right Leg & Foot of Private Lawrence McDonald: “There are two substantial pieces of metal just above ankle on posterior aspect and there is a fracture of the Fibula.”

Private Lawrence McDonald died at 11.30 pm on 7th July, 1917 at Horton (County of London) War Hospital, Epsom, Surrey, England from wounds received in action in France – G.S.W. Legs, Acute Osteo Myelitis & Septicaemia.

A death for Lawrence McDonald, aged 29, was registered in the September quarter, 1917 in the district of Epsom, Surrey, England.

Private Lawrence McDonald was buried at 1.30 pm on 10th July, 1917 in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England – Australian Military Burial Ground - Plot number 179503.

From the burial report of Private Lawrence McDonald - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was buried with full Military Honours. Firing Party and Bugler from the staff of Administrative Headquarters A.I.F. London were in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Australian flag, and was borne to the graveside by members of the Administrative Headquarters A.I.F. staff. Floral tributes were sent from the Nursing Staff and the patients of the Hospital respectively. Chaplain Col. Wray (Church of England) officiated, the service being held at the graveside. The “Last Post” was sounded by the Administrative Headquarters’ Bugler. No relatives were present at the funeral, but a number of patients from the Hospital in which the deceased soldier died, attended as a mark of respect to the memory of their late comrade. Oak cross to temporarily mark the grave has been ordered, and will shortly be erected.”*

This is now recorded by CWGC as Memorial reference - XI. F. 15. Private L. McDonald now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

A. A. G., 3rd Military District, Melbourne, replied to Base Records on 1st August, 1917 with the following: “With reference to your 90140 of the 11th instant, reporting 2195 Private L. McDONALD (enlisted N.S.W.) 54th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, died 7/7/17, gunshot wounds left arm and legs at Horton County of London War Hospital, please note that inquiries were made at Ballarat, at the District Pay Office, and through the medium of the press with a view of locating the next of kin (Father) Mr A. McDONALD, but success by this procedure has not been attained.”

Mrs R. Morrison, The Park, Guildford, W.A., wrote to Base Records on 27th January, 1918 with the following letter: *"I am writing to ask if you can supply me with the address of relatives or next of kin, of the late Private Lawrence Macdonald, B. Company, 54th Batt. who died of wounds in England on 7th July, 1917. I have received a letter from a mate of his, asking me to find the relatives (if any) & convey to them some messages contained in the letter. I have inquired at Hd Qrs here, but they have no record of him, & advised me to communicate with you. I shall be much obliged if you will let me have a reply at your earliest convenience."*

Base Records replied to Mrs R. Morrison on 6th February, 1918 with the following: *"...and to state that the address of next-of-kin to No. 2195 Private Lawrence McDonald, 54th Battalion, is shown on the records as follows:- Mr Alexander McDonald (Father), Ballarat, Victoria. but all communications sent to this address have been returned unclaimed. Advertisements which have been inserted in the Press in this connection have remained unanswered."*

Communications sent to Mr A. McDonald, father of the late Private Lawrence McDonald, from Administrative Headquarters, London, England in February, 1918 were returned unclaimed.

Mr F. M. McDonald, 14 White Street, South Kalgoorlie, wrote to Base Records on 2nd July, 1918 with the following letter: *"Seeing the list of names of deceased soldiers in today's Kalgoorlie Miner, I see the name of 2195 Pte L. McDonald 54th Batt. I have not heard of a brother of mine named Lindon McDonald age 25 years for a number of years having heard he had enlisted but never had any word from him. Would be very pleased to hear further news. I have not a photo of him but probably there may have been one among his belongings. Anxiously awaiting your reply."*

Base Records replied to F. M. McDonald, 14 White Street, South Kalgoorlie, W. A., on 10th July, 1918 with *"...I have to state the soldier to whom you refer is the late No. 2195, Pte Lawrence McDonald, 54th Battalion. There is no record of a man by the name of Lindon McDonald having enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force."*

Base Records wrote to District Finance Officer, 2nd Military District, on 2nd August, 1920 asking *"If you are aware of the present address of next-of-kin of the late No. 2195 Private L. McDonald, 54th Battalion, kindly furnish same, as it is desired to dispose of his personal belongings."*

The District Finance Officer, 2nd Military District, Victoria Barracks, Sydney, NSW, replied to Base Records on 16th August, 1920 with *"...I have to inform you that a settlement has not yet been effected as the next-of-kin cannot be traced."*

Base Records wrote to Deputy Commissioner, Department of Repatriation, Melbourne on 30th May, 1923 with the following: *"I shall be glad to learn whether any claim for War Pension has been submitted on account of the service of the late No. 2195 Private L. McDonald, 54th Battalion, and if so, the name, address and relationship of the claimant. I desire this information in order that I may get into touch with some relatives of the deceased soldier with a view to disposing of his War Medals, etc., and the favour of early attention will be much appreciated."*

The Deputy Commissioner, Department of Repatriation, Melbourne replied to Base Records on 9th June, 1923 advising *"...I have to inform you that no pension claim has been lodged in this State."*

Private Lawrence McDonald was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to the next of kin but in Private McDonald's case the next-of-kin could not be located so the Medals, Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were sent to "Untraceables."

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Lawrence McDonald – service number 2195, aged 29, of 54th Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Private L. McDonald is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 159.



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

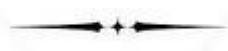
The Cobar War Memorial, located at Drummond Park, Linsley Street, Cobar, NSW does not list individual names.



**Cobar War Memorial** (Photo from AWM Places of Pride – Henry Moulds)

(75 pages of Private Lawrence McDonald'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*



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **FOR AUSTRALIA**

#### **311TH CASUALTY LIST**

NEW SOUTH WALES

WOUNDED

Pte LAWRENCE McDONALD, Ballarat, Vic (severely)

*(The Sun, Sydney, NSW – 16 June, 1917)*

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#### **THE 326th CASUALTY LIST**

DIED OF WOUNDS

Private L. McDonald, Ballarat

*(The Mildura Cultivator, Victoria – 25 July, 1917)*

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### **Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones**

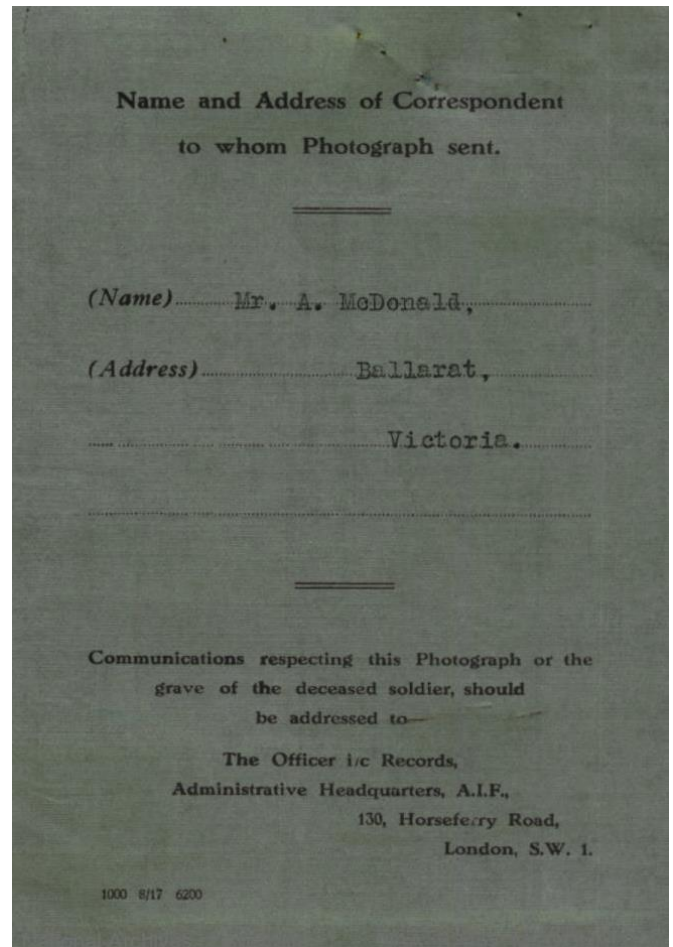
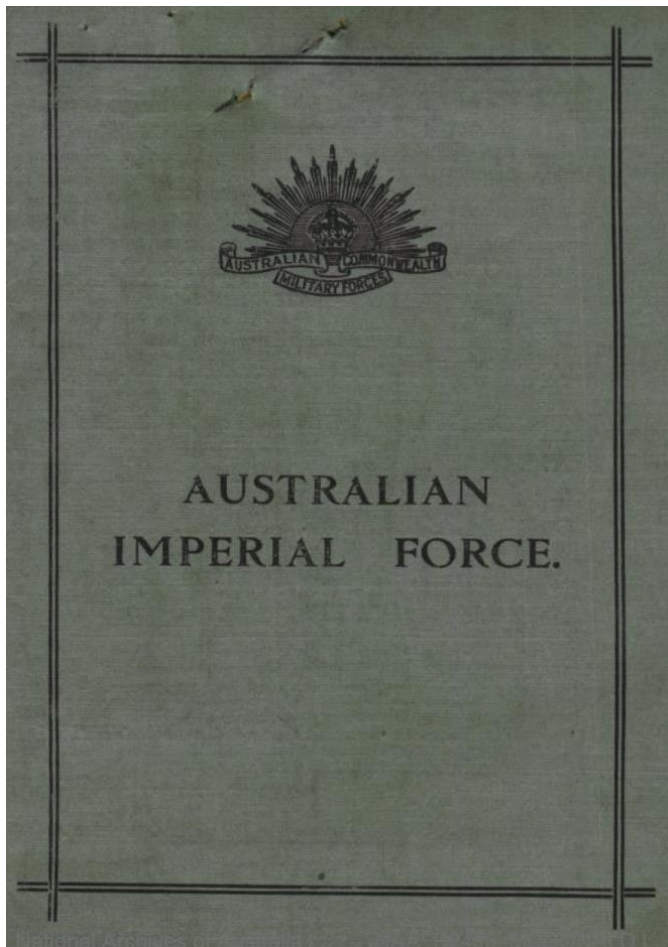
The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) &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

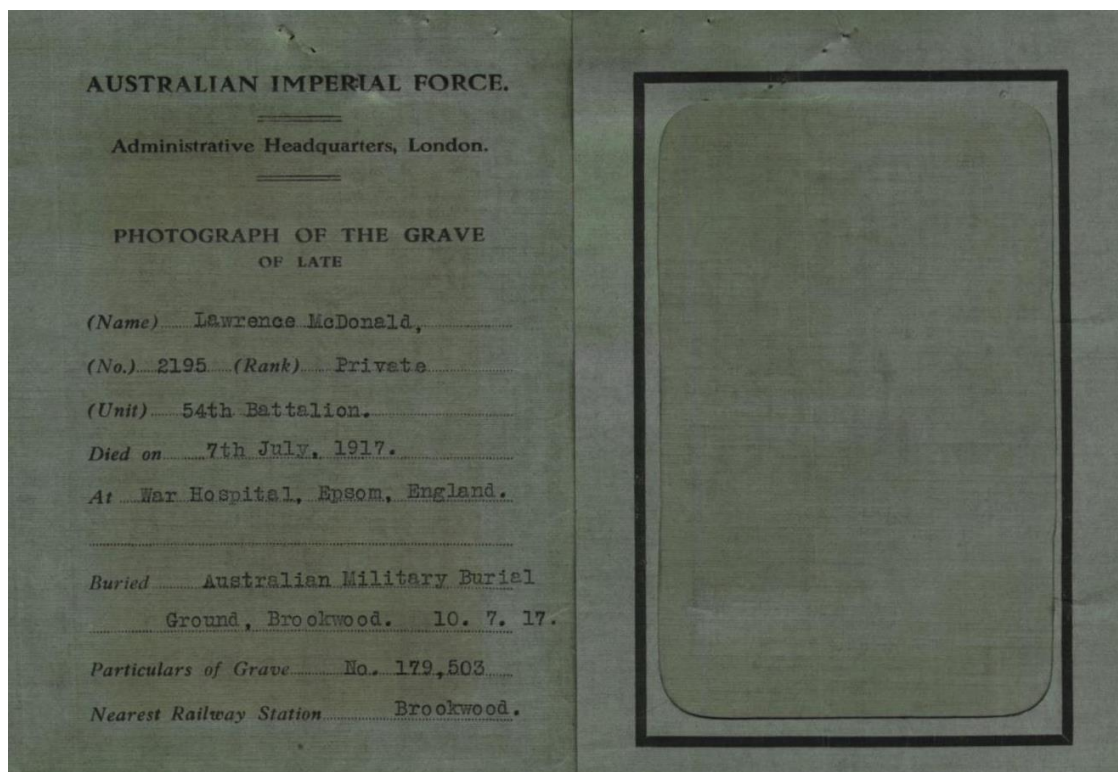
*(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)*

Private Lawrence McDonald does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

The next of kin of deceased soldiers were sent photographs of the graves. In the case of Private Lawrence McDonald communications addressed to his father in Ballarat were returned unclaimed. The following photos are of the folder that was returned unclaimed & is now located in the Service Record file for Private Lawrence McDonald.



Front & Back covers of Folder containing a photograph of the original Cross Marker sent to Next of Kin of Deceased soldiers





Original Cross Marker showing the grave of Private Lawrence McDonald in Brookwood Military Cemetery



## Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England

Located 30 miles from London in Surrey, Brookwood Military Cemetery is the largest CWGC cemetery in the United Kingdom. The cemetery contains the graves of more than 1,600 servicemen of the British Empire in the First World War and over 3,470 from the Second World War.

Brookwood Military Cemetery lies adjacent to Brookwood Cemetery (The London Necropolis), a vast space which covers 500 acres. In 1917, an area to the north of the cemetery was set aside as Brookwood Military Cemetery for men and women of Commonwealth forces who died, many of battle wounds, in the London district. This site was further extended to accommodate Commonwealth casualties of the Second World War. *(Information from CWGC)*

There are 446 Australian War Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery – 351 from World War 1 & 95 from World War 2.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00185

*A large crowd attends an A.I.F. military funeral at Brookwood Cemetery. In the foreground wooden crosses mark rows of graves. (Photo c1919)*

*Identified: Front row, left to right: Second Lieutenant Douglas Abbott Ferguson, Australian Flying Corps, died of accidental injuries 18 August 1918; Lieutenant (Lt) Francis John Smedley MC, 7th Battalion, died of wounds 20 August 1918.*

*Second row: 6860 Private (Pte) James Alexander McKeown, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 20 June 1918; 3622 Pte S T Wilson, 2nd Australian Pioneers, died of wounds 4 July 1918; 2390 Sergeant Frederick Charles Stronell, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 9 July 1918; Lt Arthur Melville Lilburne MC, 6th Brigade Australian Field Artillery, died of disease 11 July 1918.*



**Brookwood Military Cemetery** (Photo from CWGC)



**Brookwood Military Cemetery** (Photos by Magicfingers)



**Australian Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery** (Photos by Magicfingers)





*(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher)*



**Australian War Graves** *(Photo courtesy of Neil Bright 2020)*

Photo of Private L. McDonald's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England.



*(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher)*



(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher – Jan 2021)

