

Stories from the Honour Boards

Stories of those who served and are remembered on the Honour Boards in the Merrington Anzac Memorial Peace Chapel at Saint Andrew's Uniting Church

Booklet Number 91

CONOCHIE BROTHERS

WILLIAM STEWART

1890 - 1961

ALLAN FLEMING

1894 - 1968



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H01729

Sutton Veny Command Centre

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Cover:

Sergeant William Conochie was assigned to duties at Sutton Veny Agricultural School in 1919.

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Conochie Family from Victoria

Robert and Agnes Conochie were married in 1860 in Melbourne. Both were of Scottish birth. Robert Conochie was a draper in the Melbourne suburb of Ivanhoe. Seven children were born in Victoria before the family moved to Brisbane in about 1903, among them the two boys, William Stewart and Allan Fleming Conochie whose names are on the honour boards at Saint Andrew's Uniting Church. They all lived at Woolongabba where Mr Robert Conochie managed a warehouse. Their mother, Mrs Agnes Conochie died in 1906. After Mr Robert Conochie's second marriage in 1908 to Jesse Reid Meikle, Mr and Mrs Conochie moved to live at New Farm. Their farm at Tingoora, a small town near Wondai in the South Burnett Region also claimed the Conochie family's interest and time. They were listed as communicant members of Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church in 1921 and 1923.

Sergeant William Stewart Conochie

William Stewart Conochie was born at Fitzroy, Melbourne on 14 July 1890, the second son of Robert Conochie and Agnes Neilson née Anderson. His mother died when he was 15 years old. He worked with his father on the farm at Tingoora, William Conochie became a dairy instructor in Longerenong College at Dooen in the Wimmera District of Western Victoria.

At the age of 26 years and 2 months, he enlisted in Melbourne on 25 September 1916 to serve abroad in the Australian Infantry Force (AIF). A tall single man, he gave as next of kin the name of his father whose address at that time was Tingoora.

WS Conochie's regimental number was 977 and he was appointed to 4th and 5th Mobile Veterinary Sections, 3rd Military District at Maribyrnong. His unit embarked from Melbourne on board RMS *Omrah* on 17 January 1917 and arrived at Devonport England on 27 March.

After a short time at the Australian Army Service Corps Training Depot at Parkhouse, Private Conochie moved overseas to the Australian Veterinary Hospital at Calais and was soon promoted to the rank of corporal.



*Australian
Veterinary
Hospital,
Calais*

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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He was reprimanded for disobeying the instruction of a senior officer in January 1918 but a few days later was serving as temporary sergeant for duties with the 4th Field Artillery Brigade. After a fortnight's leave in England he was promoted to the rank of sergeant on 1 April 1918. In January 1919 Sergeant Conochie was assigned to duties at Sutton Veny Agricultural School and was later engaged in non military employment in England. Leave was also granted for him to take part in an American Irrigation Tour. His return to Australia via San Francisco was at his own expense on board SS *Ventura*. He disembarked at Sydney on 9 March 1920 and his period of enlistment was terminated at Melbourne on 7 May 1920.

William Conochie returned to Queensland and married Constance Mildred Sharpe, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs F R Sharpe of Ashton Hall, Clayfield on 24 March 1926 at Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Rev J Scott Macdonald officiated and Mr Dalley-Scarlett presided at the organ. Their home was at Brookland, 365 Sherwood Road, Sherwood and William continued his work as a farmer at Tingoorra.

W S Conochie presented himself for voluntary service in Brisbane during the Second World War. Then a stud master, he served with the rank of lieutenant in the Citizen Military Forces from 3 November 1941 till 25 September 1942. His duties in the early part of 1942 involved travel to Toowoomba.

In 1958 William Conochie moved to Anzac Hostel, Thorn Street, Kangaroo Point. He died on 26 August 1961, aged 71 years. He is honoured on a plaque bearing his name at the Queensland Garden of Remembrance at Bridgeman Downs.

Gunner Allan Fleming Conochie

The youngest son in the Conochie family was Allan Fleming Conochie born at the Melbourne suburb of Ivanhoe on 19 July 1894. Before the First World War he was a farmer at Tingoorra. His mother died in 1906 when Allan was 12 years old. He was six feet in height (183 cm), when at the age of 21 years and 11 months, he enlisted in Brisbane to serve in the AIF on 19 June 1916. His father, Robert Conochie of Brookland, Tingoorra was named as next of kin. Gunner Allan F Conochie. regimental number 31913 was assigned to join 9th Field Artillery Brigade, 8th Reinforcements for active service abroad.

His unit embarked from Sydney on board Royal Mail Ship *Osterley* on 10 February 1917 and arrived at Plymouth on 11 April 1917. Gunner Conochie spent the next few months in artillery training at Lark Hill. He overstayed leave on one occasion, forfeiting five days' pay (£1/5/-) as an "award". At the beginning of August he proceeded overseas to Rouelles in France where he was assigned to the 6th Field Artillery Brigade which was an army brigade, not allotted to any particular division. Gunner Conochie joined 106 Howitzer Battery. He was engaged in the campaigns on the Western Front till the Armistice on 11 November 1918. He was permanently attached to the 4th Australian Field Artillery Brigade before return to Australia on SS *Sardinia* in April 1919.

Allan Conochie returned to his family's farming property at Tingoorra. For a short period his sister Edith Mary Conochie was a teacher of music there. On 26 April 1926 he married Dorothy Henrietta Moore at All Saints Church, Brisbane. Their only child, Dorothy Elaine Conochie was born on 19 February 1925 at Wondai near Tingoorra. In 1935 and 1936 the family was living at Texas, New South Wales where Allan managed Gunyan Station and in 1943 they had moved to Norman Park in Brisbane. Like his elder brother William, Allan enlisted for service in the Second World War¹. Allan was employed as a clerk in New South Wales in the 1950s and his wife Dorothy died in Brisbane on 5 July 1960. Allan Conochie married Evelyn Maude Mills in Sydney in 1961 and they returned to Queensland, living in retirement at Mount Gravatt. Allan Fleming Conochie died on 14 December 1968 aged 74 years. He is remembered with honour in the Merrington Anzac Memorial Peace Chapel and on a plaque in the Garden of Remembrance at Bridgeman Downs.

1. He enlisted at Grovely with regimental number Q303005. Details of service are "not yet examined" which would mean delay and cost to access them at the present time.



Allan Conochie

References

National Archives of Australia, military records

National War Memorial

Unit Histories

Embarkation Rolls

Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church Annual Reports 1920 – 1925, Archives, Saint Andrew's Uniting Church, Brisbane

Queensland Register of Births Deaths and Marriages

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Australian Electoral Rolls

The Argus, 26 March 1886, page 1

The Brisbane Courier, 24 May 1924, page 22

The Daily Mail, 16 September 1924, page 6

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Lest we forget