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 132

WALTER LOCKHART GIBSON

1896 - 1981

This booklet remains the property of Saint Andrew’s Uniting Church. Please see a Guide if you would like a copy.
Gunner Walter Lockhart Gibson

Walter Lockhart Gibson was born in Brisbane on 11 May 1896, twin son of John Lockhart Gibson and Mary Florence née Burkitt. His father was a well known leader in the medical profession, ophthalmologist, University of Queensland senator, Brisbane Grammar School trustee and elder at Saint Andrew’s Presbyterian Church. He and his wife and family of twin sons and one daughter lived at Chiefswood at Simpson’s Road, Bardon. Walter’s mother, Mrs Florence Lockhart Gibson was an original member of the Braille Association. From February 1910 to December 1914 Walter attended Brisbane Grammar School where he participated in various activities. The school magazine of November 1911 records his participation in a squad demonstrating life saving methods. Walter Lockhart Gibson was a member of the school shooting teams in 1913 and 1914 when he was also in the First XV. He was involved in senior cadets during his schooling and gained membership in the Champion Commonwealth cadet team.

Walter Lockhart Gibson commenced studies at the University of Queensland and transferred to the University of Sydney as a medical student. He also continued his military involvement as a member of the Light Horse Citizen Force. His studies however were interrupted by the war years. In Brisbane he enlisted in the Australian Infantry Force (AIF) on 27 December 1916 and was appointed a gunner, regimental number 33751 in the 13th Field Artillery Brigade for initial training at Liverpool, New South Wales. With reinforcements his unit embarked on HMAT Marathon from Sydney on 10 May 1917.

1. See Dr John Lockhart Gibson, Booklet No 14. in this series Stories from the Honour Boards.
2. His Majesty’s Australian Transport
In England Gunner WL Gibson was attached to the Reserve Brigade Australian Artillery at Larkhill till he proceeded overseas to France in September.

In World War 1, Field Artillery Brigades (FAB) were formed to support infantry brigades where and when they were needed. Each FAB was equipped with 18 pounder field guns and later 4.5 inch howitzers. Gunner Walter Lockhart Gibson was in action with the 11th Howitzer Battery in France when he suffered wounding by gassing in France on 21 March 1918. He recovered in hospital without sustaining permanent damage and returned to duties on the battle fields of France. He returned to Australia per HMAT *Kashmir* on 23rd April 1919 and was discharged from the AIF on 2nd June.

Walter Lockhart Gibson resumed his studies at St Andrew’s College, University of Sydney and graduated MB ChM in 1924. After spending the year 1925 as resident surgeon at the Ipswich General Hospital he decided to follow his father into the specialised field of ophthalmology and travelled as ship surgeon on SS *Jervis Bay* for further training in England. Before he returned to Brisbane he married Evelyn Helena (Barbie) Smartt, a nurse from the Royal Westminster Eye Hospital, at Saint Paul’s Church, Hastings in Sussex on 9 April 1927. This was the beginning of a long and happy partnership. Dr D’Arcy Williams, another well-known Australian ophthalmologist was best man at the wedding.

Dr Walter Lockhart Gibson began his career as an ophthalmic surgeon assisting his father in premises at 551 Wickham Terrace opposite the Edward Street tram terminus. Before long however he established himself as an ophthalmologist in his own right. He
was appointed relieving surgeon to the Eye Department at the Brisbane Hospital. In addition to his Brisbane practice he established one at Ipswich. A strong supporter of returned servicemen, he was appointed Visiting Ophthalmologist to the repatriation hospitals at Rosemount and Greenslopes.

Like other members of the Lockhart Gibson families, Dr Walter and Mrs Lockhart Gibson often attended presentations by the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society in His Majesty’s Theatre or the Cremorne Theatre. As Australian president of the Ophthalmological Society Walter hosted conferences and with Mrs Lockhart Gibson welcomed visiting speakers and participants to their home. They lived for a while at Herston Road, Herston, later Maryvale Street, Toowong and homes in St Lucia. They had three sons, Charles Anthony Lockhart Gibson (Tony), Brian Harry Lockhart Gibson (Brian) and Robert Walter Lockhart Gibson (Bob). Brian who was also an ophthalmologist joined his father in practice in 1967.

Dr Walter Lockhart Gibson retired in 1970 when his deafness, a legacy of the First World War made it too difficult for him to carry on. As more specialists began to practise, the available space on Wickham Terrace became very short. Walter Lockhart Gibson was instrumental in organising the erection of the first post-war building for medical specialists. It replaced the building that he owned and in which his father had practised first in 1891. Ladhope Chambers was opened in 1964.

His long and happy marriage came to an end in 1972 when Mrs Barbie Lockhart Gibson died after a number of operations. Walter lived at 20 Archer Street Toowong in his closing years.
He died on 5 November 1981. He is remembered on rolls of honour at the University of Queensland, Brisbane Grammar School and Saint Andrew’s Uniting Church, Brisbane.

The ORIA (Ophthalmic Research Institute of Australia) celebrated its 60th Annual General Meeting on November 25, 2012 in Melbourne. In recognition of the hard work performed by those who helped form the ORIA, this photo of the Board taken in 1957 was published.

Back row – Left to Right; Hugh Ryan, Kelvin Lindgett, Ron Lowe, Bruce Hamilton, Bill Deane-Butcher, Sir Norman Gregg
Front row – Left to Right; Walter Lockhart Gibson, John Pockling, Dame Ida Mann, Archie Anderson, Arthur Joyce, A L Fostevin.
**Bibliography**

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*Daily Mail*, Brisbane, 5 December 1924, page 9

*Telegraph*, Brisbane, 8 Dec 1925, page 8; 30 September 1944, page 2

*Queensland Figaro*, 14 May 1927; 1 October 1927, page 4;

*Brisbane Telegraph*, 2 August 1948, page 5; 13 May 1950, page 7; 27 May 1950, page 6

Compiled by Noel E Adsett, Brisbane, October 2016
Lest we forget