

Compton Chamberlayne War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



3058 PRIVATE

W. R. FINN

33RD BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

13th MAY, 1918 Age 22

ONE OF THE BEST

GOD COULD SEND

BELOVED BY ALL

A FAITHFUL FRIEND

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte Finn is located in Back Row Grave
Plot # 10 of Compton Chamberlayne Cemetery*

Walter Richard Finn was born in 1895 at Little Plains, Inverell, NSW to parents Richard Francis & Jane Finn (nee Wilkins). Walter was the second youngest of 6 males born to Richard & Jane Finn. (The first son died in infancy in 1887). Walter was a farmer, single & aged 21 when he enlisted with the 33rd Infantry Battalion, 7th Reinforcements on 28th November, 1916 at Liverpool, NSW. His Service Number was 3058 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father, Richard Francis Finn of Little Plains, Inverell, NSW.

Pte Finn embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Anchises* (A68) on 24th January, 1917 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 27th March, 1917.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. These were located in the Salisbury Plain area, in the county of Wiltshire.

Pte Finn was marched into 9th Training Btn at Durrington, Wiltshire on 9th April, 1917. On 25th April, 1917 Pte Finn was admitted to Military Hospital, Parkhouse with mumps. On 17th May, 1917 Pte Finn was admitted to 2nd Scottish General Hospital with Pharyngitis.

Pte Finn was then found to be AWL -absent without leave in November, 1917 & forfeited 39 days pay as a result.

Pte Finn was admitted to Hurdcott Group Hospital on 26th January, 1918 with influenza & transferred on 28th February, 1918 to Fovant Military Hospital with pneumonia & Cardiac failure – Seriously ill.

Pte Walter Finn died at 9.20 p.m. on 13th May, 1918 of Bronchitis Purulent at the Military Hospital at Fovant. A death for Walter R Finn, aged 22, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Wilton, Wiltshire. (Fovant was a parish in the district of Wilton).

Pte Walter Richard Finn was buried in Compton Chamberlayne cemetery on 16th May, 1918. From the burial report of Pte Finn – Coffin was good, Polished Elm with Brass Mountings – *Deceased was accorded a full Military funeral. The band of a Training Brigade preceded the funeral. Firing Party, pallbearers and a company of N.C.O.'s and men were in attendance. Deceased's cousin – Mr H. E. Smith of Herwain, near Aberdare, Glamoraganshire, was chief mourner.*

The late Pte Finn was very popular with all ranks of his unit and always proved himself a keen soldier and a good comrade.

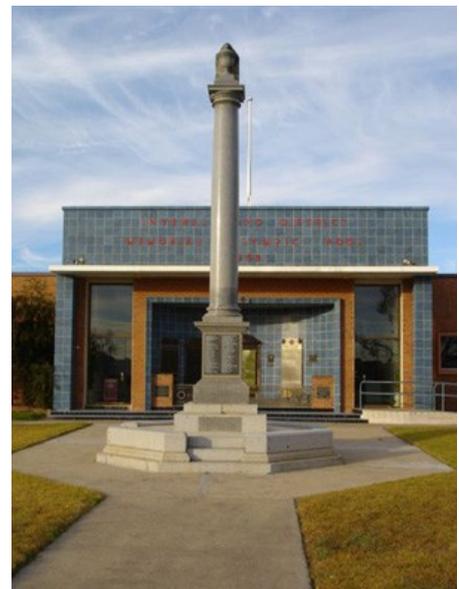
Private W R Finn is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 122.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia



Pte Finn is also remembered on the Inverell War Memorial.

(Photo by Douglas N James)

Pte Finn was entitled to British War Medal only as he did not enter a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque (October, 1922) were sent to Pte Finn's father – Mr Richard Francis Finn of Little Plains, Inverell, NSW.

(77 pages of Pte Finn'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) & National Archives.

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407th CASUALTY LIST

New South Wales – Died – Cause Not Stated

Pte Walter Richard Finn, Inverell

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – Monday 10th June, 1918)

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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 at Compton Chamberlayne 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)

Pte Finn does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Photo of Pte W R Finn's Headstone at Compton Chamberlayne War Graves Cemetery



Photo courtesy of Andrew Stacey