# Killarney New Cemetery, Republic of Ireland War Grave



Lest We Forget

# World War 1



2875B PRIVATE

# R. E. KINCHINGTON

**3RD BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.** 

5TH FEBRUARY, 1919 Age 25

Mild And Gentle
As He Was Brave
The Sweetest Love
Of Life He Gave

### **Robert Emmett (Bert) KINCHINGTON**

Robert Emmett Conmee was born at Arabac, Longreach, Queensland on 14th July, 1892 to parents Patrick Joseph & Nora Ellen (Nellie) Conmee (nee Scanlan). Robert was one of eight children born to Patrick & Nellie Conmee – Patrick Duagnan Conmee – born 1887; James Timothy Conmee – born 1889; Thomas James (Jack) Conmee – born 1890; then Robert; Louisa Dympna Kathleen Conmee – born 1895; Kathleen Mary Conmee – born 1897, died 1897; Vivian (Vincent) Conmee – born 1899 & Gladys Cecelia Conmee – born 1899.

In 1894, Nellie Conmee left her husband & lived with Louis Halberstater, a butcher, for 18 months.

On 5th June, 1895, P. J. Conmee & T. W. Cliffe were charged with larceny of 13 ½ lbs. of beef valued at 2s. 3d. from the shop of John Currie. Conmee was fined 10s & Cliffe fined 20s. The Bench dealt "leniently with them, because if they were sent to prison it was the wives and families who would suffer."

#### Newspaper report - Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton, Queensland - 18th December, 1895:

Patrick Conmee was charged, on the information of his wife, with having deserted his child Patrick Diaungal Conmee, aged eight years.... the evidence of the complainant showed that the parties were married in June, 1886, and four children were born of the marriage, the oldest being eight years of age and that since the 1st of July the defendant (who is working at the boiling-down or wool scoring works at Barcaldine and is supposed to be receiving £2 or £ 5s. a week) has not contributed anything towards their support. The Bench made an order for the payment of 8s. a week – the sum asked for by the complainant – for twelve months towards the support of the eldest child and called on the defendant to find a surety for the sum of £20. An order was also issued for the first payment to be made on the 1st of January next, and costs of Court amounting to 4s. 6d., and professional costs amounting to £2 2s. were given.

Newspaper report – *The Western Champion and General Advertiser* for the Central-Western Districts, Barcaldine, Queensland – 14th January, 1896:

#### Attempted Suicide at Mount Morgan

An extremely sad case of attempted suicide occupied the attention of the Police Magistrate at Mount Morgan (says the Argus), the victim being Frances Ellen Conmee, a married woman with several children. About a fortnight ago Mrs. Conmee sued her husband - who is said to be a clerk at Barcaldine - for the maintenance of herself and family, and in the absence of defendant a verdict was given against him. This had apparently not been in any way met, and the unfortunate woman being at her wit's end as to how to support her family attempted suicide. Through her little boy, aged eight, she obtained a bottle of chlorodyne from the Friendly Societies' Dispensary at Mount Morgan, and apparently swallowed the whole bottle - about 120 drops - the average maximum dose being 20 drops. Dr. Brannigan, who gave evidence, administered emetics, and in the course of his evidence remarked that while the defendant was in the hospital she admitted she bad previously attempted to poison herself with sulphuric acid, but what she attempted to take had been spilt over her wrist. Dr. Brannigan, in the course of his evidence, added:-" The defendant does not seem to feel the position she is in, or the trouble she has given, over what she has done. I think she is a woman of impulsive nature who, with sufficient cause in her own estimation, would take her life. Since I first saw her up to the present her conduct has been that of a rational being." The accused told the Police Magistrate that she had been driven to it. She was committed for sentence at the next sittings of the District Court, to be held in Rockhampton on February 18. Bail was allowed, herself in £20, two sureties of £10 each, or one of £20, and this was subsequently procured. At a later stage the defendant's four children, Patrick aged eight, James Timothy aged seven, Thomas aged five, and Robert, aged 3, were charged with being neglected children. They had, it appeared, been arrested for their own protection, the father's whereabouts being unknown and the mother unfit to take charge of them. The Police Magistrate ordered the children to be received in the Meteor Park Orphanage, Stanwell.

#### Newspaper report – Australian Town and Country Journal, Sydney, NSW – 7 February, 1906:

The Royal Hotel, George-street, Sydney, was the scene of a terrible tragedy on Thursday, February 1, Mrs Mercy Gregory, wife of Mr John A. F. Gregory, licensee of the United Club Hotel, Coolgardie, West Australia, being murdered by a youth known as Thomas John Quinlan, but whose real name is Conmee, aged 15, who was employed at the hotel as a lift-boy. The weapon with which the wounds were inflicted was a butcher's or sailor's sheath knife. Altogether there were eight wounds on the body, two on the back, just behind each armpit; one oin the

middle line of the spine, and penetrating it; one on the top of the skull; one right through the left upper arm; a cut just above that; one on the left hip; and the fatal wound on the left breast.

.... Thomas John Quinlan, 15 lift boy, of Queensland, charged with having, on the 1st instant, at Sydney, feloniously and maliciously murdered Mercy Gregory.......

Ellen Conmee married Thomas Henry Kinchington in Goulburn, NSW in 1906.

Patrick Conmee, father of Robert Conmee died on 16th April, 1908 in Cloncurry District Hospital. He was buried in Cloncurry Cemetery.

Robert Emmett Kinchington attended Nudgee College, Queensland & St. Charles at Waverley, NSW.

Robert Emmett Kinchington joined NSW Tramways as a cleaner at Rushcutters Bay Electric Tram Depot from 16<sup>th</sup> May, 1910. He resigned on 7<sup>th</sup> January, 1912 & statutory declaration was sent to the Electrical Engineer five days later by his mother. Robert Kinchington applied for re-employment in April, 1912 & he was advised that when a suitable vacancy occurred, he would be re-employed. In May, 1912 he was employed as a Shop Boy at Eveleigh Locomotive Depot & on 10<sup>th</sup> July, 1913 he was transferred & became a Boilermaker's Helper. He was transferred to Harden, NSW then was granted Leave on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 1916 to join the Australian Imperial Force.

(Information about NSW Railways & Trams from NSW Railways Remember)

Robert Emmett Kinchington enlisted under the name of <u>George</u> Emmett Kinchington - a 24 year old, single, Engineer from 16 Waverley St, Waverley, Sydney, NSW. He enlisted on 27th June, 1916 in the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2875 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Nellie Kinchington of 16 Waverley St, Waverley, Sydney, NSW.

Private <u>George</u> Emmett Kinchington embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Borda (A30)* on 17th October, 1916 with the 1st Pioneer Battalion, 6th Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 9th January, 1917.

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 <u>George</u> Emmett Kinchington was sent sick to Parkhouse Hospital from No. 3 Camp, Details, Parkhouse, Wiltshire on 18th February, 1917 & was under observation for mumps. He was marched out from Hospital to No. 3 Camp Details at Parkhouse on 22nd February, 1917 having not contracted mumps.

Private <u>George</u> Emmett Kinchington was marched in to Pioneer Training Battalion at Larkhill, Wiltshire from Parkhouse, Wiltshire on 2nd March, 1917.

Private <u>George</u> Emmett Kinchington proceeded overseas to France from Pioneers Training Battalion, Larkhill via Folkestone on 25th April, 1917. He was marched in to 1st Divisional Base at Etaples, France on 26th April, 1917.

Private <u>George</u> Emmett Kinchington proceeded to join his Unit & left Etaples on 13th May, 1917. He was taken on strength of 1st Australian Pioneer Battalion from 6th Reinforcements in the field on 16th May, 1917.

Private <u>George</u> Emmett Kinchington was re-allotted his regimental/service number - the letter "B" was added - 2875B on 10th September, 1917.

Private <u>George</u> Emmett Kinchington was transferred from 1st Australian Pioneer Battalion to 3rd Australian Infantry Battalion on 11th September, 1917.

Private <u>George</u> Emmett Kinchington was discharged for duty with 1st Australian Divisional Signalling Company on 18th December, 1917. He re-joined his Battalion on 1st February, 1918.

Private <u>George</u> Emmett Kinchington was on leave to UK from 7th February, 1918 & re-joined his Battalion on 24th February, 1918.

Private <u>George</u> Emmett Kinchington was sent to 1st Australian Divisional Signalling Class on 24th June, 1918 & rejoined his Battalion on 21st July, 1918.

By sworn declaration on 29th September, 1918, Robert Emmett Kinchington declared that he had enlisted under the name of <u>George</u> Emmet Kinchington which he declared to now be incorrect. His records were altered to show his real name of Private Robert Emmett Kinchington. A letter, dated 23rd May, 1918, signed by Ellen Kinchington, mother of Robert Emmett Kinchington, set out a similar declaration – that her son had enlisted under the name of <u>George</u> Emmet Kinchington but his true name was Robert Emmett Kinchington.

Private Robert Emmett Kinchington was on leave to UK from 3rd Battalion from 21st January, 1919.

Private Robert Emmett Kinchington died around 4.30 am on 5th February, 1919 at the International Hotel, Killarney, Ireland from Septic Pneumonia.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Robert Emmett Kinchington states he died on 5th February, 1919 at International Hotel, Killarney of Septic Pneumonia.

A report was made by Ralph Vane, Capt., D.S.I. O/C Troops, Killarney on 11th February, 1919 regarding Ref No. 2875 Private George Emmet, 3rd Battalion, A.I.F.: "No. 2875 Pte George Emmet was on leave from France and arrived in Killarney on or about Jan 30th, 1919. He was then ill. He stayed at the "International Hotel" where he was known, having stayed there before. On Jan. 31st, 1919 he appeared to be so unwell that the Manageress of the Hotel persuaded him to go to bed. He was attended by Dr Mangan whom I have seen and certifies that Pte Emmet died of Septic Pneumonia following Influenza. I learn that deceased died at about 0430 hrs on Feb. 5th and was buried about midday on the same date. It appears to be the custom here to bury any person who dies of an infections disease within a few hours. Thus I learn from the Registrar of Deaths etc. The Medical Officer – Dr. O'Sullivan i/c Troops, Killarney was not consulted, had he been, the matter would have been brought to my notice and reported to the proper authority in due form.....

A further letter written by Ralph Vane, Capt., D.S.I. O/C Troops, Killarney on 11th February, 1919 regarding Ref No. 2875 Private George Emmet, 3rd Battalion, A.I.F.: "Further to my report on the above named soldier, I have the honour to inform you that the name of the deceased soldier is KINCHINGTON and not EMMET as stated in my original report. I was misled as to the name of the soldier in question. I have today seen a Corporal of A.I.F. Graves Registration Department who has come here from London and who was surprised to find that Pte G. E. KINCHINGTON had already been buried......

Private Robert Emmett Kinchington was buried on 5th February, 1919 in Killarney New Cemetery, Killarney, County Kerry, Republic of Ireland – R.C. ground, North-east part and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private Kinchington - Coffin was Elm, brass fittings. Private Funeral. Immediately upon receipt of a telegram from the landlord of the International Hotel, Killarney notifying Pte Kinchington's death, a representative from these headquarters was sent to Ireland to make appropriate funeral arrangements. On his arrival, however, he learnt that, acting under instructions from a civilian Doctor, the landlord of the hotel had taken upon himself the responsibility of having the remains of Private Kinchington interred a few hours after his death. The explanation given by the landlord was that, as death was due to Septic Pneumonia in a malignant form immediate burial was considered as a medical necessity. The landlord of the hotel and the doctor failed to notify the Military Authorities at Killarney of the death, and had it not been for the action of a few members of the Australian Imperial Force who were on leave in Killarney and heard of the funeral at the last moment the A.I.F. would not have been represented at the funeral. The following brothers of the late soldier were in touch with these Headquarters throughout, Lieut. Patrick Kinchington, Empire Hospital, Vincent Sq., London, and No. 5823 Pte Vincent Kinchington, 3rd Battalion, A.I.F. France; and one brother No. 6823 Pte V, Kinchington, has been granted facilities to proceed to Ireland and see his brother's grave upon which he will erect the Standard Wooden Cross this day. 11.2.19. In attendance at the funeral was Miss Bennett & 5 Australian soldiers on leave.

Private <u>George</u> Emmett Kinchington requested in his Will, dated 14th May, 1918, that the whole of his property & effects to be given to his mother – Mrs Nellie Kinchington of 90 Northumberland Street, Auburn, near Sydney, NSW.

Private Robert Emmett Kinchington was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Kinchington's mother – Mrs E. Kinchington, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent December, 1921 & Plaque sent October, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Robert Emmett Kinchington – service number 2875B, aged 25, of 3rd Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Mrs Ellen Kinchington, of 40 Junction Rd., Summer Hill, Sydney. Born in Queensland. His brother Thomas John Kinchington also fell.

Private R. E. Kinchington is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 37.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

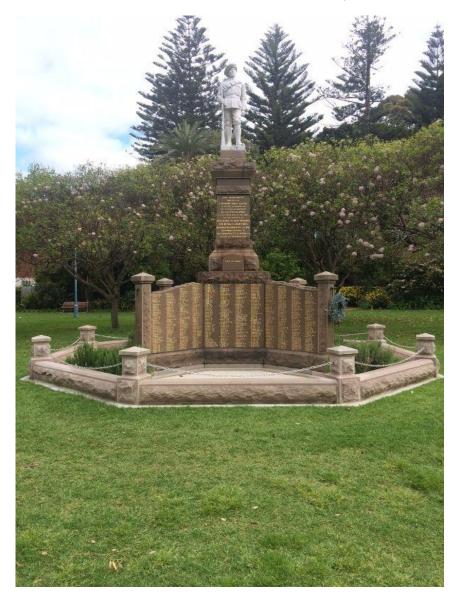
R. E. Kinchington is remembered on the NSW Government Railways & Tramways Roll of Honour, located at Country Trains Concourse, Eddy Avenue, Haymarket, Sydney, NSW.



NSW Government Railways & Tramways Roll of Honour (Photo from AWM – Places of Pride – Peter F. Williams)
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Robert Emmett Kinchington is remembered on the Waverley Soldier's Memorial, located in Waverley Park, Bondi Road, Bondi, NSW. Robert's four brothers who also served in the Australia Imperial Force are also listed.



Waverley Soldier's Memorial (Photo from Monument Australia)

(60 pages of Private Robert Emmett Kinchington 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



**Private Robert Emmett Kinchington** 





Your Affectionate Son Bert With Love 24-8-16



Portrait of the 5 brothers that their mother used to wear

(I-r) Robert, James, Thomas, Patrick & Vincent Conmee/ Kinchington

Private Robert Kinchington was one of 5 brothers who served during the war. He was the brother of:

- Private Thomas John Kinchington, 2707A, (also known as Jack Thomas Neugent) who was killed in action at Polygon Wood, Belgium on 26 September 1917. Remembered in Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Flanders, Belgium.
- Lieutenant Patrick Kinchington, MM, 3rd Battalion, 8th Reinforcement returned to Australia 9th February,
- Private Vincent Kinchington, 6823, 17th Battalion, 20th Reinfrocement returned to Australia 1st August, 1919.
- Corporal James Timothy Conmee, 986, MM.



#### **Newspaper Notices**

#### **PERSONAL NOTES**

The friends of Mrs Kinchington, "Fleurbaix", Auburn, and late of Waverley, will regret to hear that she has lost a second son on active service, Private Bert Kinchington, who died from influenza while on leave. A cable received from a private source stated that he had gone to Ireland, and his comrades in his platoon were on their way then to bury him. Private Kinchington, who was a number of the foresters' (Paddington branch), was nearly three years at the front, and had four brothers at the front also. The two eldest are on their way home – Lieut. P. Kichington, M.M., and Corporal James Kinchington, M.M.

(Freeman's Journal, Sydney, NSW – 20 February, 1919)

#### A Catholic Fighting Family



PRIVATE JACK KINCHINGTON.



MRS. KINCHINGTON.



PRIVATE ROBERT KINCHINGTON



TROOPER JAMES KINCHINGTO



LIEUT, PATRICK KINCHINGTON



SIGNAL. VINCENT KINCHINGTON

Lieutenant Patrick Kinchington, aged 30 years, is the eldest son. He is an Anzac and was one of the last to leave Gallipoli at the evacuation. He has proved himself an excellent leader of men— one in whom those under him have implicit confidence. A less modest officer would have gained much higher rank long ago. He was twice wounded, on the first occasion at the sanguinary battle at Bullecourt on May 5, 1916, and on the second occasion (in the head) on September 20 last, during the last stages of the brilliant final offensive. He was the first to enter the Hindenburg line at the head of his men — one morning at seven o'clock. He gained the Military Medal for distinguished conduct and bravery at Fleurbaix in July, 1916. He and the whole of his brothers were attached to the 3rd Battalion. He is now on the way home. Trooper James Kinchington, the second son, is 29 years of age. He is also an Anzac. He gained the Military Medal on October 22, 1918, for distinguished conduct and bravery during the last stages of the big final offensive. Private Jack Kinchington, the third son, who was 28 years of age, was killed in action at Zonnebecke Wood, France, on September 26, 1917. Private Robert E. Kinchington, the fourth son, was 26 years of age. He contracted pneumonic influenza while on furlough in Ireland and died on the 6th ult. The sad news was officially conveyed to the mother a few days later. A day or so after a cable was received by her from one of her sons stating that the whole of D Company was going over to Ireland to attend the burial ceremony. Signaller Vincent Kinchington, who is now 19 years of age, left for the front when only 17 years of age. Mrs. Kinchington, the mother of these soldiers, is well known in Catholic circles in Sydney. For many years now Mrs. Kinchington, an earnest worker in the Catholic Women's Association, has done noble work in many avenues of charity, especially looking after the girls discharged from prisons. Possessing a tactful manner and gifted with a sweet personality, she has brought much consolation to scores badly in need of it.

(Freeman's Journal, Sydney, NSW – 13 March, 1919)

#### 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)

A letter from Base Records, dated 7th February, 1921, to Mrs E. Kinchington, of 40 Junction Road, Summer Hill, NSW advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning the proposed personal inscription on the headstone of the late Pte R. E. Kinchington exceeded the limit imposed by the Imperial War Graves Commission. Mrs Kinchington was given a further 14 days to reply.

Private R. E. Kinchington does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Mild And Gentle As He Was Brave

The Sweetest Love Of Life He Gave



Original Grave Marker for Robert Emmet Kinchington

(Photo courtesy of Geoffrey Gillon)

Base Records wrote to The Official Secretary and Financial Adviser, Australia House, Strand, London in March 1933, with regards to the burial of the late No. 2875B Private R. E. Kinchington, stating in part "it has been represented to the Hon. the Minister for Defence that no steps appear to have been taken to properly maintain the grave or annage for the erection of a permanent headstone as in the case of other overseas war graves and as the next-of-kin is expressing some anxiety in the matter, it would be appreciated if a report could be obtained from the Imperial War Graves Commission indicating the probable date on which the headstone will be placed in position, also what further action is contemplated to provide for suitable maintenance and upkeep......"

The Imperial War Graves Commission wrote to The Official Secretary and Financial Adviser, Australia House, Strand, London in October, 1934 to advise that the headstone for Private R. E. Kinchington had now been erected & had been inspected by one of the Commission's officials, who is attached to the Irish Free State Government for this work & was found to be satisfactory. All the headstones in the Cemetery at Killarney had now been erected,

## Killarney New Cemetery, County Kerry, Republic of Ireland

Killarney New Cemetery, County Kerry, Republic of Ireland contains 4 Commonwealth burials - all relating to World War 1.





(Photo from CWGC)

Photo of Private R. E. Kinchington's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Killarney Cemetery, Republic of Ireland.



(Photo courtesy of Geoffrey Gillon)



(Photo from John – Find a Grave)