

# Arthur Harold TUCKER

1-6-1886 to 22-12-1917

Biography as published in 1985 & 1995

Arthur Harold was the twelfth child, eighth son, of Annie and John Tucker, and was born at *Lake View*. Four first cousins were also born that year: Ethel Jane McDonald and Amy Helena Victoria McDonald at Noradjuha, Victoria, and the twins Archie and Allan McDonald at Nurrabel, Victoria. His grandparents were Rachel and Ewen McDonald and great-grandparents were Christina and Donald McLean.

It was in 1886 that Boyle Travers Finniss published *The Constitutional History of South Australia*. Arthur attended school at Sandergrrove and, when the school closed, at Strathalbyn. He joined his father and brothers on the family property and became one of the accomplished Tucker horsemen. Entries in his father's diary tell part of Arthur's story.

*30-3-07. At Polo. Tucker boys won 7 goals to 3 from club team.*

*1-6-07. Saturday. Arthur 21 today.*

*2-6-07. Kept up Arthur's birthday today.*

*31-10-07. Arthur to Strath to Thomas the dentist — had all his teeth out. Rose had 16 teeth drawn.*

Arthur continued his work on the farm with polo, races and rifle shooting as recreation. On August 4, 1914, England declared war on Germany and the British Empire followed suit. Arthur's younger brother, Stewart, joined the army almost immediately and was killed at Gallipoli in 1915. Further entries in the diary continue the story.

*11-3-1916. Arthur to Strath to be examined for the front by Dr. passed.*

*16-3-1916. Arthur went down to camp this morning by train to be examined for the front. Home after a few days.*

On April 25, 1916, Arthur enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force at Adelaide, South Australia, stating that he was born at Strathalbyn, South Australia, and that he was 30 years two months of age. He became Number 3009 Trooper A. H. Tucker and was to serve overseas in Egypt and Palestine with the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Light Horse Training Regiment and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Horse Regiment.

*9-5-1916. Arthur left for Military Camp this morning by train — and home after a few days.*

*22-5-1916. Arthur back to camp.*

*26-6-1916. Arthur back to camp — home 8-7-1916.*

*4-9-1916. Arthur back to camp.*

*26-9-1916. Arthur home for his long leave. Then left on 29-9-1916.*

*4-10-1916. Arthur left for Melbourne this afternoon at 4 p.m.*

It was during this final leave that Arthur became engaged to Rose Piercy. John Tucker's diary refers to her 22nd birthday in August 1906. Rose married Arthur's brother George in the 1930s.

In Australia's early days many of the mounted troops had been formed solely to catch a particular desperado or gang of bushrangers. By the outbreak of the Boer War permanent forces had been formed in each colony. Between Federation in 1901 and World War One there were twenty-three light horse regiments as part of the militia. When war was declared in 1914 some of the militia regiments volunteered almost as a body. Most of the men were from the bush and many brought their own horses. In this way the management of the horses was of supreme importance, the authorities having learned from mistakes in the Boer War. The complete dependence of each horse on its owner for food, water and grooming strengthened the bond between man and horse. To avoid the probable loss of men and horses by pneumonia in the Australian camp on Salisbury Plain in England, the

Australians were sent to Egypt to train. They were hardened by heat and cold, wind and sand, and by travelling long distances on desert treks without water.

Each light horse brigade was composed of regiments from different states: 1st Light Horse Regiment, New South Wales; 2nd Light Horse Regiment Queensland; 3rd Light Horse Regiment, South Australia and Tasmania. A distinctive touch to the uniforms of these men was the bunch of emu feathers tucked into the band of their slouch hats.

In March 1916 the Anzac Mounted Division was created, comprising the 1st, 2nd and 3rd light horse brigades under the command of Australian-born Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Chauvel. The objective of the desert campaign was the defence of the canal zone and the recapture of the Sinai Peninsula. By early 1917 the British forces were at the border of Palestine. Attacks on Gaza in Palestine in March and April were unsuccessful and the commander in chief, Sir Archibald Murray, was replaced by General Sir Edmund Allenby from France. On May 1, 1917 the Tucker family at *Lake View* was notified that Arthur had been wounded, shot in the right leg. After Allenby's arrival, Chauvel was given command of all mounted troops. It was the largest body of cavalry assembled this century and was to be the last great cavalry campaign of modern warfare. Tanks, motorised vehicles and aircraft have surpassed the horse in speed, endurance and range. Meanwhile the enemy's defences at Gaza were strengthened and extended to Beersheba, twenty miles east in the Judaeian hills. Beersheba with its vital wells was captured on October 31 and Gaza on November 7. Then the pursuit north began. Ramleh, Ludd and Jaffa were captured and the holy city of Jerusalem was occupied on December 9. At *Lake View* Arthur's father continued his diary.

*22-12-1917. Arthur died of wounds in Palestine today by shells. Age 31 years.*

In March 1918, John Tucker wrote to another son, Jim.

*I had a letter from the chaplain to say Arthur was heavily wounded and before he got back to hospital Arthur had died and he buried him in the little military cemetery at Jaffa; he marked his grave and it is easily identified. A very nice letter full of sympathy. Then we got another from Mr Stacey at Finnis to say he had a letter from his brother and he was with Arthur when wounded and he said he and another carried him a quarter of a mile to hospital, and said he was very heavy and they were clean done when they got there and his ribs were all broken. We think from that, that Arthur would be unconscious up to the time he passed away and he is now resting in the Holy Land. Poor boy, one consolation is we know he was well cared for. The chaplain said everything was done for him that could be, but he was beyond human aid. Poor Stewart, if we had only known that he had been cared for as Arthur was it would have been a great comfort, but we know not and I suppose never will.*

Arthur's father told the end of the story in his diary.

*23-4-1918. Rose to Strath for parcel of Arthur's effects from Palestine.*

*7-6-1918. Self and Rose to Strath - settled up Arthur's affairs with lodge money — gave it to Rose, £39.13.0.*

In June 1918 the Tucker family received a communication from the Australian Imperial Force, Base Records Office, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne.

*Dear Sir, With reference to the report of the regrettable loss of your son, the late No. 3009 Private A. H. Tucker, 3rd Light Horse Regiment. I am now in receipt of advice which shows that he died at 77th Casualty Clearing Station, Palestine, Turkey, Asia, on 22-12-17 of wounds (shell wounds - chest - penetrating lungs) received in action, and was buried the same day at Tempelgemeinder Cemetery, Jaffa, grave No. 141. Chaplain W. Ewing conducted the service.*

*These additional details are furnished by direction, it being the policy of the Department to forward all information received in connexion with deaths of members of the Australian Imperial Force.*

*Officer in Charge*

Arthur was reburied at Ramleh War Cemetery, Palestine, Row M, Grave 49. He was posthumously awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal. During World War Two his nephew, Major Rex Tucker, of the 9th Division, 2/48 Battalion, Second A1F visited the grave at Ramleh.

- SOURCE : This biography was from page 94 of "History of Ewen & Rachel McDonald & Descendants" by Jill McDonald which was originally published in 1985. It was republished as part of "The History of Donald & Christina McLean and Their Descendants" in 1995.
- COLONIALISTS : Christina and Donald McLean and their ten children migrated from Argyllshire to South Australia in 1837. This was in the earliest years of the colony. The McLeans initially settled near Adelaide where they grew the first wheat crop in SA. Then in about 1840 they pioneered the Strathalbyn area. There are now well over 20,000 descendants spread across Australia and elsewhere.
- CHANGES : Please contact us with additions, corrections or suggestions about any part of this family tree.
- CONTACT : Visit our website [www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com](http://www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com) or Strathalbyn Museum phone 08 8536 2656 to discover more about your family – and about privacy and copyright.