



Major Colin Gurner



Played with Adelaide University



Football Club: 1914 (A) & 1915 (A)

(Intervarsity 1914 & 1919)

and

Cricket Club: 1913/14 (B) & 1914/15 (B)

Sports Awards: Double Blue - Football (1915) & Tennis (1919)

Degree - MB BS (1918) FRCRA

Background

Coinciding with the Centenary of Anzacs our incentive behind the series of biographical publications is the Adelaide University Football and Cricket Club's desire to honour our players who served in the Great War (1914 - 1918). These brave men put on hold their academic, professional and sporting careers for King and Country in the name of peace and freedom. The AUFC/AUCC WW1 Memorial Committee is endeavouring to identify every one of our players who served and prepare life stories on all. This is to ensure their sacrifices and further contributions to society will be recognised by future generations.

On Anzac Day 2015, the Centenary of the Gallipoli landing, a memorial plaque was unveiled on the Adelaide University Oval Pavilion and this was followed by the erection of a picket fence between the pavilion and the scoreboard with each picket bearing a plaque with the name of an AUFC/AUCC player who served.

The following documentation relates to the life of Colin Gurner. It is compilation of information and photographs collected from a variety of historical sources.

RSL Virtual Memorial

GURNER, Colin

Service Number: SX1478

Enlisted: 17 June 1918

Last Rank: Major

Last Unit: [Australian Army Medical Corps \(AMF\)](#)

Born: Adelaide, South Australia, 25 May 1896

Home Town: [Adelaide](#), Adelaide, South Australia

Schooling: Prince Alfred College, University of Adelaide

Occupation: Doctor

Died: Vascular degeneration, Adelaide, South Australia, 15 February 1962, aged 65 years

Cemetery: Not yet discovered

Memorials:

World War 1 Service

17 Jun 1918: Enlisted AIF WW1, Captain, Australian Army Medical Corps (AMF)

World War 2 Service

22 Jan 1940: Involvement Major, SN SX1478

22 Jan 1940: Enlisted Adelaide, SA

12 Dec 1945: Discharged

Published Biography

Excerpt from Blood Sweat and Fears: Medical Practitioners and Medical Students of South Australian who Served in World War 1. Courtesy of the Authors

Colin Gurner was born on 25th May 1896 the second son of Walter and Hannah, nee Fry and brought up in Marryatville, SA. His great grandfather had migrated from England in 1849 eventually settling in Riverton, South Australia. He was educated at Prince Alfred College and studied medicine at the University of Adelaide where he graduated MB BS in 1918. He played football and tennis for the university eventually captaining both teams and being awarded a Blue for each.

During his medical course he had joined the Citizens Military Force and after his graduation was appointed captain in the AAMC on 26th November 1918. This appointment was terminated on 17th December 1919. His brother Leonard, a lieutenant in the infantry, was killed in action in July 1918.

Gurner entered general practice with Ernest and Lincoln Borthwick in the Payneham and Marryatville areas. He joined the radiology practice of Stanley Verco in 1930 and, with his wife and two sons, he left Adelaide to study radiology in Vienna, London and the United States in 1931. Not long after his return to South Australia and partnership with Dr Verco in Verco Buildings on North Terrace he was appointed honorary assistant radiologist and radiotherapist at the Adelaide Hospital and the Adelaide Children's Hospital. He became a member of the SA State Committee of the Australian and New Zealand Association of Radiologists in 1938 and remained a member until 1950.

Gurner joined the AAMC in October 1939 and was posted to 2 AGH. Joining Leonard Charles Edward Lindon and Edmond Britten-Jones at Puckapunyal they found the circumstances offered at the Menzies Hotel in Melbourne more desirable than a shared tent and became known as the 'MX contingent (the Menzies Expeditionary Force)'. Gurner embarked for the Middle East in 1940 and set up at Kantara on the Suez Canal. He returned to Australia in March 1942 and Gurner was to take a number of military posts around Adelaide and did not go overseas again. The Gurner home became an unofficial 'officers mess' for officers billeted all over Adelaide.

He returned to his work at Adelaide and Adelaide Children's Hospitals and the Verco, Gurner and Smeaton radiological practice much to the relief of Bronte Smeaton who had had the lion's share of the work as his partners were engaged in their military duties. After Smeaton's death the practice was joined firstly by Peter Verco, Stanley Verco's son and later Gurner's son, Colin. Gurner was a heavy smoker and was showing signs of vascular degeneration. When his son joined the regular army in 1960 he retired from practice. Colin Gurner died on 15th February 1962. His wife, Jessie, died a few weeks later. He was survived by his children including Colin who later became Major General Gurner AO CBE ED QHP, DGMS.

Sources:

Ryan J, Sutton K, Baigent M., 'Australasian Radiology' McGraw Hill, Sydney, 1996.

<http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/NameSearch/Interface/ItemDetail.aspx?Barcode=4380383>

<http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/NameSearch/Interface/ItemDetail.aspx?Barcode=4380385>

"Blood, Sweat and Fears" ISBN: 978-0-64692-750-3

Medical Practitioners and Medical Students of South Australia who served in WW1

Service Record

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=4380383>

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=6656952>

A.M. Form A. 5 (a).

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES.

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. 101 Name (Surname) GUARDER
in full (Christian Name) COLIN
Unit _____
Joined on 17 JUN 1918

Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

You are hereby warned that if after enlistment it is found that you have given a wilfully false answer to any question set forth in this Attestation Paper, you will be liable to be tried for the offence.

1. What is your Name? ...	1. <u>Colin Gardener</u>
2. In or near what Town were you born? ...	2. In or near the Town of <u>North Adelaide</u> In the State or Country of <u>South Australia</u>
3. Are you a natural-born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown.) ...	3. <u>Natural Born</u>
4. What is your Age? (Date of birth to be stated) ...	4. <u>22 yrs. 2 months</u> <u>25 May 1896</u>
What is your Trade or Calling? ...	5. <u>Medical Student. 5 years</u>
Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? ...	6. <u>No</u>
7. Are you married, single, or widower? ...	7. <u>Single</u>
8. Who is your next of kin? (Address and relationship to be stated) ... The answer to this question shall not be construed as in the nature of a Will.	8. <u>(FATHER) WALTER GARDNER,</u> <u>TUSMORE AVENUE</u> <u>KNIGHTS BRIDGE</u> <u>SOUTH AUSTRALIA</u>
9. What is your permanent address in Australia? ...	9. <u>TUSMORE AVENUE</u> <u>KNIGHTS BRIDGE</u> <u>SOUTH AUSTRALIA</u>
10. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge ...	10. <u>5 WEEKS HOME SERVICE STAFF.</u> <u>4 years 6 mos. 1914 MC.</u>
11. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service?	11. <u>Yes</u>
12. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? ...	12. <u>No</u>
13. Have you ever suffered from:— 1. Consumption, tubercular disease, or chronic cough? ... 2. Fits of any kind? ... 3. Rheumatism or asthma? ... 4. Mental or nervous disease? ... 5. Has any member of your family suffered from any of the above diseases? If so, state particulars.	13.— 1. <u>No</u> 2. <u>No</u> 3. <u>No</u> 4. <u>No</u> 5. <u>No</u>
14. (For married men, widowers with children, and soldiers who are the sole support of widowed mother)— Do you understand that no separation allowance will be issued in respect of your service beyond an amount which together with pay would reach ten shillings per day?	14. _____
15. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against small pox and enteric fever? ...	15. <u>Yes</u>

I, Colin Gardener, do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to allot not less than two-fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during my service for the support of my wife and children.

Date 17 JUN 1918 Colin Gardener
Signature of Person Enlisted.

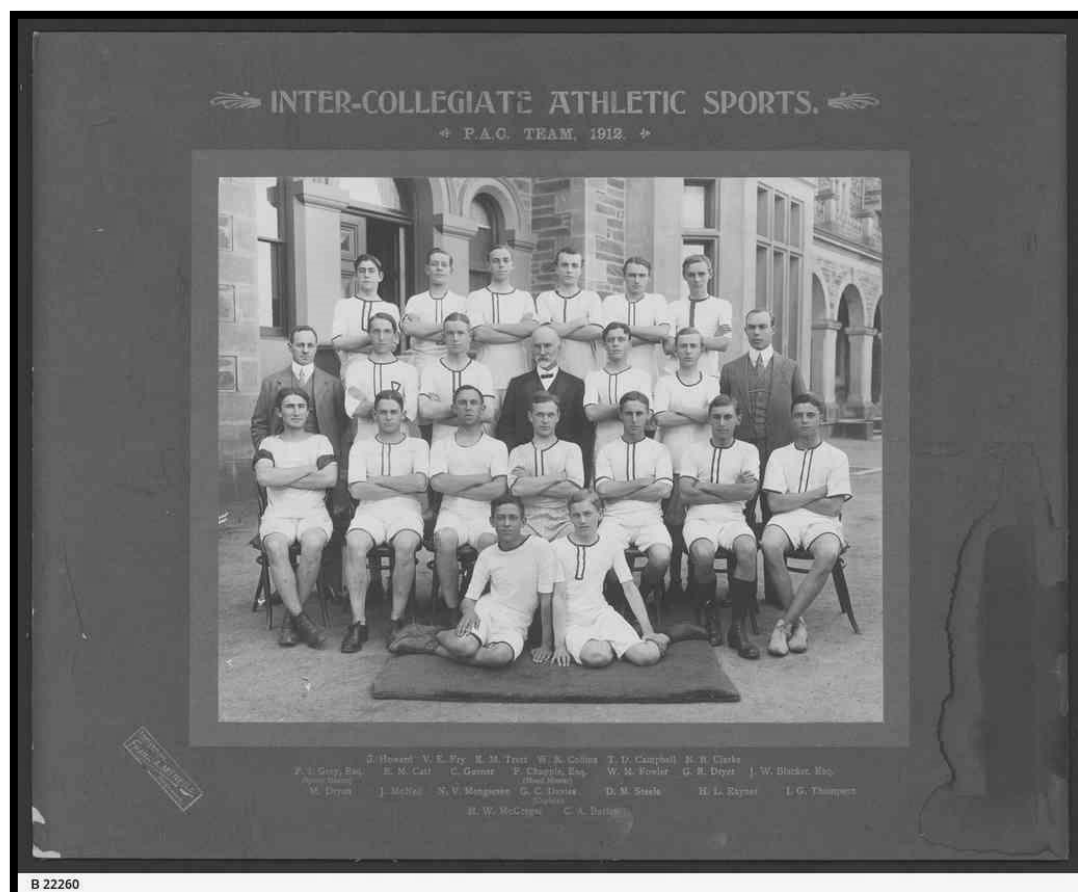
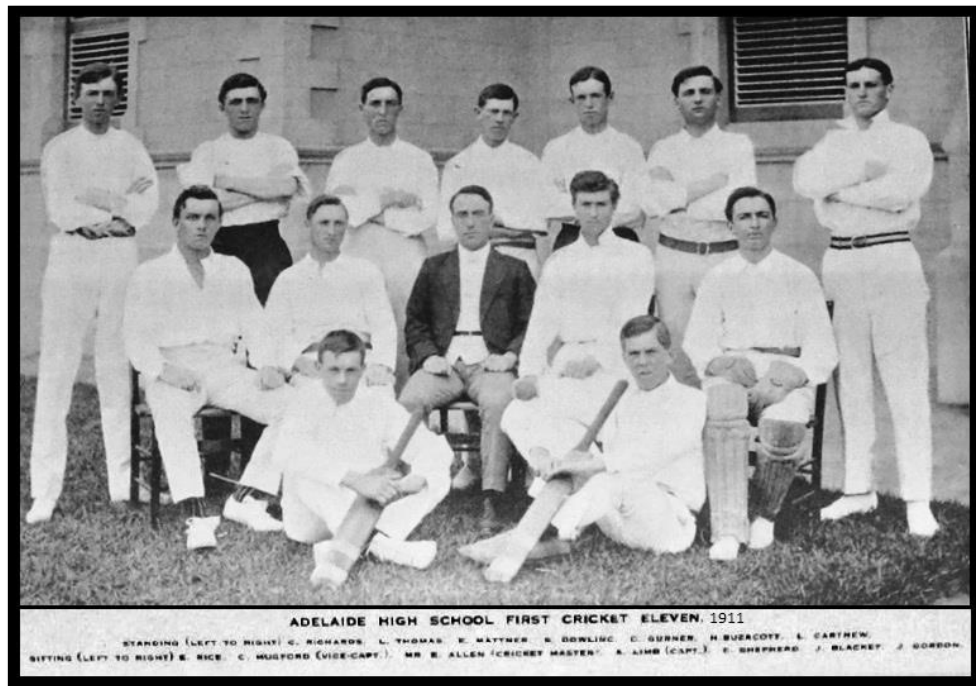
* This clause should be struck out in the case of unmarried men or widowers without children under 16 years of age.
† Two-fifths must be allotted to the wife, and if there are children three-fifths must be allotted.

D.1182/2.18.—C.1272.—70M.

Additional Biography

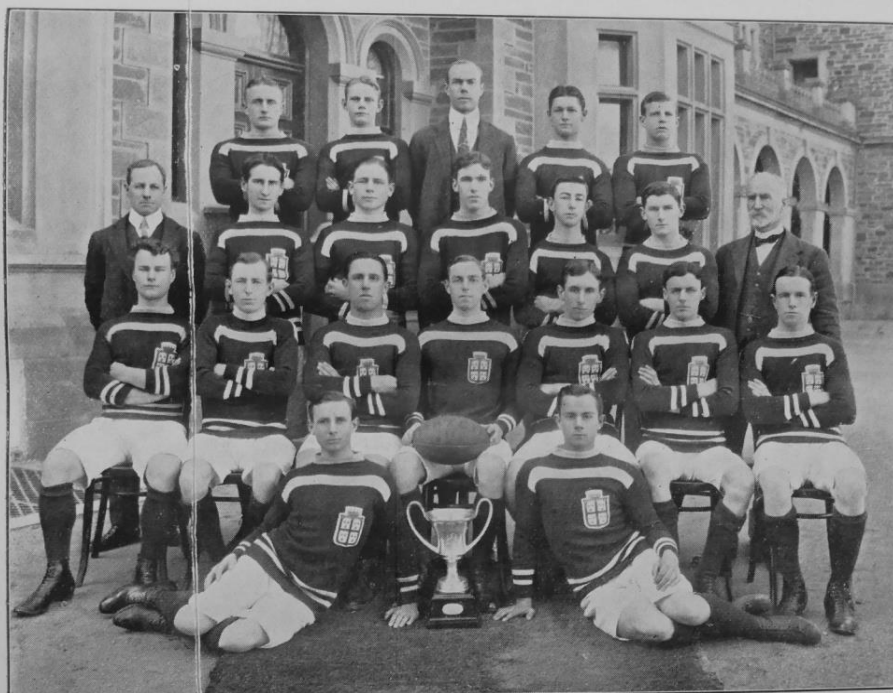
Schooling

Colin's early schooling was at Norwood public School however in 1910 he won a scholarship which enabled him to study at Adelaide High School in 1910 and 1911. He passed his Junior and Senior Examinations while at Adelaide High Schoolⁱ and was a member of the 1st XI Cricket Team. Colin spent his final school years (1912 & 1913) at Prince Alfred's College. At PAC Colin was a school Prefect in 1913. He was the 1912 & 1913 Tennis Champion, played football, cricket and athletics in Intercollegiate and in weekly competitions.ⁱⁱ



C Gurner – Middle Row – Third from Left

INTERCOLLEGIATE FOOTBALL TEAM, 1913.



BACK ROW.—L. A. Mander, A. H. White, J. W. Blacket, Esq., C. E. Cockram, K. D. Bell.
MIDDLE ROW.—F. I. Grey, Esq. (Sports Master), H. W. Stempel, E. M. Davidson, H. W. Chinner, A. H. Temby, T. L. Chinner, F. Chapple, Esq. (Head Master).
FRONT ROW.—L. M. Humphrey, G. R. Dreyer, N. V. Mengersen (Vice-Captain), E. M. Trott (Captain), H. L. Rayner, W. M. Fowler, C. Gurner.
SITTING.—R. E. Jolly, A. S. Chipper.

C Gurner – Seated Far Right

Prince Alfred College Prefects.

1913.



G. E. Payne	E. M. Temby	C. Gurner	D. D. Magony	L. A. Mander
M. V. Mengersen	W. E. Collins	F. Chapple, Esq. (Head Master)	H. L. Rayner	G. C. Davies

C Gurner – Standing Centre

1913 Cricket Intercollegiate Team



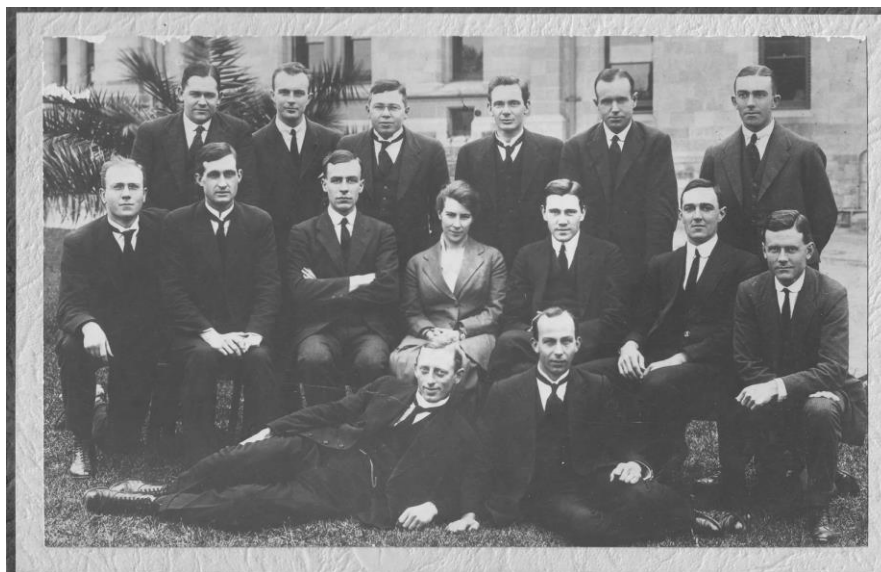
C Gurner – Seated 1st on Left

University

From 1914-1918 Colin was at Adelaide University studying Medicine. He graduated MB BS in 1918.

1918 Medical School

(<http://hdl.handle.net/2440/39525>)



Standing : J. McNeil, W.K. Collins, H.R. Pomroy, R. Cilento, C. Gurner, K.W. Bollen

Sitting : J. Kiepert (non-graduate) , B. Shanasy (non-graduate), L.A. Wilson, P. McGlew, D.R. Wallmann, P.S. Messent, R.L.T. Grant

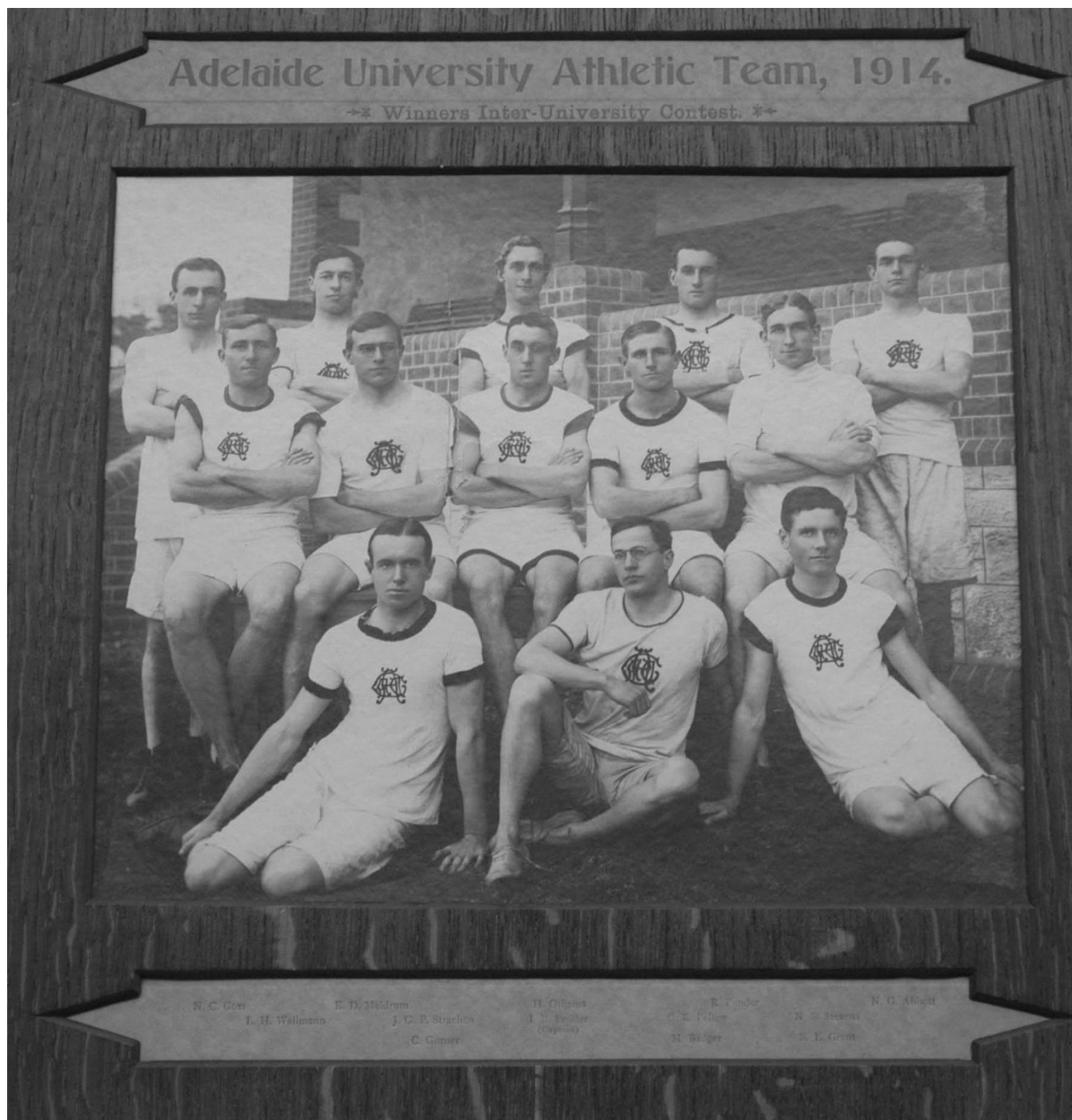
Front : W. Webb (non-graduate), L.W. Linn

University Sport

In addition to his studies, Colin was a keen and capable sportsman. He played Cricket 1913/14 (B) & 1914/15 (B), Football 1914 (A) & 1915 (A) and Tennis. Colin represented the University at Intervarsity Football in 1914 & 1919 and at Intervarsity Tennis in 1914 & 1919, 1920 (Captain) and Intervarsity Athleticsⁱⁱⁱ. Colin was awarded Blues for Football (1915) and Tennis (1918).

1914 Adelaide University Intervarsity Athletics

<https://thesis.library.adelaide.edu.au/dspace/handle/2440/39418>



Back row: N.C. Goss, E.D. Meldrum, H. Othams, R. Pender, N.G. Abbott.

Middle row: L.H. Wallmann, J.C.P. Strachan, I.B. Pender (captain), C.E. Pellew, N.B. Stevens.

Front row: C. Gurner, M. Badger, R.L. Grant.

1914 Adelaide University Intervarsity Football^{iv}

1914 AUFC 'A' TEAM

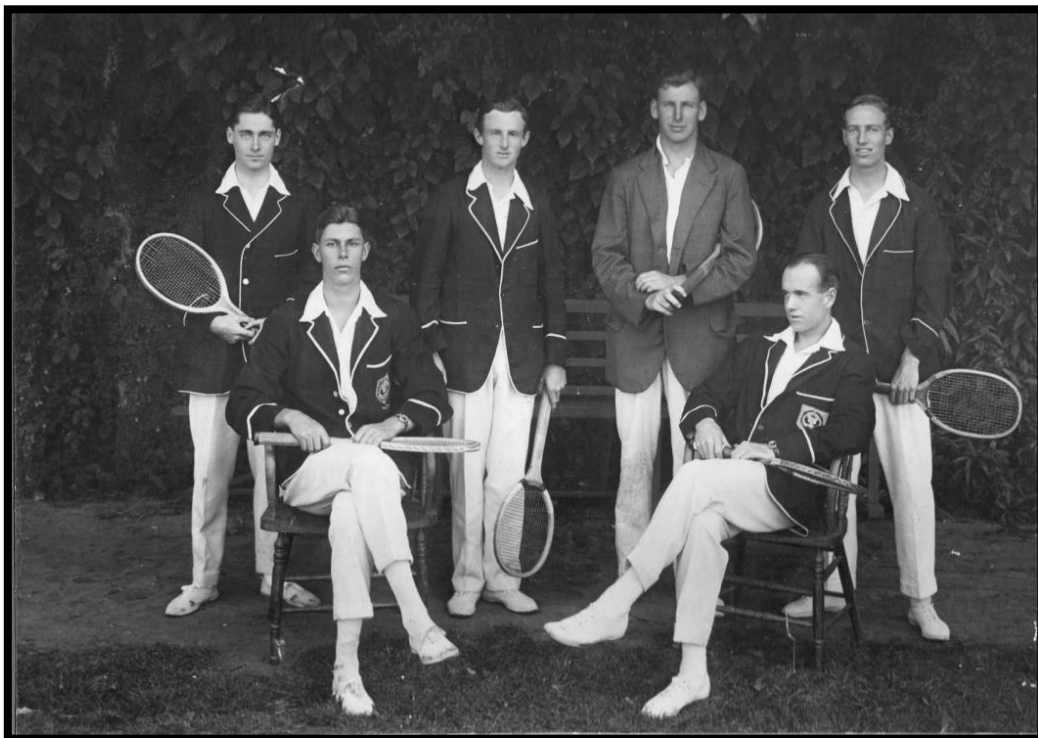


BACK ROW: T.B. Sard, W.J. Phillips, A.E. Williams, J.B. Laurie, C.R. Cole, W.J. Price, A.H. Limb, E.G. Dorsch,
L. Carthew, J.D. Northley, C. Gurner.
MIDDLE ROW: N.V. Mengerson, C.E. Pellew, L.A. Hayward (Vice-Captain), J.W. Blacket (Captain), D.M. Steele, W.A. Rollison.
FRONT ROW: L.G. Holmes, F.E. Williams, H.C. Thrush, W.O. Jose.

Colin Gurner – back Row – Far Right

1920 Adelaide Intervarsity Tennis Team

<http://hdl.handle.net/2440/40795>



Back: Nobel Laureate H.W. Florey, R.H. Berriman, F.R. Hone, A.W. Dawkins
Front: G.M. Hone and captain Dr C. Gurner.

WW1

When Colin enlisted in the AAMC on 17 June 1918 he was described as 5-foot 11¾ inches, 160 lbs, with a fair complexion, grey eyes and light brown hair.

Marriage

Colin married Jessie Gwyndolyn Marshall, the daughter of James Marshall, at the Methodist Church at Kent Town on the 18th December 1918. Sons, Colin Marshall and Walter James Lincoln were born in 1919 and 1924 respectively.^v



Young Jim & Colin



Jessie, Colin Snr with Jim & Colin Jnr

Tennis

Colin competed in the South Australian Tennis Championships in 1919, 1920, 1921, 1923, 1924 & 1925, reaching the Quarter Finals of the Singles in 1920 and 1921. In 1920 Colin competed in the Australian Open and was defeated in the Quarter Finals Quarterfinals by Horace Michael Rice (6-2 6-2 6-2).^{vi}

Other Sport

Colin also played squash and golf (becoming a member of Royal Adelaide).^{vii}

Other Interests

Colin and Jessie enjoyed several overseas trips including visits to Great Britain, the Continent, and the United States of America (1931), England by way of America (1935) and the UK and Norway (1950).^{viii}

Family Tradition

Colin and Jesse's elder son Colin Marshall Gurner also attended Adelaide University qualifying MBBS (1942), playing cricket for the University from 1937/38 (Blue in 1938) until 1942/1943 when the competition was suspended. He joined the AAMC (1943) where he rose to the rank of Major General and was awarded the AO, CBE, KStJ, ED & QHP.



Gurner, Colin Marshall 1919-2006

(From The Canberra Times 24/12/1979)

Radiologist Surgeon-General taking up civilian career When Major-General Colin Gurner retires on Wednesday it will mark the end of a military career that began when he joined the School Cadet Corps in 1935. Colin Marshall Gurner graduated a surgeon from the University of Adelaide in 1942, then joined the Australian Army Medical Corps and served in the AIF until 1946, reaching the rank of captain. After World War II, he served in the Citizen Military Force, from 1948 to 1960, rising to the rank of colonel in the Medical Corps. In 1960 he joined the Australian Regular Army as a colonel and was promoted to major general in 1967. General Gurner retires as Surgeon General of the Defence Force, a position he has held since 1977. During his military career General Gurner served in Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Britain, Canada, the US and Germany. He was appointed an honorary physician to the Queen in 1967 and was awarded the honour of Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1969. Though his military service ends on Wednesday, General Gurner's medical career will continue as he will be working in his speciality, radiology, in Canberra. After graduating from university as a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, he specialised in radiology, becoming a Member of the American College of Radiology in 1952,

Fellow of the College of Radiologists of Australia in 1957, and a Fellow of the Royal College of Radiologists in 1975. General Gurner had also become a Fellow of the Royal Australian College of Surgeons, and of the Royal Australian College of Physicians in 1969. He is president of the ACT Corps of the St John Ambulance Brigade, and chairman of the ACT Medical Board.

From the RACP College Roll:

Gurner, Colin Marshall Qualifications: AO ED KStJ CBE MBBS Adel (1942) DABR USA (1951) FRACR (1957) FRA CMA (1967) FRACP (1969) FRACS (1969) FRCR Hons UK (1972) [DABR USA = osteopathic qual.] Born: 26/12/1919 Died: 13/9/2006 Biography: Colin Gurner was born in Adelaide in 1919 and educated at Prince Alfred College and the University of Adelaide. He joined the militia (CMF) in 1939 and completed his internship at Royal Adelaide Hospital (RAH) before entering army service in 1943 as a Captain. He served in various Camp Hospitals in both Australia and New Guinea, including AGH 101 near Adelaide where his father was the radiologist. When war ended Colin trained in the radiology department at RAH, acting also as radium officer. After obtaining RACP Membership in 1950 he spent a year as Fellow in Radiation Therapy at Memorial Cancer Centre, New York, obtaining the Diploma of the American Board of Radiology (Radiation Therapy). On returning he joined the long-established radiological practice in North Terrace of Victor Stanley Verco and his father as a junior partner. He maintained honorary appointments to RAH and Adelaide Children's Hospital while continuing his involvement with the CMF, holding a senior appointment and commanding two medical units. In 1960 following the retirement of Major General William Refshauge as DGMS to become Commonwealth Director of Health, Colin accepted the offer to join the Regular Army as deputy DGMS. He was promoted to Brigadier in 1961 and Major General in 1967 when appointed DGMS. It was a time of National Service in Australia and involvement in the Vietnam War. Colin made regular trips to Singapore, Malaysia and New Guinea where troops were stationed. To be readily available to the Chief of the General Staff and Ministers for the Army, successively Malcolm Fraser, Philip Lynch and Andrew Peacock, Colin moved to Canberra. He was appointed Physician to the Queen in 1967 and Commander of the British Empire in 1969 in recognition of the contribution of the Medical Corps in Vietnam. Colin Gurner was President of the Royal Australasian College of Radiologists at the time of the First Asian-Oceanian Congress of Radiology held in Melbourne in 1971. He was appointed the first Surgeon General of the Defence Forces in 1977 and Officer in the Order of Australia in 1978. Following compulsory retirement at 60, Colin became director of the Australian Kidney Foundation and returned to radiology working in the Health Department and private practice. He was Chairman of the ACT Medical Board from 1979 to 1984. Always keen on sport and the outdoors, Colin gained blues in football and cricket at Adelaide University and played district cricket. He once admitted to dropping Don Bradman off a friend's bowling! In his seventies, he completed a diploma of journalism. In 2003 he published *The Royal Australian Army Medical Corps, 1945-1975*, described by a reviewer as 'a precious document'. Among many other awards he received Honorary Fellowships from the Royal College of Radiologists (London), Royal Australasian College of Physicians and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, delivering the Rupert Downes Memorial Lecture in 1979. He was a Knight in the Order of St John of Jerusalem. Colin's main interests during his Army days included malarial control, innovative means of evacuating those wounded and the effects of chemical, biological and radioactive weapons. He also successfully promoted the introduction to the medical defence services of part-time specialist expertise. Colin was survived by his wife Cynthia, nee Miller, a physiotherapist, three children, five grand-children and one great-grandson. Author: WSC HARE
References: © 2009 The Royal Australasian College of Physicians.

From RSL Virtual Museum from Genealogy SA

Given Name(s): Colin Marshall Last Name: GURNER Birth Date: 1919, December 26 Gender: M Father: Colin GURNER Mother: Jessie Gwyndolyn MARSHALL Birth Place/Residence: Gilberton District: Adelaide Book/Page: 49A/225 Cross

Reference: From Online Memorials Australia - Genealogy, Obituaries Colin GURNER AO, CBE, ED, QHP. Major General. A Military funeral service for MAJOR GENERAL COLIN MARSHALL GURNER will be held in its entirety at Toorak Uniting Church, 603 Toorak Road, Toorak, on Wednesday (July 26, 2006), commencing at 2 p.m. A Private

Cremation will follow. In lieu of floral tributes, donations to The Salvation Army would be appreciated. Envelopes will be available at the church or online link below. <https://secure.salvosonlinedonations.org.au/>

Walter James Lincoln Gurner 1924-2006

Second son, Walter James Lincoln "Jim" Gurner, completed his schooling at Prince Alfred College in Adelaide in 1940. Records of the speech night on 19th December 1940 states he was Sixth Form (A) Dux and won the Geoff Robin Memorial Prize.

Later records note that "Cadet W. J. L. Gurner, gained 100 per cent, proficiency in the recent Air Training Corps tests. B Flight of No. 70 Squadron of the Air Training 12 Sept 1942" Jim Gurner served in the RAAF ending as a Warrant Officer in 1945 with 101 Squadron.



RAAF. No. 1 Wireless Air Gunners School Ballarat (1WAGS).

GURNER, Walter James Lincoln Service Number 437265 Course Details WAGS Course 35 Intake Date 04/02/1943
Discharge Date 14/09/1945 Discharge Unit 101 SQN Rank Warrant Officer

In 1948 at the age of 23 Jim studied engineering at Sydney University and attended Wesley College. In 1950 he gained a Bachelor of Engineering from Sydney University and then travelled to the UK in 1950 to do further study at Trinity College, Cambridge.^{ix} He later married Roberta Craig.



L-R Colin Gurner, Jessie Gurner, Jim Gurner, Bobbie Gurner, Dorothy Patricia Craig, William Henry Craig

Sources and Acknowledgements:

- ⁱ "UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE." *The Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929)* 2 October 1909: 7. Web. 7 May 2017 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article58286611>
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- "THE UNIVERSITY." *The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931)* 21 December 1911: 12. Web. 7 May 2017 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5317642>
- ⁱⁱ "SCHOOL SPEECH DAYS." *The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931)* 13 December 1912: 18. Web. 7 May 2017 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5357570>
- "P.A.C. SPEECH DAY." *The Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929)* 19 December 1913: 9. Web. 7 May 2017 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article57134055>
- ⁱⁱⁱ "LAWN TENNIS." *The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931)* 13 April 1914: 14. Web. 7 May 2017 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5424039>
- "LAWN TENNIS." *The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931)* 11 October 1919: 14. Web. 7 May 2017 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5634364>
- "INTER-VARSITY TENNIS." *The Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929)* 8 April 1920: 7. Web. 7 May 2017 <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article62620306>>
- ^{iv} History of the Adelaide University Football Club, F Bloch
- ^v https://www.genealogysa.org.au/index.php?option=com_search&Itemid=32
- ^{vi} <http://www.tennisarchives.com/player.php?playerid=8360>
- ^{vii} "Popularity Of Squash Rackets" *The Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1954)* 17 October 1936: 23. Web. 7 May 2017 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article55732065>
- "S.A. Sports Stars Who Answered Call" *The Mail (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1954)* 23 March 1940: 9. Web. 7 May 2017 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article55776006>
- ^{viii} "PERSONAL" *The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954)* 30 November 1931: 8. Web. 7 May 2017 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article29877999>
- "Social Doing Of The Week" *Chronicle (Adelaide, SA : 1895 - 1954)* 14 March 1935: 60. Web. 7 May 2017 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article92365098>
- "About People" *The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954)* 14 June 1950: 10. Web. 7 May 2017 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article44938295>
- ^{ix} "About People" *The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1931 - 1954)* 14 June 1950: 10. Web. 7 May 2017 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article44938295>
- Ancestry.com.au – Dr Colin Gurner Family Tree
<https://www.ancestry.com.au/family-tree/person/tree/77633091/person/170195177395/facts>

Rob O'Shannassy AUFC/AUCC WW1 Researcher