



CHARLES G
COMPTON

1881-1918



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OVERVIEW



Charles George Compton
Service number 3037

Charles George Compton was born in July 1881 in Worthing Sussex, England (1). He was brought up in England by his two loving parents, Charles George Compton and Eliza Compton. At the age of 33, he migrated from England to South Australia (1). While he was in Australia he lived at 1 Orange Lane, Norwood, with his wife Lilian Compton (1C4). He worked as a bricklayer and was enlisted in the Norwood Home Service, in which he served for a full 380 days (1). Charles did not have any offspring but he did have a sister Miss E. Compton who lived back in Worthington, with his parents.

Charles had a fairly average build as he was 5.6 feet tall and weighed 154lbs (69kg) (1). His chest circumference was between 36-38 inches and he had an average dental grade of 'B'(1). His hair was brown and his eyes were hazel, his complexion was categorised as medium which would most likely have been pale at that time and he may have had a weak immune system, as unfortunately he died of influenza on the 2 of July 1918 in Fovant, England (3).



Charles George Compton was buried at Worthington Cemetery, Sussex, United Kingdom on the 6 of July 1918, just 4 days after his death somewhere between the age of 37 & 38 **(1)**. The funeral itself was very appropriate, it was a military funeral and Rev E.J Cunningham officiated at the ceremony **(1)**. Charles himself was of the Church of England and was buried in a polished Elm wood coffin with brass mountings **(1)**. After the last post had played there was a gun salute and then he was buried in consecrated ground. Many floral wreaths were laid at the tombstone which to this day can be found in row 4, section A10 of Worthington Cemetery **(6)**. Unfortunately for Charles's wife this made it very hard to visit his grave, so she asked the A.I.F for a photo of his grave to keep **(6)**. This was a war in itself and after many letters had been sent she finally received her photo. This would have made her very happy, as now Charles could always be in her home, as well as in her heart.



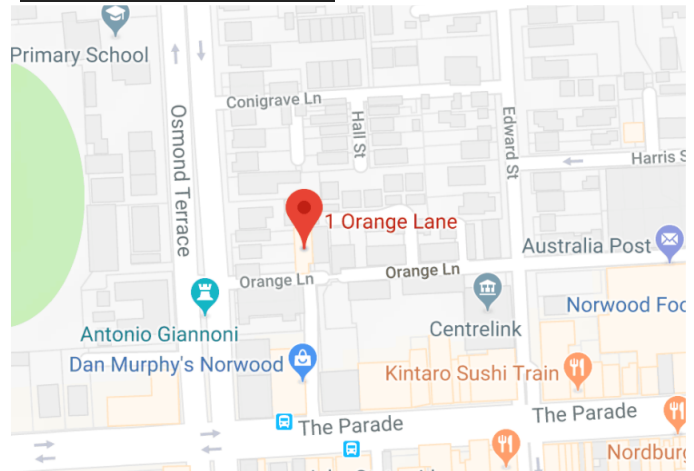
Painting of Worthington Sussex 1900's
www.gravelroots.net



Worthington Cemetery, Sussex
<https://www.1austburialsuk.weebly.com>



Charles George Compton's tombstone
<https://www.1austburialsuk.weebly.com>



1 Orange Lane, Norwood present day
<https://www.google.com.au/maps>

(1) <http://naa.gov.au/>, **(2)** <https://search.findmypast.com.au>, **(3)** <https://data.sa.gov.au>,
(4) <https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/>, **(5)** <https://www.awm.gov.au>, **(6)** <https://aif.adfa.edu.au/aif/>, **(7)** prior knowledge,
(8) explained in class, **(C)** confirmed by **(No. of site)**

LIFE IN THE MILITARY

DESTINATIONS

- 23/6/17-** Embarked to England via HMAT Borda A30.
- 25/8/17-** Disembarked Plymouth, South of England.
- 26/8/17-** Started training at Lark Hill, Salisbury.
- 5/11/17-** Moved out to Sutton Mandeville.
- 30/3/18-** travelled to Fovant for final preparations.
- 11/6/18-** Admitted to Fovant Military hospital with influenza.
- 3/7/18-** died of illness Fovant England.
- 6/7/18-** Buried at Worthington Cemetery Sussex.

Charles George Compton enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces at the age of 35 and 8 months, on the 28th of March 1917, at an enlistment station somewhere in the Adelaide CBD (1). This was not his first time enlisting for the AIF, previously he had attempted to enlist but was refused as he had varicose veins (1C4). Charles was accepted into the army later in the war because Australia was no longer able to produce enough troops if they only accepted people in A grade condition. Charles was not forced into signing up because of social pressure in fact he probably would have been over looked as he had been serving in the Home Service and had been doing so for 380 days prior to enlisting (1). On the 1st of April 1917, Charles graduated from the B. Coy at Mitcham training camp, was given the rank of private and placed in the 43rd Infantry Battalion, which formed part of the 11th Brigade (1&5). Inside the 43rd Battalion was the 3rd Australian division, which consisted of infantry units and the AIF (5). The battalion's commanding officers were John Farrell, Charles Philip Butler & Douglas Dixon Gordon (5). On the 23 of June 1917 Charles departed from Port Adelaide aboard HMAT Borda A30, his journey was completed 64 days later when he disembarked at Plymouth, England on the 25th of August 1917 (1).



<https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/>



www.adoptadigger.org



Mitcham training camp
<https://www.google.com.au/maps>



HMAT Borda A30
<https://www.awm.gov.au/>

Plymouth, South England



<https://www.google.com.au/maps>



<https://www.flickr.com>

On the 30th of March 1918 Charles George Compton travelled from Sutton Mandeville to Fovant (1) which would have been the last stop before he went to the front in France. It was in Fovant that Charles would have finalised his training and was briefed by his commanding officers. Charles trained for around three months in Fovant before he was unfortunately diagnosed with influenza (1). Charles was admitted to Fovant military hospital on the 11th of June 1918 (1C6). Little did he know that it would claim his life just 28 days later. This was a disease that was commonly caught in the trenches and it is not that strange when you read that one year later the flu claimed more lives than in the entirety of the Great War. In a way Charles was lucky that he got to die in the comfort of his birth country and was buried three days later in a cemetery in Worthington Sussex (1), where his family could attend his funeral. Charles, whilst he did not fight in France or any front for that matter, was still honoured with a military funeral and was awarded three war medals which were the British War Medal, Victory Medal and the British War Star, which would have been given to his family(2). In addition to these medals Charles George Compton's family was given a memorial death plaque of WWI (2).

To develop his skills so that when he went to war he would be a capable and valuable soldier, Charles George Compton travelled to multiple training camps around England. He started his journey by travelling from the port in Plymouth to the Lark Hill training camp which today is located in a suburb of Salisbury. He arrived at Lark Hill on the 26th of August only a day after landing in England (1). It was here that he would receive training from experienced English Officers, which would help him build on the basic training he had done at Mitcham. As an infantry private Charles would have most likely used a rifle and nothing else, whilst Charles did not actually make it to a war front his training was designed to prepare a soldier for that situation. Three months later he had completed his training at Lark Hill and travelled to Sutton Mandeville(1) where he would once again train and perfect his skills. Sutton Mandeville was not as much of a training camp as Lark Hill. Instead it was more of a place for soldiers to rest and get the right mind set. When a soldier went to a front they didn't take much with them, which was most likely because they only had a small kit bag with them when they were in the trenches (3). Because Charles did not leave for the front he therefore had more personal effects, than if he had died at the front. Even though he still did not have much, some of his personal effects included a pen, a wallet, money which was most likely his pay, smoking pipes, a razor, handkerchiefs and assorted letters, photos and post cards (1). All of these items were either bare essentials, precious gifts or items to remind him of home and his loved ones.



<https://www.flickr.com>



<https://www.awm.gov.au/>

Lark hill training camp

(1) <http://naa.gov.au/>, (2) <https://search.findmypast.com.au>, (3) <https://data.sa.gov.au>,
(4) <https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/>, (5) <https://www.awm.gov.au>, (6) <https://aif.adfa.edu.au/aif/>, (7) prior knowledge,
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Fovant Hill Badges

Left to Right

1st The Royal Wiltshire
Yeomanry

2nd 6th City of London
Regiment

3rd Australian
Commonwealth Military Forces

4th Royal Corps of Signals

5th The Wiltshire Regiment

6th The London Rifle Brigade

7th The Post Office Rifles

8th The Devonshire Regiment

Charles George Compton was an infantry private, so he would have packed light and would most likely have only carried a rifle possibly with a bayonet on the end (7). It was the job of the infantry to be in the heat of the battle and defend their trenches from the enemy. It was also the job of the infantry to storm across no man's land and lay down their lives in an attempt to seize the defender's trench. Since Charles was in the infantry his death was simply collateral damage, and his loss was an expense of war. It was the state of ill preparation that led to the loss of hundreds of lives most of which occurred at the Battle of Lone Pine (7). It was really only the officers who oversaw the battle from a boat or from a safe distance who were guaranteed to live. However, most officers did feel guilty if there were massive loses of men as they felt that they had led their men to this fate. Superior officers often felt dishonour if they had failed to take the trenches and instead were left with a slaughter. A prime example of this is Winston Churchill whose idea it was to attack Gallipoli. It was the sacrifice of many men which led to the Allie's victory. Unfortunately in the case of Gallipoli this meant innocent lives were lost only to achieve a stalemate. Whilst Charles George Compton did not lay down his life for the lives of others he was prepared to do so, which makes him as honourable as those men.



Fovant training camp past
www.fovanthistory.org



Fovant military hospital
www.fovanthistory.org

(1) <http://naa.gov.au/>, (2) <https://search.findmypast.com.au>,
(3) <https://data.sa.gov.au>, (4) <https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/>,
(5) <https://www.awm.gov.au>. (6) <https://aif.adfa.edu.au/aif/>, (7) prior knowledge,
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WWI STATS

14.1%

DECREASE IN
AUSTRALIA'S
POPULATION

Around 416,809 Australians enlisted for service in the First World War. By the end of the war 58,961 were dead.



1/5

DIED OF
INFLUENZA

Like Charles George Compton
Influenza claimed the lives of
20-40million people from
1918-1919. (2)



1.91
MILLION US
DOLLARS

TOTAL COST OF WWI (1)

"In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below'

-John McCrae

AWARDS

British War Star

No. ?

British War Medal

No. 57,573

Victory Medal

No. ?



ANZAC Spirit

Anzac Spirit is the mateship, courage and compassion for one other that was shown by the ANZAC's during War (8). The Term ANZAC spirit, whilst it may originate in WWI applies to all Australian and New Zealand Soldiers who fought or are fighting in war today (8). The ANZAC spirit shown in World War One by Charles and his fellow soldiers was the most significant as they had not been properly prepared for war. It was these qualities that kept them together and pushed them through the war. It would have been hard on the soldiers, not only not knowing what they were getting into but, also the entire plan going awry and hundreds of them getting slaughtered. Whilst some soldiers displayed the ANZAC spirit by going beyond the call of duty, for example Simpson and his donkey others might have shown this by doing something as simple as offering some food or taking someone's turn at the trench wall (7).

Charles George Compton displayed the ANZAC spirit in many ways, one example being the fact that he enlisted in the AIF (1). Charles did not have to enlist as he was already doing his part in the Home Service and no one would have thought any less of him for doing so (1). Instead of staying in the H.S Charles made the courageous decision to re-enlist in the Military. This has even more significant as Charles was willing to lay down his life defending a country that he wasn't even born in. If Charles died at war his wife would have been left a widow with no children, so he was not only risking his life but also his family name (7). The courage shown by Charles by fighting for another country is something for everyone to admire. He went from the simple job of laying bricks, to protecting his friends and family from a highly unlikely attack, to risking his life, so that a young adult would be able to live theirs. Charles George Compton did not risk life and limb on the battle field storming the enemy's trenches, but that doesn't mean that he is forgotten. This biography is a clear example that he risked just as much as the man on top of the trench. Even if he didn't die a valiant death, he is still remembered in war memorials and especially by his loving family.

'They shall grow not old, as
we that are left grow old. Age
shall not weary them, nor the
years condemn. At the going
down of the sun and in the
morning

We will remember them'

-Laurence Binyon



Perth war memorial, WA

(1) <http://naa.gov.au/>, (2) <https://search.findmypast.com.au>, (3) <https://data.sa.gov.au>,
(4) <https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/>, (5) <https://www.awm.gov.au>, (6)
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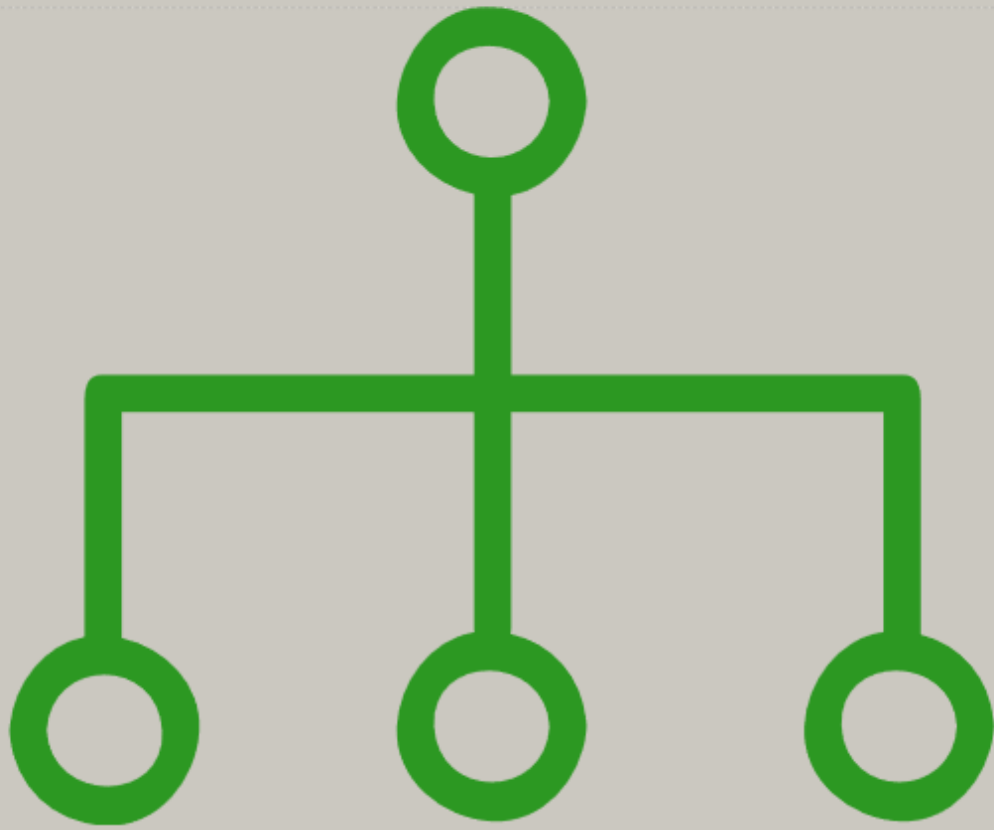
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