

## Eric Winfield CONNELLY



Eric Winfield Connelly was born on 18 September 1888, he studied at Carlton College and completed his law degree at Melbourne University. He signed the Bar Roll in 1911 and commenced work as a barrister. He was practicing in Selborne Chambers when War broke out.

Connelly applied for a commission in the Australian Imperial Forces in September 1914. He was appointed a lieutenant and joined the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion under the command of Lt Col “Pompey” Elliott, and embarked on the *Hororata*. Connelly took part in the Gallipoli landings but was injured (in the arm/elbow) on first day. His injury was serious enough that he was repatriated to Australia. Whilst home, he married Miss Dorothy Maclellan in May 1916 at St Paul’s Cathedral in Melbourne.

Following recovery from his injuries, he returned to service and was promoted to captain and appointed to the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Headquarters, the Australian 3<sup>rd</sup> Division in France. Here Connelly saw many of the major battles of the Western Front and was awarded a Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for his actions in the battle of Messines in June 1917. He is

mentioned in Sir Douglas Haig’s despatches for his “*gallant service and devotion to duty*” during 1917. Connelly was badly gassed during the Messines battle.

Connelly was promoted to major in March 1917 and was appointed General Staff Officer to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Division in July 1918. On 8 September 1918 a shell from a German airplane hit his tent, where he was sleeping, and although he was operated on (having his legs amputated) gangrene caused by the gassing at Messines set in and he died on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 1918. His wife Dorothy was on her way overseas to meet him when he died. Eric Connelly is the brother of Clive Connelly.

Eric’s mother received the official news of his death on what would have been his 30<sup>th</sup> birthday.