

Charles Leonard Gavan DUFFY

Born in 1882, Charles Gavan Duffy was the eldest son of Sir Frank Gavan Duffy, who sat on the High Court of Australia. Charles was educated at Riverview College in Sydney and Xavier College in Melbourne, before undertaking his Bachelor of Laws degree at Melbourne University.

He undertook his articles with a Wangaratta firm and was admitted to practice in 1907, having read with Sir Hayden Starke, before signing the bar roll in 1908.

Charles Gavan Duffy enlisted in April 1915 and was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant with the Australian Field Artillery. He left Australia in June 1915 and proceeded to Gallipoli. After the withdrawal from Gallipoli he returned to Egypt and then went onto England later in 1916. He arrived on the French battlefields late in 1916. In early 1917 he was promoted to captain and in June 1917 he was serving with the 4th Field Battery. He received a temporary commission as major in September 1917 when he was made the commanding officer of the battery. In November 1917, during fighting at Passchendaele, Gavan Duffy, like many of his compatriots, was badly gassed.

He was evacuated to England and received medical care throughout the rest of 1917, returning to light duties with the records service in January 1918. Gavan Duffy did not return to France and the artillery until May 1918 when he was attached to the 1st Divisional Ammunition Column. Later in 1918, he was placed in command of the 1st Field Artillery Brigade. He was wounded in October 1918 and was again hospitalised, until the armistice. In early 1919, he spent time on leave in Nice, France and in London, before returning to Australia in September 1919. He was mentioned in despatches in 1919.

Shortly after his return, he married, in December 1919, and returned to practice at the Bar. Gavan Duffy was appointed to the Supreme Court bench in 1933 and was knighted for his services to the law. He died in 1961, his later years troubled by ill health, perhaps as a direct result of his war service.

Two of his brothers also served, Frank Gavan Duffy and Desmond Gavan Duffy, who was killed on active service in November 1916.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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