

**Queensferry Cemetery,
Edinburgh, Scotland,
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



ABLE SEAMAN 2955

CONRAD de COURCY STRETTON, A.B.

H.M.A.S. "AUSTRALIA"

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

12TH MARCH, 1915 Age 25

Erected By His Shipmates

As A Token Of Their Respect

Conrad de Courcy STRETTON

Conrad de Courcy Stretton was born on 15th May, 1890* at Gosport, Hampshire, England to parents William de Courcy Stretton & Beata Caroline de Courcy Stretton (nee Stead). His birth was registered in the September quarter, 1890, in the district of Alverstoke, Hampshire. (*The Royal Australian Navy Record of Service card for Conrad de Courcy Stretton has his date of birth as 15th May, 1889).

The 1891 England Census recorded Conrad d. C. Stretton as an 11 month old living with his family at The Limes, Christleton Rd., Great Broughton, Cheshire, England. His parents were listed as William d. C. Stretton (Captain, Royal Artillery, aged 29, born Southampton, Hants) & Beata C. Stretton (aged 29, born Romsey, Hants). Conrad was the youngest of four children listed on this Census – Alexander L. de C. Stretton (aged 4, born Southampton, Hants), Catherine E. de C. Stretton (aged 3, born Fareham, Hants), William S. de C. Stretton (aged 2, born Gosport) then Conrad. There were also four servants listed – Charlotte Meredith (Cook, aged 29), Elizabeth Sutton (Nurse, aged 33), Mary Fletcher (Nursemaid, aged 15) & Eliza Clarke (House, Parlour Maid, aged 31).

Conrad de Courcy Stretton attended Bedford Grammar School from May, 1899 & left in the third term on 1900.

[The 1901 England Census listed the De Courcy Stretton family living at 3 Merton Rd., Bedford, Bedfordshire. The family listed were: William De C. Stretton (Retired Captain, R.A. – Army Officer, aged 39), Beata C. De C. Stretton (aged 39), Alexr. S. De C. Stretton (aged 14), Catherine E. De C. Stretton (aged 13), Wm. S. De C. Stretton (aged 12), Mary A. De C. Stretton (aged 8), Michael F. De C. Stretton (aged 6). Also living with the family was Catherine A. De C. Stretton – mother of William De C. Stretton (Widow, aged 70, Living on own means). There were three servants also listed – Emily Walker (House Parlour Maid, aged 19), Mary E. Goodson (Cook, aged 19) & Minnie Baker (Nurse, aged 17).]

Conrad de Courcy Stretton was aged 17 when he was indentured in the Merchant Navy in the port of London for a term of 4 years, until 1911 with George Duncan & Co.

[The 1911 England Census listed William de Courcy Stretton (Retired Captain in H. M. Army, aged 49) & his wife Beata Caroline Stretton (aged 49) living at The Nest, Salcombe, S. Devon, in an eight roomed dwelling. They had been married for 25 years & had 7 children. Only one of their children was listed living with them on this Census – Mary Adela de Courcy Stretton (aged 18). Also listed was a servant – Emily Viola Yeoman (aged 20).]

Conrad de Courcy Stretton was listed as a probationary Midshipman of the Royal Naval Reserve Admiralty Navy List for the following dates: July, 1909; January, 1910; March-April, 1911; August, 1912.

Conrad de Courcy Stretton joined the Royal Australian Navy in Melbourne on 8th May, 1913 for a period of 7 years. He was given a service number of 2955 & his next-of-kin was listed as his father – Capt. W. de C. Stretton, Barracks, Chichester, Sussex. He was 5ft 7 in tall, with brown hair, brown eyes & a fair complexion. No distinguishing marks, wounds or scars.

Mr C.de C. Stretton was listed as a passenger on the *Katoomba* which arrived at the port of Sydney on 20th July, 1914.

The 1914 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Melbourne Ports, subdivision of Williamstown listed Conrade De Corcey Stretton, Seaman, Naval Depot, Williamstown.

Conrad de Courcy Stretton joined H.M.A.S. *Cerberus* on 8th May, 1913 & his rating was Ordinary Seaman. Ordinary Seaman Conrad de Courcy Stretton was promoted to Acting Able Seaman on 17th June, 1913.

[H.M.A.S. *Cerberus* – previously H.M.V.S. *Cerberus* was renamed H.M.A.S. *Cerberus* when the navy became the Royal Australian Navy in 1911. By World War I, the weapons and boilers on H.M.A.S. *Cerberus* were inoperable & was confined to Port Phillip Bay in Victoria, Australia. The ship was retasked as a guardship and munitions store, while carrying the personnel of the Royal Australian Naval College on her paybooks.]

Acting Able Seaman Conrad de Courcy Stretton was transferred to H.M.A.S. *Encounter* on 9th August, 1913.

[H.M.A.S. *Encounter* was commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy on 1st July, 1912 & became Australia's first cruiser. Over the next two years she was actively employed in training the growing Navy and showing the flag at ports all around the nation. On 4 October 1913 she joined with the remainder of the new Australian Fleet Unit (comprising the battlecruiser *Australia*, light cruisers, *Sydney* and *Melbourne*, and destroyers, *Parramatta*, *Yarra* and *Warrego*) and took part in its initial entry into Port Jackson.]

Acting Able Seaman Conrad de Courcy Stretton was transferred to H.M.A.S. *Australia* on 1st January, 1914.

Acting Able Seaman Conrad de Courcy Stretton was transferred to H.M.A.S. *Cerberus* on 31st January, 1914. Conrad de Courcy Stretton was granted a Good Conduct Badge on 8th May, 1914.

Acting Able Seaman Conrad de Courcy Stretton was transferred back to H.M.A.S. *Australia* on 19th July, 1914.

H.M.A.S. *Australia*

H.M.A.S. *Australia* was launched in 1911, and commissioned as flagship of the Royal Australian Navy (R.A.N.) in 1913. On completion she sailed for Australia and, on 4 October 1913, led the cruisers and destroyers of the fleet unit into Sydney Harbour to public acclaim.

With the outbreak of the First World War, *Australia* became the flagship of the force that captured the German colonies in the southern Pacific. She led a force which captured Rabaul on 13th September, 1914 before proceeding to Samoa.

In late December, 1914 *Australia* received orders to sail to England via the Pacific and reached Devonport on 28th January, 1915. En route she captured and sank von Spee's supply ship *Eleonore Woermann* off South America. From Devonport *Australia* proceeded to Rosyth in Scotland, where in February, 1915 she became flagship of the 2nd Battle Cruiser Squadron. The squadron, as initially formed, comprised *Australia* and her two sister ships, HMS *New Zealand* and HMS *Indefatigable*.



H.M.A.S. *Australia* 1914

Able Seaman Conrad De Courcy Stretton died on 12th March, 1915 at South Queensferry Hospital, Scotland from Congestion of the lungs. (Source: Australian War Memorial – Roll of Honour.)

Able Seaman Conrad de Courcy Stretton was buried in Queensferry Cemetery, Edinburgh, Scotland – Plot number 573. He has a private headstone but his death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Able Seaman Conrad De Courcy Stretton – service number 2955, aged 24, of H.M.A.S. "Australia", Royal Australian Navy. He was the son of Capt. W. S. De Courcy Stretton and Mrs Stretton, of Little Close, Salcombe, Devon.

Conrad De C. Stretton & his 3 brothers – A. Lynam De C. Stretton, John De C. Stretton & William S. De C. Stretton are all named on the Roll of Honour Plaque located in Holy Trinity Church, Church Street, Salcombe, Devon, England.



Salcombe Holy Trinity Church Roll of Honour (Photo from War Memorials Online - andifoxly 2015)

Conrad De C. Stretton & his 3 brothers – Alexander L. De C. Stretton, John De C. Stretton & William Stapleton De C. Stretton are all named on the Salcombe War Memorial located on Cliff Road, Salcombe, Devon, England.



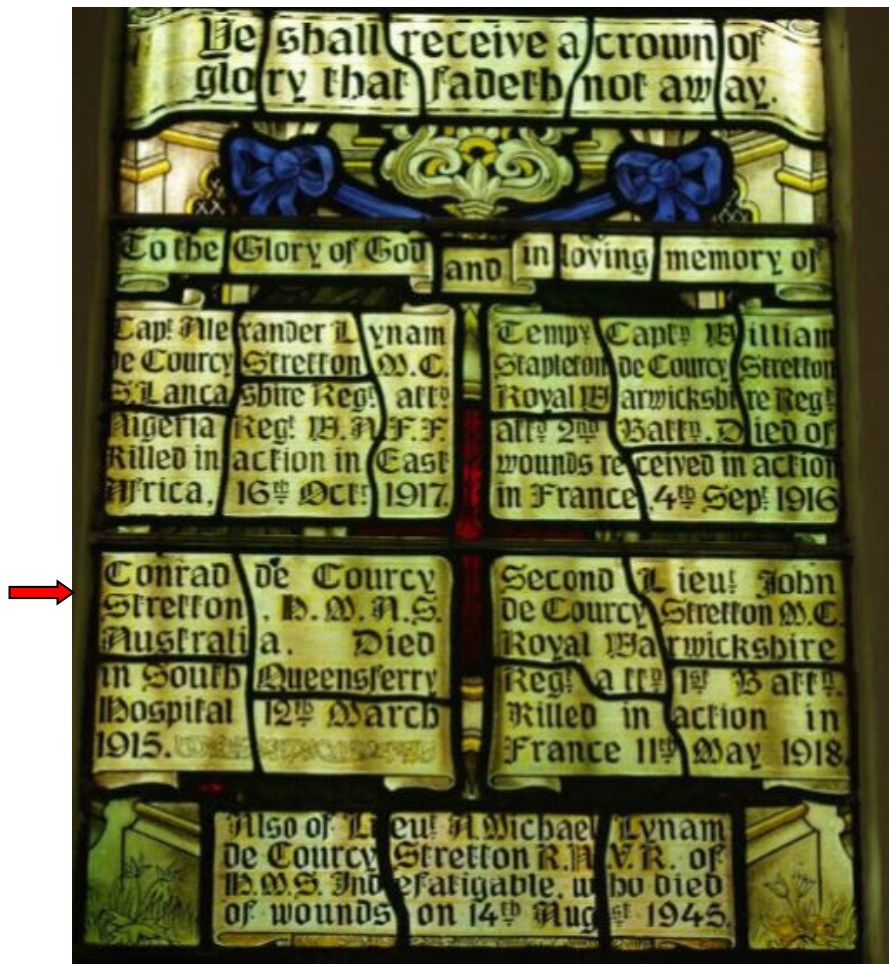
Salcombe War Memorial (Photo from War Memorials Online - andifoxy 2015)



Conrad De Courcy Stretton is remembered in a glass stained window located in Holy Trinity Church, Salcome, South Hams, Devon, England.



Holy Trinity Church, Salcome (Photo by Mark Newton, IWM)



Able Seaman C. De C. Stretton is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 1.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Able Seaman C. De C. Stretton is remembered on Royal Australian Navy WW1 Memorial, located at HMAS Cerberus Protestant Chapel of St Mark, Nelson Road, Crib Point, Victoria.



HMAS *Cerberus* Protestant Chapel of St Mark, Crib Point, Victoria (Photos courtesy of Karen Standen)



Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour) & National Archives

Connected to Conrad De Courcy Stretton:

Older Brother – Captain Alexander Lynam De Courcy Stretton, 1st Battalion, South Lancashire Regiment – attached 1st Nigeria Regiment, W.A.F.F., (West African Frontier Force). Killed in action 16th October, 1917, aged 31. Remembered on Dar Es Salaam British and Indian Memorial, Tanzania. Awarded Military Cross, Mentioned in Despatches.

Older Brother – Captain William Stapleton De Courcy Stretton, 3rd Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment – attached 2nd Battalion. Killed in action 4th September, 1916, aged 27. Buried in Corbie Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

Younger Brother – Second Lieutenant John De Courcy Stretton, 3rd Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment – attached 1st Battalion. Killed in action 11th May, 1918, aged 27. Buried in Le Vertannoy British Cemetery, Hinges, France. Awarded Military Cross.



Newspaper Notices

DEATHS ON THE AUSTRALIA

Melbourne, Monday.

The Navy Office has been notified of the following deaths on board H.M.A.S. Australia:-

Able Seaman Conrad Stretton, died on March 12, result of congestion of the lungs.

Ordinary Seaman William Kenneth Buck, died of pneumonia, on March 11.

Stretton was an Englishman. The relatives of Seaman Buck reside in Tasmania.

(*Barrier Miner*, Broken Hill, NSW – 15 March, 1915)

OBITUARIES

Mr Conrad Stretton, A.B.

General regret is expressed throughout the district (writes our Renmark correspondent) in the consequence of the announcement in The Register on Monday of the death of Able Seaman Conrad Stretton, of the H.M.A.S. Australia, from congestion of the lungs. Although of English parentage, the deceased left Renmark two years ago to join the Australian Navy, and is the first of the many young men, who have left this place, to die in the service of the Empire. He was a native of Devonshire, and had naval experience before going to Renmark. He worked for several employers here, and was highly respected. Only a fortnight ago a letter was received from him to the effect that he was well and happy, and looking forward to being made a warrant officer.

(*Observer*, Adelaide, Sth Australia – 27 March, 1915)

Queensferry Cemetery, Edinburgh, Scotland

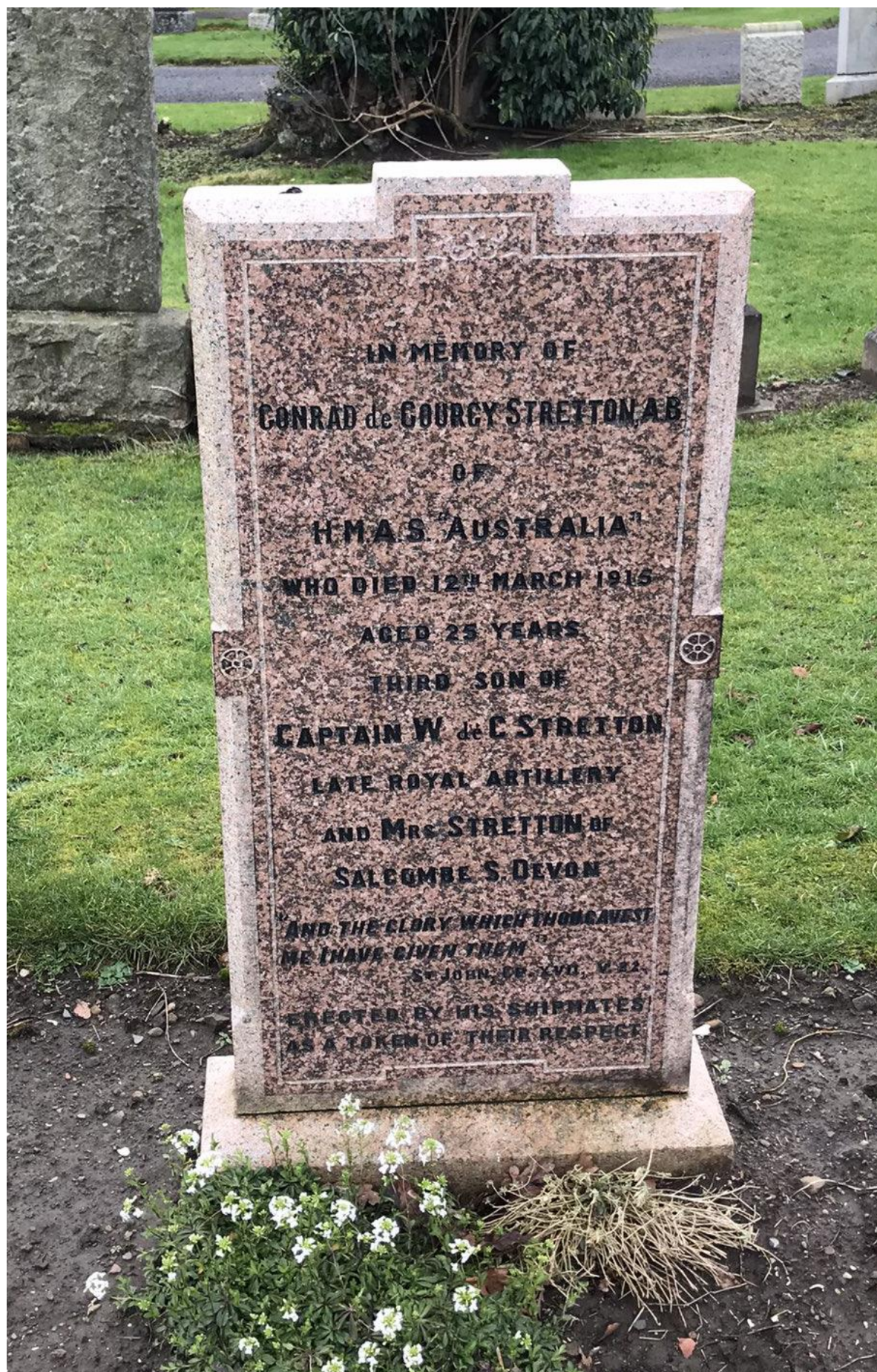
Queensferry Cemetery, Edinburgh, Scotland contains 180 First World War burials, almost all of them naval. There are also eight burials of the Second World War. There are 11 War Graves from World War 1 belonging to members of the Royal Australian Navy.

(Information & photos from CWGC)



(Photo courtesy of Allan Noble - 2020)

Photo of Able Seaman Conrad De Courcy Stretton's Private Headstone in Queensferry Cemetery, Edinburgh, Scotland. His Headstone was erected by his Shipmates.



(Photo courtesy of Allan Noble - 2020)