



In memory of  
**Lieutenant**  
**WALLACE ALLAN COCHRANE**  
QX5560, 2<sup>ND</sup>/2<sup>ND</sup> Machine Gun Battalion  
who died age 22  
on 11 July 1942

Son of Lot Haynes Cochrane and Eva May Cochrane;  
of Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia

Remembered with honour  
EL ALAMEIN WAR CEMETERY



LIEUTENANT  
**WALLACE ALLAN COCHRANE**  
2<sup>ND</sup>/2<sup>ND</sup> MACHINE GUN BATTALION  
REGIMENTAL NUMBER: QX5560



Wallace Cochrane's portrait sketched when he was in Palestine. Courtesy of Douglas Cochrane, brother, Chermside.

Lieutenant Wallace Allan Cochrane was born at Toowoomba in Queensland on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1920 to Lot Haynes Cochrane and Eva May Cochrane (nee Hooker) He completed his primary schooling at the East State School in Toowoomba and then attended the Toowoomba Grammar School. At the age of 20 years and 2 months, he was enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force at Toowoomba in Queensland on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1940 after swearing the statutory oath that he would serve in the armed forces for the duration of the war and an additional 12 months. At the time of his enlistment, he was unmarried, employed as a Clerk and residing with his family at 215 Hume Street in Toowoomba. He gave his

next-of-kin as his father, Lot Haynes Cochrane at 215 Hume Street in Toowoomba. He stated that he was of the Presbyterian religion. His physical description on enlistment was that he had dark brown hair and grey eyes.

Lieutenant Wallace Cochrane, on the day that he enlisted, was allotted the regimental number of QX5560 and he joined the Northern Command A.I.F. Reception Depot. He was sent to the 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Battalion at Enoggera on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1940. He later trained at the Redbank Camp and he left there on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1940 and proceeded to the E.C. School at Liverpool Camp in New South Wales where he completed No. 2 Potential Officers Course that was held during the period 24<sup>th</sup> June until 16<sup>th</sup> August 1940. During the course, he was promoted to the rank of Acting Sergeant on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1940. He rejoined the 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Battalion at Redbank Camp on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1940. He was sent to the S.A. School in Sydney on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1940 and rejoined the 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Battalion at Redbank Camp on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1940. He was transferred to the Machine Gun Training Company at the Grovely Camp on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1940 as an instructor.

Wallace Cochrane was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1941 and his promotion was promulgated in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No. 85/41. He was allocated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reinforcements of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Battalion on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1941. He proceeded to the 11<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion at Redbank on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1941 and on the following day he proceeded on pre-embarkation leave during the period 17<sup>th</sup> March until 25<sup>th</sup> March 1941. He left Redbank Camp on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1941 and travelled by train to Sydney where he embarked by ship on the following day.

He disembarked from the ship in the Middle East on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1941 where he joined the Machine Gun Training Battalion in Palestine. He attended Chemical Warfare Course at the (Middle East)

Tactical School during the period 22<sup>nd</sup> July until 8<sup>th</sup> August 1941. He attended the Australian Imperial Force (Middle East) Infantry School during the period 7<sup>th</sup> September until 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1941. He qualified at both courses. He left the Machine Gun Training Battalion on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1941 and joined the 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Battalion later that day. In June 1942, the 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Battalion as part of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division, returned to Egypt to reinforce the British Eighth Army that had retreated to Alamein. It fought alongside the infantry in defending the Alamein line.

Whilst commanding No. 3 Platoon of "A" Company of his battalion near Tel El Eisa Ridge, he was wounded on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1942 and he died as a result of his wounds on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1942. At the time of his death, Wallace Cochrane was 22 years of age. He was buried in Grave No. 6 at Elimayad. After the war, his remains were interred in the El Alamein War Cemetery in Egypt. His family placed the following inscription upon his headstone in the El Alamein War Cemetery: "*Jesus called him O'er the tumult of our life's wild restless sea*". For his service during World War 2, Wallace Cochrane was awarded the 1939/1945 Star, the Africa Star, the Defence Medal, the War Medal and the Australian Service Medal. His medal entitlement was sent to his father on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1952.



*Australian War Memorial photograph 024709  
Men of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Battalion manning a Vickers Machine Gun at Tel El Eisa.*

Lieutenant Wallace Cochrane's name is commemorated on Panel No. 74 at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and locally on the Toowoomba Mothers' Memorial, the Toowoomba Soldiers' Memorial Hall World War 2 Honour Board, the Toowoomba Grammar School World War 2 Honour Board and St Stephens Church Honour Board. As a former Toowoomba Grammar School Student, who brought honour to his school and country, his name is recorded in John K. Winn's publication, "*Toowoomba Grammar School - Steadfast, Brave and True*", published by the Toowoomba Grammar School in 2010.

Notes:

The 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Battalion War Diary records that Lieutenant Wallace Cochrane was the officer commanding No. 3 Platoon, A Company of the Battalion that was supporting the 2<sup>nd</sup>/48<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion during its attack on Tel El Eisa Ridge. The following entry gives details on the circumstances of Wallace Cochrane's wounding:

*"In the afternoon the 2<sup>nd</sup>/48<sup>th</sup> Battalion moved southward and reached the railway line east of Tel El Eisa Station. Lieutenant Cochrane's platoon moved forward with the two companies of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/48<sup>th</sup> Battalion, C and D, and took up defensive positions near the railway line. About 1430 hours, German tanks swept right through Lieutenant Cochrane's positions and overran the area. The enemy tank crews endeavoured to crush the personnel, who were sheltering in their slit trenches (at that time only about 18 inches deep), by running the tank tracks down the trench. Lieutenant Cochrane, Officer commanding No. 3 Platoon of A Company was mortally wounded shortly after the platoon first took up their position near the railway line, and though he reached the Medical Dressing Station, he died the next morning.*



*Australian War Memorial photograph 024752*

*Gun crew of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Machine Gun Battalion in their camouflaged gun position at Tel El Eisa.*

**Wallace Cochrane's photograph and the following obituary appeared in the local newspaper shortly after his parents were notified of his death.**

*Mr and Mrs L.H. Cochrane, 215 Hume Street, Toowoomba, have received notification from the Minister for the Army that their fifth son, Lieutenant Wallace Alan Cochrane, died of wounds on July 11. Lieutenant Cochrane joined the A.I.F. in May 1940, and was drafted for overseas service in Palestine, Syria and*

*Egypt. He was an old boy of the Toowoomba Grammar School. After leaving school he was employed on the clerical staff of the Downs Co-operative Bacon Factory. Lieutenant "Wally" Cochrane was well known in Toowoomba, particularly by the men of the old 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Lieutenant Cochrane's brother Douglas is serving overseas with his late brother's battalion, and his eldest brother, Rupert, is a member of the R.A.A.F. Another brother, Bill, was discharged from the A.I.F. some time ago. Lieutenant Cochrane was 22 years of age.*

#### Family notes:

Wallace's brother, Douglas Clive Cochrane, QX10201, enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force at Toowoomba on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1940 and eventually served as a Warrant Officer Class 2 in anti-gas warfare instruction. He was discharged from the Australian Imperial Force on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1946.

Wallace's brother, William Hooker Cochrane, QX16422, enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force at Toowoomba on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1940. He was discharged from the Australian Imperial Force on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1940.

Wallace's brother, Rupert Gordon Cochrane, 272697, enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force. He was discharged from the R.A.A.F. on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1945. Prior to enlisting in the R.A.A.F. he was employed as a School Teacher at Dalby and Mackay in Queensland. He served as a Navigator in the R.A.A.F. and achieved the rank of Flight Lieutenant. He saw active service in Papua/New Guinea with No. 20 Squadron flying operations using Catalina aircraft. At the time of his discharge, he was serving with No. 2 Flying Boat Repair Unit. He was a member of the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion Cadet Colour Party at the opening of Federal Parliament in 1927. He was educated at the Toowoomba High School & Technical College during the years 1926 and 1927.

Toowoomba Grammar archives records show that he enrolled as a day student on 30th January 1934 and left the School on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1935. His parent was shown as Lot Haynes Cochrane, Farmer & Wheat Classifier, Toowoomba. After leaving school he was employed as a Clerk at the Downs Cooperative Bacon Factory.

#### External links

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