

WARD

Harold Whitfield



Dr Ward

Courtesy G.M. Galvin

A Life of Service: Major H W Ward

G.M. (Mike) Galvin

Harold Whitfield Ward (1890-1975) was a doctor, soldier and community leader. He was born and educated in Melbourne and graduated as a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery from Melbourne University in 1914.

In 1914, Dr Ward applied to join the Medical Corps of the A.I.F. but was unsuccessful as there were no vacancies. In early 1915, he saw that the British Army wished to recruit one hundred medical practitioners from Australia for service in the Royal Army Medical Corps. This time, Dr Ward was successful and travelled to England for training at Aldershot on a Short Service Commission. These men became known as the Kitchener 100 Doctors and they were to have a great influence on Australian society over the half century after the Great War.

Dr Ward was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Medical Corps of the British Army and then assigned to the 61st Field Ambulance for service on the Western Front. He saw substantial action at the Battle of Loos and in the Ypres Salient. Dr Ward relinquished his commission on the 3rd June 1916 and returned to Australia. He was appointed as a surgeon at the Perth Public Hospital and also consulted at the Tuberculosis Hospital at Wooroloo.

Dr Harold Ward was later appointed as the Medical Officer for Health by the York District Health Board and entered private practice at York where he remained for the rest of his life.

In the conflict of 1939-1945, Dr Ward enlisted in the Australian Army Medical Corps (Militia) and provided in-patient services to the A.I.F. Convalescent Hospital which had been established at Faversham House, York. He attended the patients in the Hospital virtually every day in addition to his very busy private practice and work at the York District Hospital.

This was at a time when relieving doctors were unavailable due to so many practitioners serving in the armed forces. Dr Ward carried an extraordinary workload during those years. His private life, however, was marked by tragedy when both his parents were drowned in a boating accident in Victoria and his only son was killed over Germany whilst serving in the R.A.F.

As well as his normal civilian practice and military responsibilities, Dr Ward assumed a leadership role in the St John Ambulance and was decorated for his service. Like others of his generation, he served his country and community with devotion.

For his U.K. military service, Dr Ward received the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal and, for his Australian service, the War Medal and the Australian Service Medal.

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