

**Reading Cemetery,
Reading, Berkshire
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



32751 GUNNER

C. R. SPENCER

AUSTRALIAN T. M. BATTERY

11TH OCTOBER, 1917 Age 25

Charles Robert SPENCER

Charles Robert Spencer was born at Beechworth, Victoria on 28th March, 1892 to parents Charles William and Rose Ann Spencer (nee Pyle).

The 1913 Australian Electoral Roll for the district of Albury, subdistrict Albury, New South Wales, recorded Charles Robert Spencer, Ironmonger, of Sylvania. Also listed at Sylvania were Charles William Spencer, Clerk; Rose Ann Spencer, Domestic duties & Laura Rose Spencer, Domestic duties.

Charles Robert Spencer was a 24 year old, single, Ironmonger from Sylvania, Albury, NSW when he enlisted at Cootamundra, NSW on 26th September, 1916 with the Medium Trench Mortar Batteries, 6th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 32751 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr C. W. Spencer, of Sylvania, Albury, NSW. Charles Spencer stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served 3 years in Junior Cadets with the rank of Sergeant.

Private Charles Spencer was posted to "C" Company, 1st Depot Battalion, Cootamundra on 26th September, 1916. He was transferred to "C" Company, Depot Battalion, Goulburn on 4th October, 1916. Private Spencer was transferred to 55th Battalion as Acting Corporal on 6th November, 1916. Acting Corporal Spencer was transferred to Trench Mortar Battery on 28th November, 1916 as Acting Sergeant.

Gunner Charles Robert Spencer embarked from Sydney on RMS *Osterley* on 10th February, 1917. He was promoted to Sergeant for voyage only. He disembarked at Plymouth, England on 11th April, 1917.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Sergeant Spencer was marched in to H. & D. Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 11th April, 1917 & his rank reverted to Gunner on 12th April, 1917.

Gunner Charles Robert Spencer proceeded overseas to France via Southampton from H. & D. Depot, Camps 4 & 5, Perham Downs on 22nd May, 1917.

Gunner Charles Robert Spencer was marched in to A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot) at Rouelles, France on 23rd May, 1917.

Gunner Charles Robert Spencer was marched out to 2nd Division Trench Mortar Battery on 7th June, 1917. He was taken on strength & posted to Y2/A Battery in France on 8th June, 1917.

Gunner Charles Robert Spencer was promoted to Temporary Bombardier from 5th September, 1917 – vice Cpl. Lambton Killed in action.

Temporary Bombardier Charles Robert Spencer was wounded in action on 21st September, 1917. He was taken to 6th Australian Field Ambulance with multiple gunshot wounds then transferred on 3rd Casualty Clearing Station on 22nd September, 1917. Temporary Bombardier Charles Robert Spencer reverted back to his permanent rank of Gunner on being evacuated wounded in France on 21st September, 1917. Gunner Charles Robert Spencer was transferred by Ambulance Train 15 on 23rd September, 1917 & admitted to 35th General Hospital at Calais, France the same day with shrapnel wounds to left shoulder & fracture of lower jaw. Gunner Spencer embarked for England on Hospital Ship *Pieter de Conick* on 25th September, 1917.

Gunner Charles Robert Spencer was admitted to Reading War Hospital, Reading, Berkshire, England on 26th September, 1917 with shrapnel wounds to jaw & left shoulder.

Gunner Charles Robert Spencer died at 10.20 am on 11th October, 1917 at No. 1 Reading War Hospital, Reading, Berkshire, England from wounds received in action – Shell wound to jaw & compound fracture and left shoulder.

A death for Charles R. Spencer, aged 25, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Reading, Berkshire, England.

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Gunner Charles Robert Spencer was buried at 3 pm on 15th October, 1917 in Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire – Screen Wall. 72. 16369. Those buried in Plot 72 & buried in other parts of the cemetery that do not have headstones marking their graves are named on the Memorial Screen Wall located near the Cross of Sacrifice. Their deaths are still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. From the burial report of Gunner Spencer - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a full Military Funeral Band, Party of Mourners and Bearers being supplied by the Berkshire Regiment stationed at Reading. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside. The coffin was draped with the "Union Jack" and surmounted with several beautiful floral tributes. Prior to the interment a service was held in the St. Giles' Church by the Rev. F. J. C. Gillmor. No relatives were present at the funeral. An oak cross will be erected by the A.I.F.*

Charles Robert Spencer, 32751, acknowledged on 16th July, 1917 that "My Will has been made & is in the custody of Miss Alice C. McKenzie c/o Mrs R. Bowden, Guinea St. Albury, NSW, Australia."

A War Pension was granted to Rose Ann Spencer, mother of the late Gunner Charles Robert Spencer, in the sum of 30/- per fortnight from 17th December, 1917.

Gunner Charles Robert Spencer was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Gunner Spencer's father – Mr C. W. Spencer, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque both sent September, 1922). Charles William Spencer, father of the late Gunner Charles Robert Spencer, died on 28th July, 1918 however his wife - Mrs Rose Ann Spencer signed for the Medals, Scroll & Plaque etc .

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Gunner Charles Robert Spencer – service number 32751, aged 25, of 2nd Australian Trench Mortar Battery. He was the son of Rose Ann Spencer, of Fallon St., Albury, New South Wales, and the late Charles William Spencer. Born at Beechworth, Victoria, Australia.

Gunner C. R. Spencer is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 20.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Gunner Charles Robert Spencer is remembered at the Albury War Memorial. The Albury Memorial was opened on Anzac Day, 1925. The tower was originally lit by ground lights however electric lighting was not supplied to the torch until 1995. In the same year a number of individual plaques were set in the gardens around the monument to recall those who had died in both World Wars, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. The monument is located at the end of Dean Street.



Albury War Memorial (Photos from War Memorials Register in NSW)



Memorial Plaques (Photos from TripAdvisor)

C. R. Spencer is remembered on the St. David's Uniting (Presbyterian) Church War Memorial located at the corner of Olive & Wilson Streets, Albury, NSW.



St. David's Uniting (Presbyterian) Church War Memorial, Albury

(Photos from Register of War Memorials in NSW – Peter Levarre-Waters)

(73 pages of Gunner Charles Robert Spencer's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



Newspaper Notices

DIED OF WOUNDS- Mr C. W. Spencer, of "Baarmutha", Albury, on Friday received the sad news of the death from wounds of his son, Acting-Sergeant Charles Robert Spencer, 2nd Australian Divisional Trench Mortar Brigade, late Sixth Reinforcements, Medium Trench Mortar Battery. Some days ago Mr Spencer was officially informed of the wounding of his son, and although the best was hoped for he died on October 11. Deceased was 26 years of age, and was well and popularly known in Albury. For about eight years he was employed in the hardware department of Messrs T. H. Mate and Co., but resigned to take a similar position with Messrs Brovman and Co. Temora. He enlisted at Cootamundra, and left Australia during February this year. He had only been three weeks in England when sent into the firing line and in his last letter, dated August 11, 1917, he stated he was still there. Acting-Sergeant Spencer was a native of Beechworth, where his father was employed for many years with Messrs R. Taylor and Co. storekeepers. He was a nephew of Mr Roland Spencer, of Black Springs, Beechworth, and grandson of Mrs C. Pyle, of Three mile.

(Ovens and Murray Advertiser, Beechworth, Victoria – 24 October, 1917)

GENERAL

Mr C. W. Spencer, Albury, has received the sad news of the death from wounds of his son, Acting-Sergeant Charles Robert Spencer, 2nd Australian Divisional Trench Mortar Brigade, late Sixth Reinforcements, Medium Trench Mortar Battery. Some days ago Mr Spencer was officially informed of the wounding of his son, and although the best was hoped for he died on October 11. Deceased was 26 years of age, and was well and popularly known in Albury. For about eight years he was employed in the hardware department of Messrs T. H. Mate and Co., but resigned to take a similar position with Messrs Brovman and Co. Temora. He enlisted at Cootamundra, and left Australia during February this year. He had only been three weeks in England when sent into the firing line.

(Albury Banner and Wodonga Express, NSW – 26 October, 1917)

DIED ON SERVICE

SPENCER – On the 11th October, died of wounds at Reading War Hospital, England, A/c.-Sergeant Charles Robert Spencer, aged 25 years, 6th Reinforcements, Medium Trench Mortar Battery, No. 32,751, dearly beloved son of C. W. and R. A. Spencer, "Barrmutha", Sylvania, Albury, New South Wales.

His life on the battle-field was spent,
And Australia raises this monument;
A soldier and a man he died,
Honoured by all! his country's pride.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 27 October, 1917)

DIED ON SERVICE

SPENCER – A tribute of love to the memory of Acting-Sergeant Charles Robert Spencer, who died of wounds on October 11, at Reading War Hospital, England, aged 25 years, dearly loved fiancé of Alice McKenzie, Albury, NSW.

Duty nobly done.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 10 November, 1917)

BIG CASUALTY LIST

NEW SOUTH WALES MEN OUT OF ACTION

DIED OF WOUNDS

A.-Sgt. C. R. SPENCER (Albury) 11/10/17

(Sunday Times, Sydney, NSW – 25 November, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM

Honour Roll – Died of Wounds

SPENCER – In loving memory of Gunr. Charles Robert Spencer, of M.T.M.B., died of wounds on October 11, 1917. Buried Reading Cemetery, England.

In a soldier's grave he lies sleeping,

One of earth's bravest and best.

In our hearts we shall miss him for ever,

Though we know he is only at rest.

- Inserted by his loving mother, sisters, brother and brother-in-law.

(The Border Morning Mail and Riverina Times, Albury, NSW – 11 October, 1918)



Charles Robert Spencer



Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire, England

Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire contains 248 War Graves, 17 of those being from Australian Forces – World War 1.

The War Graves Plot is situated at the back of the cemetery, in the right hand corner from the entrance. A Screen Wall Memorial commemorates those buried in Plot 72 and those buried in other parts of the cemetery whose graves are not marked by headstones. There are 207 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war and 41 of the 1939-1945 war. There is also 1 Serbian burial.

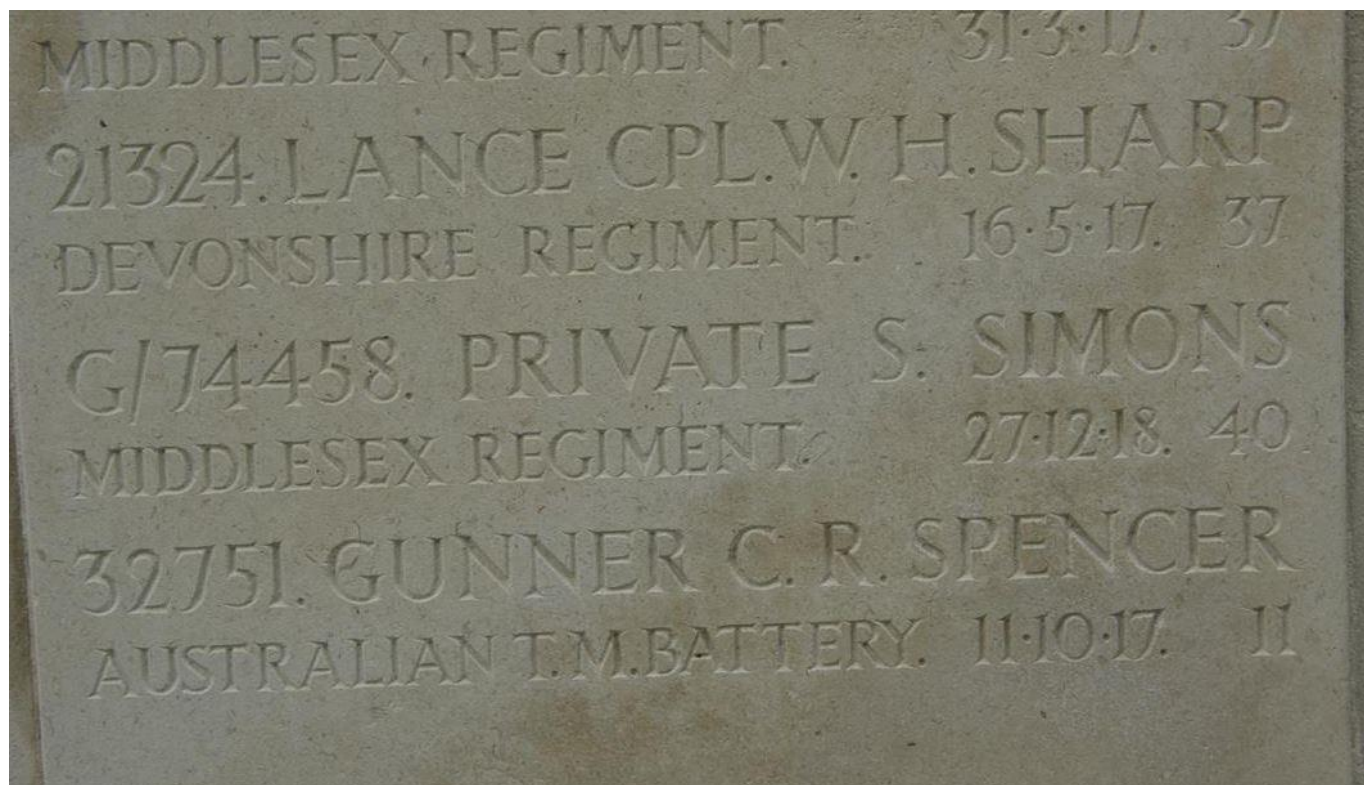
(Information & photos from CWGC)



Cross of Sacrifice & Memorial Screen Wall, Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire (Photos from CWGC)



Photo of Gunner C. R. Spencer's name on the Screen Wall Memorial in Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of Phil Wood)