

**Streatham Cemetery, Tooting,  
London, England  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**SECOND LIEUTENANT**

**G. B. ALFORD**

**1ST BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**12TH AUGUST, 1916**

*For King And Country*

## Gordon Beresford ALFORD

Gordon Beresford Alford was born at Toowoomba, Queensland on 18th February, 1885 to parents Charles George & Elizabeth Crofton Alford (nee Nott).

(Note: Births, Deaths & Marriages Queensland have date of birth as 18th February, 1885, however his headstone has date of birth as 15th February, 1885. His application for a Commission in the Australian Imperial Expeditionary Forces also has date of birth as 18th February, 1885.)

Gordon Beresford Alford attended William Street & Fort Street Public Schools, Sydney, NSW.

Gordon Beresford Alford was a 30 year old, single, Bank Accountant for Bank of New South Wales from Tivoli Street, Mosman, NSW when he joined the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.) on 13th September, 1915 at Warwick Farm, Sydney, NSW. His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his father – Mr C. G. Alford, Tivoli Street, Mosman, NSW.

Gordon Beresford Alford applied for a Commission in the Australian Imperial Expeditionary Forces on 4th January, 1916. He was aged 30 years & 10 months & was an Accountant with Bank of NSW – Goulburn branch. Gordon Alford stated he was educated at Sydney High School & had over 13 years' service in Bank of NSW. He listed the following military qualifications: "*Over 3 ½ months in camp before attending No. 5 Depot Training School. I held rank of Corporal in C. Co. 1st Battn.*"

Gordon Beresford Alford was appointed 2nd Lieutenant in the Australian Imperial Force on 16th February, 1916.

A Second application for a Commission in the Australian Imperial Expeditionary Forces was completed & signed on 28th February, 1916 in which Gordon Alford stated he had served "*Nearly six months in Camp. Rank 2nd Lieut. 16th Rein., 1st Battalion.*"

Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford received a Commission. This was gazetted in *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* – No. 22 of 17th February, 1916.

Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Nestor (A71)* on 9th April, 1916 with the 1st Infantry Battalion, 16th Reinforcements & disembarked at Port Said on 14th May, 1916.

Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford embarked from Alexandria for Overseas on 20th May, 1916 on H. T. *Ivernia*. He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 26th May, 1916.

Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford reported to 1st Australian Divisional Base Depot at Etaples, France on 29th May, 1916.

Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford was on furlough to London from 17th June, 1916 & rejoined 1st Australian Divisional Base Depot on 25th June, 1916 from furlough.

Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford proceeded to join 1st Battalion on 6th July, 1916 & was taken on strength of 1st Battalion as Supernumerary to Establishment in France on 7th July, 1916 from 16th Reinforcements.

Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford was wounded in action in France on 23rd July, 1916. He was admitted to No. 1 Field Ambulance on 23rd July, 1916 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to Back. 2nd Lieutenant Alford was transferred to 6th Motor Ambulance Convoy on 23rd July, 1916 & admitted to No. 44 Casualty Clearing Station. He was transferred to No. 22 Ambulance Train on 24th July, 1916 & admitted to No. 8 General Hospital at Rouen, France on 25th July, 1916. 2nd Lieutenant Alford was reported to be dangerously ill on 30th July, 1916 with G.S.W. Spine. He embarked for England on 1st August, 1916 on Hospital Ship *St. Andrew*.

## 1st Battalion

The 1st Battalion was the first infantry unit recruited for the AIF in New South Wales during the First World War.....  
In March 1916, it sailed for France and the Western Front. From then until 1918 the battalion took part in operations against the German Army, principally in the Somme Valley in France and around Ypres in Belgium.....

*(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

### War Diary – 1st Battalion

23rd July, 1916 CONTALMAISON

00.28 hrs – At 0028 and at 0045 message received from Lt BURSTALL that German trenches on the right were taken at 0100. A message then received that German 2nd line trenches were taken but no particulars were forthcoming. 60 prisoners were brought into the old firing line and sent back to the A.P.M. at ALBERT at 0130. Satisfactory information was not forthcoming so Lt. Col. J. HEANE D.S.O. with Bombers, H.Q. Staff and Signallers went to German first line leaving Lt. Col. O. G. HOWELL-PRICE in charge of old Bn Headqrs dugout. A message was then sent to the Brigadier that the line was taken. Col. HEANE met Lt. BURSTALL in German 1st line, and sent him immediately for information about the 2nd and 3rd lines. Word received that 3rd line was taken about 0145. Work at consolidating the 1st line commenced. Signallers obtained communications with 3rd Bn. Wires were run to D. Coy, in the 2nd line. Lt-Col. HEANE inspected the 2nd & 3rd German lines and found them \_\_\_\_\_. Our right was found to have progressed too far to the right as the 3rd Bde had not come sufficiently close to us. The 3rd line ran in & out close to the BAPAUME Road.

A communication trench was then dug between the 1st & 2nd lines under heavy shell fire. Captain A. C. MACKENZIE and Lts COLLIER, ATKINS and BLACKMORE were killed and Captain MACLEAN & Lts ALFORD, McCONNEL and A'BECKETT wounded during the attack.

The German 2nd & 3rd lines were much damaged & had to be reconstructed. The first line was little better. The dugouts were not good – scooped out shelters only. Consolidation of position continued during the day.

*(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)*

Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford was admitted to Empire Hospital, Vincent Square, Westminster, London, England on 3rd August, 1916.

Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford died at 2.50 am on 12th August, 1916 at Empire Hospital, Vincent Square, Westminster, London, England from wounds received in action in France – G.S.W. Spine.

A death for Gordon B. Alford, aged 31, was registered in the September quarter, 1916 in the district of St. George Hanover Square, London, England.

Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford was buried on 16th August, 1916 in Streatham Cemetery, Tooting, London, England – Plot number S. 97 and has a Private Headstone. His death is still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Second Lieutenant Alford's father – Mr C. G. Alford, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent January, 1922 & Plaque received January, 1923).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford, of 1st Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Charles George Alford (Chief Inspector, Bank of New South Wales).

Second Lieutenant G. B. Alford is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 28.



Roll of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

G. B. Alford is remembered on the Fort Street High School Great War Honour Roll, located at Fort Street High School, Parramatta Road, Petersham, Sydney, NSW.

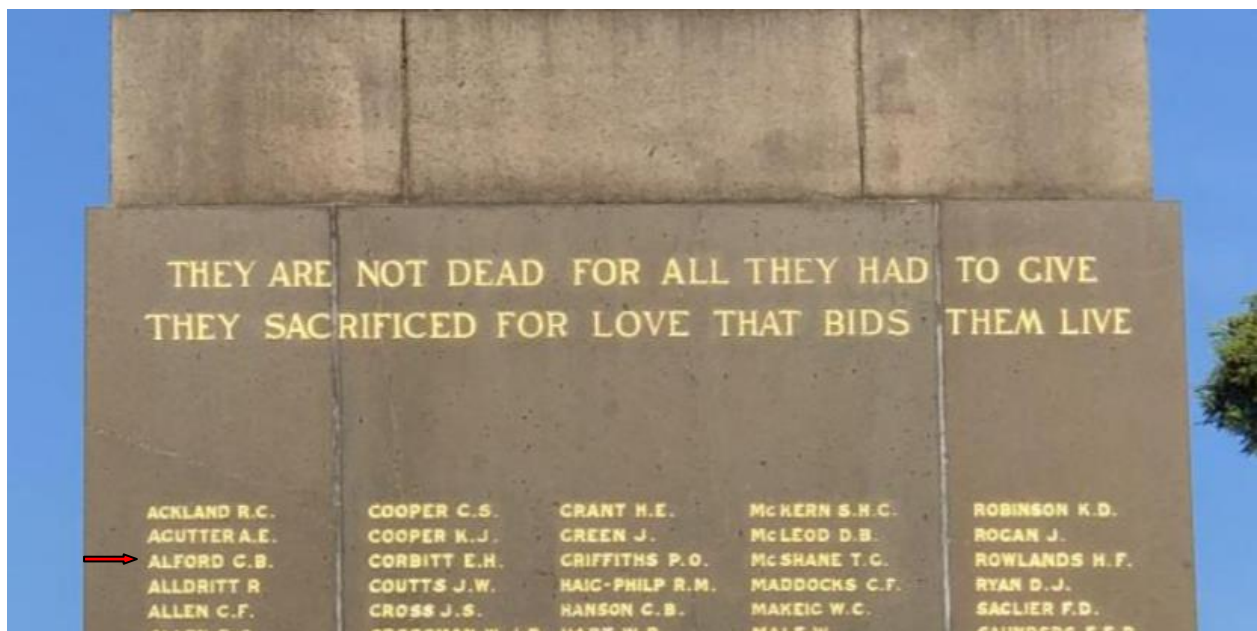


Fort Street High School Great War Honour Roll (Photo by Manny Martin – War Memorials Register NSW)

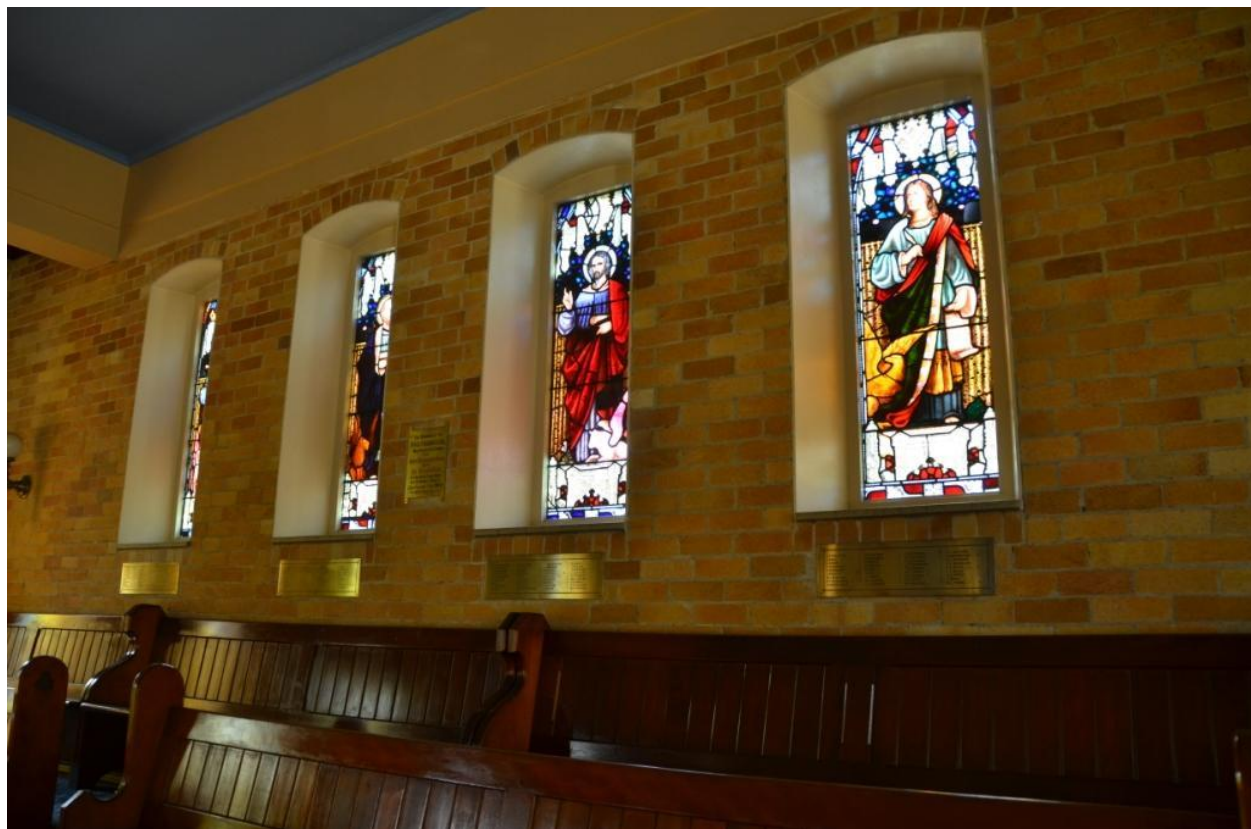
G. B. Alford is remembered on the Mosman War Memorial, located at Alan Border Oval, Myahgah Road and The Crescent, Mosman, NSW.



**Mosman War Memorial** (Photo from AWM – Places of Pride – Mosman Library)



G. B. Alford is remembered on the WW1 Memorial Panels at St. Luke's Anglican Church, corner Ourimbah and Heydon Streets, Mosman, NSW.



#### **WW1 Memorial Panels at St. Luke's, Mosman**

*(Photo from Mosman 1914-1918)*

Lt. Gordon Alford is remembered on a Stained Glass Window located in St. Peter's Anglican Church, 29 Waters Road, Cremorne, NSW. There are four Stained Glass Windows below the Rose Window in the east wall; two to the left & two to the right of the six paintings forming a polyptych in the centre, below the Rose Window.

The windows from left to right: the apostle St Peter, the Archangels St Michael and St Gabriel and, St Paul. The windows were created by glass artist J. Redecki and were dedicated in 1923 in memory of Lt. Gordon Alford (d.1916), Constance Blackmore (d.1919), anon, and Joseph and Jane Reynolds, respectively.



#### **St. Peter's Anglican Church, Cremorne – Stained Glass Windows** *(Photo from St. Peter's Church)*

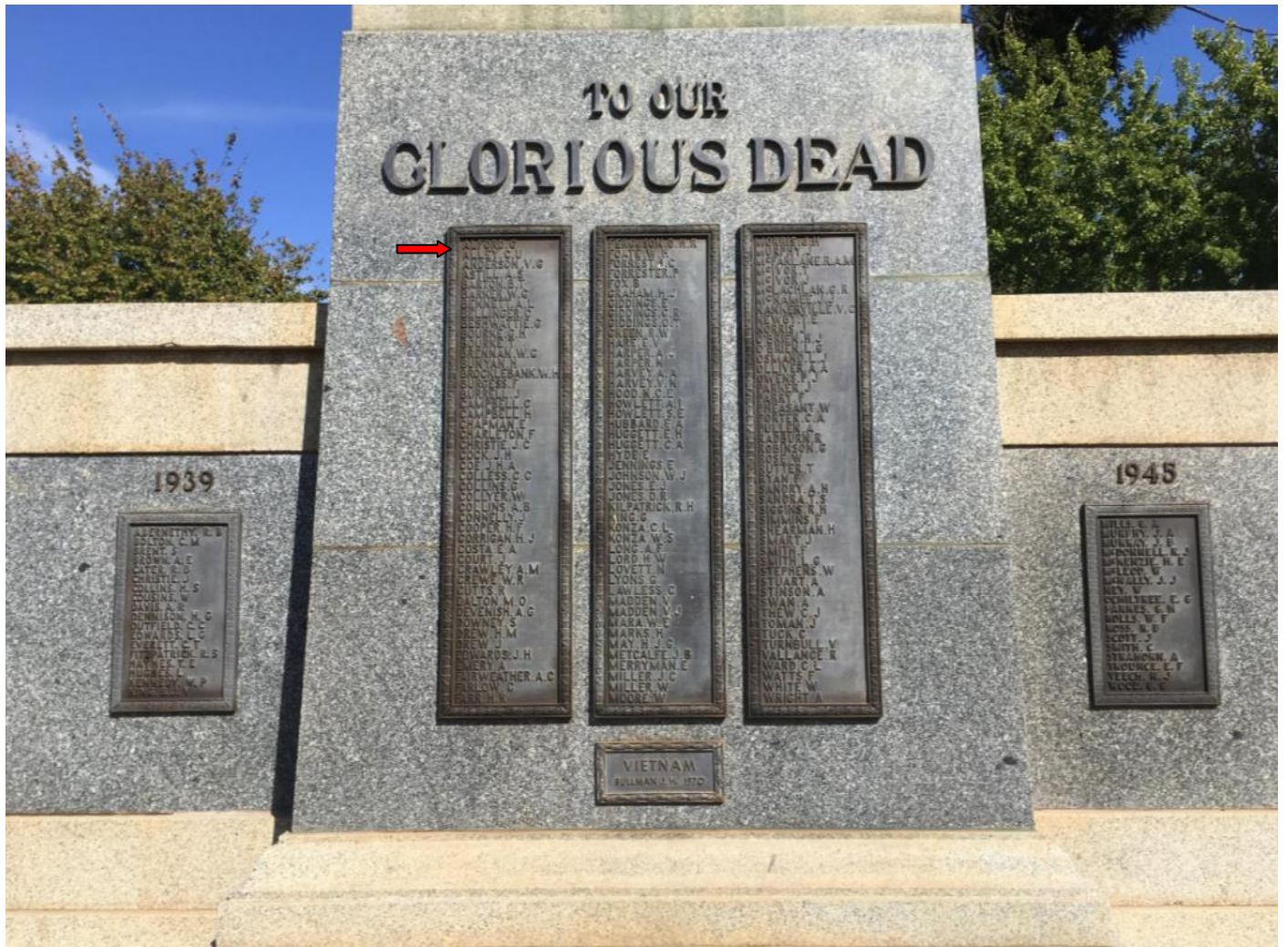
G. Alford is remembered on the Wellington Cenotaph, located in Cameron Park, corner Nanima Crescent and Swift Street, Wellington, NSW.



**Wellington Memorial Gates** (Photo from AWM – Places of Pride – Henry Moulds)



**Wellington Cenotaph** (Photo from AWM – Places of Pride – Henry Moulds)



Wellington Cenotaph (Photo from AWM – Places of Pride – Dubbo Regional Council)





G. B. Alford is remembered on the Bank of New South Wales Roll of Honour, located in (now) Westpac Bank Building, 341 George Street, Sydney, NSW.



**Bank of New South Wales Roll of Honour** (Photos from Monument Australia – Chris McLaughlin)



(39 pages of Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford'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) & National Archives



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P0541 3.001

**Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford**



## LAST POST CEREMONY

Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford was remembered in the Last Post Ceremony held at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on 1st May, 2015.

Commencing at approximately 4.55 pm AEST, the Memorial farewells visitors with its moving Last Post Ceremony in the Commemorative Courtyard. Each night the ceremony shares the story behind one of the names on the [Roll of Honour](#).

The ceremony begins with the Australian national anthem followed by the piper's lament. Visitors are invited to lay wreaths and floral tributes beside the Pool of Reflection. An individual's story is told, and the Ode is recited by Australian Defence Force personnel. The ceremony ends with the sounding of the Last Post.

*(Information from The Australian War Memorial)*



### **Speech transcript**

*Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford, 1st Battalion  
DOW 12 August 1916  
Story Delivered 1 May 2015*

*Today we remember and pay tribute to Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford.*

*Gordon Alford was born in Toowoomba, Queensland, on the 18th of February 1885. He was one of four sons and a daughter born to Charles Alford, a Queensland banker. The family moved to Brisbane shortly after Gordon was born so that Charles could take up a position as assistant inspector of the Royal Bank. Six years later the family moved again, this time to Sydney, where Charles became Chief Inspector of the Bank of New South Wales.*

*Gordon attended Sydney High School and then followed his father into banking. He spent several years working for the Wellington branch of the Bank of New South Wales before moving to take up the post of accountant at the Goulburn branch. Gordon was an active member of the local church, and was a popular amateur magician for their fundraising events. He was noted to be a very popular citizen of Goulburn.*

*Alford left his post in Goulburn to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force in September 1915. He proved to be an able soldier, and in February of the following year he applied for and was granted a commission which saw him become a second lieutenant in the 1st Battalion.*

*His first experience of a major battle came at Pozières on the 23rd of July 1916. The 1st Battalion was instrumental in the capture of the heavily fortified village. The attack was conducted under extremely heavy enemy fire, and at points the men of the battalion chased German defenders through the village itself.*

© Cathy Sedgwick 2021

*Sometime during this battle Gordon Alford was struck in the back by a bullet, seriously damaging his lower spine.*

*He was evacuated from the battlefield and eventually taken to the Empire Hospital for Officers in Westminster, London. His wound had been filthy when he was taken from the battlefield, and Gordon was completely paralysed. In the days after the battle he contracted spinal meningitis. He never recovered, and died on the 12th of August 1916. He was buried in Streatham Cemetery, London. He was 31 years old.*

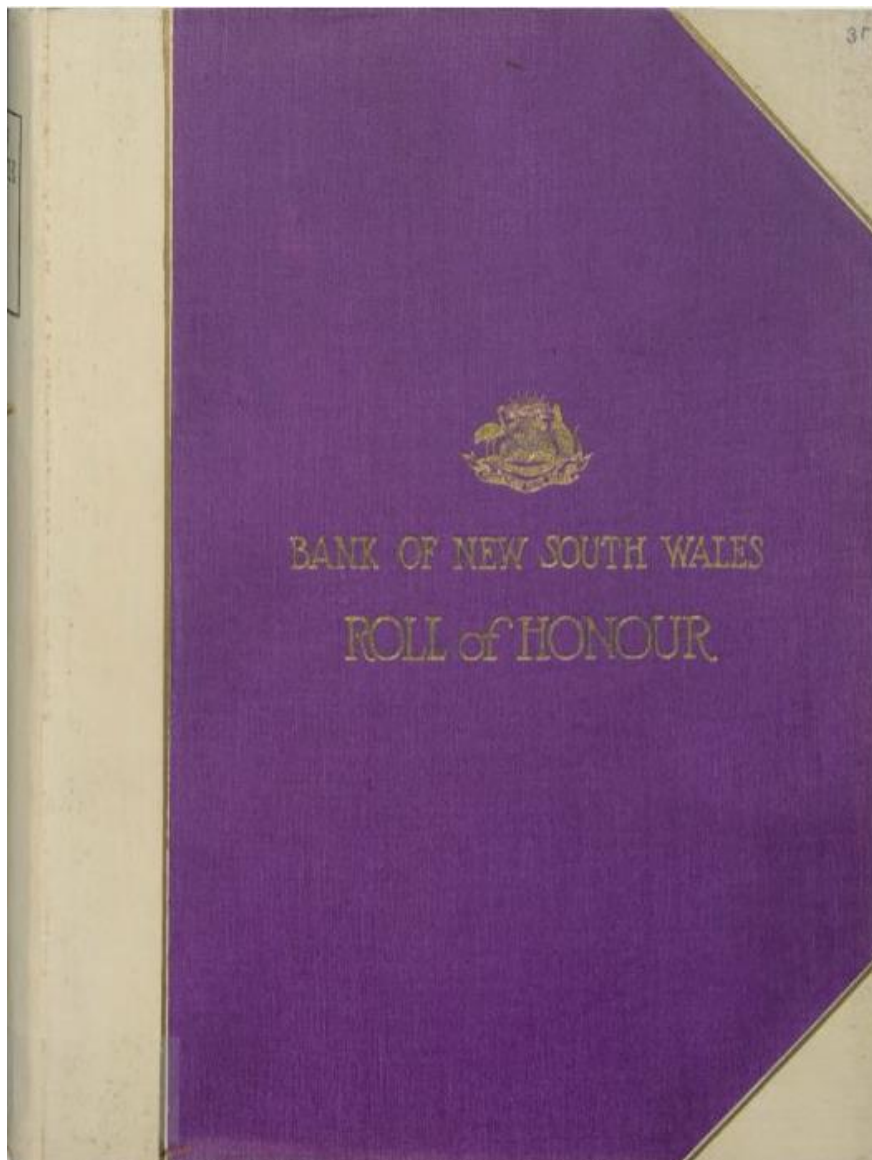
*His name is listed on the Roll of Honour on my right, along with more than 60,000 Australians who died during the First World War. His photograph is displayed today beside the Pool of Reflection.*

*This is but one of the many stories of service and sacrifice told here at the Australian War Memorial. We now remember Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford, and all of those Australians who have given their lives in the service of our nation.*

Dr Meleah Hampton  
Historian, Military History Section

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Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford is remembered in the Bank of New South Wales Roll of Honour Book.





**SECOND-LIEUTENANT GORDON BERESFORD ALFORD**

*1st Battalion, A.I.F.*

**G**ORDON BERESFORD ALFORD was born at Toowoomba, Queensland, on 18th February, 1885, the son of Mr. Chas. Geo. Alford, Chief Inspector of the Bank of New South Wales, and descendant of a well-known English family which included Dean Alford, a distinguished scholar and author, Bishop Alford, of Hong Kong, and Canon Alford, of Bristol Cathedral, who was a chaplain-captain during the war.

Gordon Beresford Alford was educated at the Fort Street School, Sydney, and joined the Bank's staff at Head Office in July, 1902. In the following month he was transferred to the Sussex Street, Sydney, Branch; on 1st January, 1903, to Eden, New South Wales; in June, 1905, to Goulburn, where, later on, he was appointed teller. In August, 1910, he went back to Eden; was transferred to Wellington, New South Wales, in May, 1911; and in November, 1913, was sent again to Goulburn as accountant.

He enlisted in September, 1915, and went into training at the military camp, Liverpool, New South Wales, and was gazetted second-lieutenant in the 16th Reinforcements of the 1st Battalion of the A.I.F.

On reaching France Lieut. Alford went straight to the front and was engaged in the battles of the Somme. On 23rd July, 1916, he was with his battalion at a position near Pozieres, and while leading his company during the night was hit by enemy

**Bank of New South Wales Roll of Honour Book** (*From State Library of Western Australia*)

shrapnel and badly wounded. After treatment in the hospital at Rouen he was sent to England, and while a patient at the Empire Hospital, London, he died from the effect of his wounds on 17th August, 1916.

The following letter was received by Lieut. Alford's father from the Private Secretary to the Governor-General of Australia:—

"I am desired by His Excellency the Governor-General to transmit to you the following message from their Majesties the King and Queen: 'The King and Queen deeply regret the loss you and the army have sustained by the death of your son in the service of his country. Their Majesties truly sympathise with you in your sorrow.'

"In addition to the above message I am desired by the Governor-General to express their Excellencies' heart-felt sympathy with you on the death of this gallant officer who fell fighting for his country and the Empire."

Lieutenant Alford's commanding officer also wrote:—

"I want you to know of the sympathy of his brother officers and myself in your loss, and trust that the knowledge that your son had done his duty well, both in his work in the battalion and especially when he led his men in the attack on Pozieres where he was wounded, will help you to bear your loss."

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## **Newspaper Notices**

### **A.I.F. APPOINTMENTS**

#### **OFFICERS GAZETTED**

The following appointments in the A.I.F. are published in to-day's Commonwealth Gazette:-

To be Second-Lieutenants:..... G. B. Alford.....

(*The Sun*, Sydney, NSW – 17 February, 1916)

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### **WAR CASUALTIES**

#### **KILLED**

##### **LIEUTENANT G. B. ALFORD**

Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford, son of Mr C. P. Alford, chief inspector of the Bank of New South Wales, has died in the Empire Hospital, Westminster, from wounds received in France. He was accountant in the Goulburn branch of the Bank of New South Wales.

(*The Sydney Morning Herald*, NSW – 14 August, 1916)

## **ROLL OF HONOUR**

ALFORD – In hospital, London, on 12th instant, from wounds received in action in France, Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford, youngest son of Mr and Mrs C. G. Alford, Mosman, aged 31. He gave his life for King, country and home.

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 14 August, 1916) & (The Telegraph, Sydney, NSW – 14 August, 1916)*

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## **DEATH OF LIEUT. G. B. ALFORD**

Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford, son of Mr. C. P. Alford, chief inspector of the Bank of New South Wales, has died in the Empire Hospital, Westminster, from wounds received in France. He was accountant in the Goulburn branch of the Bank of New South Wales. Lieut. Alford was very popular in Goulburn. He took an interest in church work. At entertainments in aid of church objects he was in request as an amateur conjuror. He was 31 years of age.

*(Goulburn Evening Penny Post, NSW – 15 August, 1916)*

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## **SPORTING**

### **THE TURF**

The friends of Mr H. G. Alford, one of the Newcastle stipendiary stewards, will regret exceedingly to learn that his brother, Lieutenant Gordon Alford, has died of wounds received in action in France. Mr C. G. Alford, chief inspector of the Bank of New South Wales, father of Lieutenant Alford, received a cable twelve days ago, stating that his son had been wounded, and a further message on Sunday that he was lying dangerously ill, and unconscious, in the Empire Hospital, Westminster, London. A few hours later came a cable stating that Lieutenant Alford had died. Prior to enlisting, Lieutenant Alford was accountant in the Bank of New South Wales at Goulburn.

*(Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, NSW – 15 August, 1916)*

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## **ROLL OF HONOUR**

ALFORD – In hospital, London, on 12th instant, from wounds received in action in France, Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford, youngest son of Mr and Mrs C. G. Alford, Mosman, and brother of L. C. and A. C. Alford, of "Oakhampton," aged 31. He gave his life for King, country and home.

*(Wellington Times, NSW – 17 August, 1916)*

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## **Local and General News**

News was received in Eden on Wednesday last that Lieut. G. B. Alford, who was some years ago a member of the staff of the Bank of N S W, Eden, had died of wounds. Deceased was a popular townsman during his sojourn in Eden, and made many friends here.

*(The Twofold Bay Magnet: and South Coast and Southern Monaro Advertiser, NSW – 21 August, 1916)*

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**Lieut. G. B. Alford**  
(OF SYDNEY),  
died of wounds.

*(Australian Town and Country Journal, Sydney, NSW – 23 August, 1916)*

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#### **204th LIST**

#### **NEW SOUTH WALES**

Died of Wounds

Second-Lieut. G. B. Alford

*(The Land, Sydney, NSW – 8 September, 1916)*

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#### Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for cemeteries and memorials in 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. In all 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth forces from WWI and WWII have been honoured and commemorated in perpetuity.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of its mandate, is responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead individually and equally. To this end, the war dead are commemorated by name on a headstone, at an identified site of a burial, or on a memorial. War dead are commemorated uniformly and equally, irrespective of military or civil rank, race or creed.

Not all service personnel have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. In some instances the relative chose to have their own memorial/headstone placed on the deceased's grave. These private headstones are not maintained by the CWGC as they have no jurisdiction to maintain them.

Second Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford has a Private Headstone.



## Streatham Cemetery, Tooting, London, England

The cemetery is in Garratt Lane, mid way between Upper and Lower Tooting. It contains scattered burials and those whose graves are not marked by headstones are recorded on a Screen Wall Memorial at the junctions of Blocks F, L, G and M.

There are 216 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war and 167 of the 1939-1945 war here.

*(Information from CWGC)*



**Streatham Cemetery** *(Photo from Find a Grave – Ferdinand)*



**War Graves in Streatham Cemetery** *(Photo from CWGC)*



**Cross of Sacrifice, Streatham Cemetery** (Photos from CWGC)



Photo of Lieutenant Gordon Beresford Alford's Private Headstone in Streatham Cemetery, Tooting, London, England.



(Photo from Find a Grave – julia&keld - 2011)



*In Loving Memory*

*Of*

*LIEUTENANT GORDON BERESFORD ALFORD*

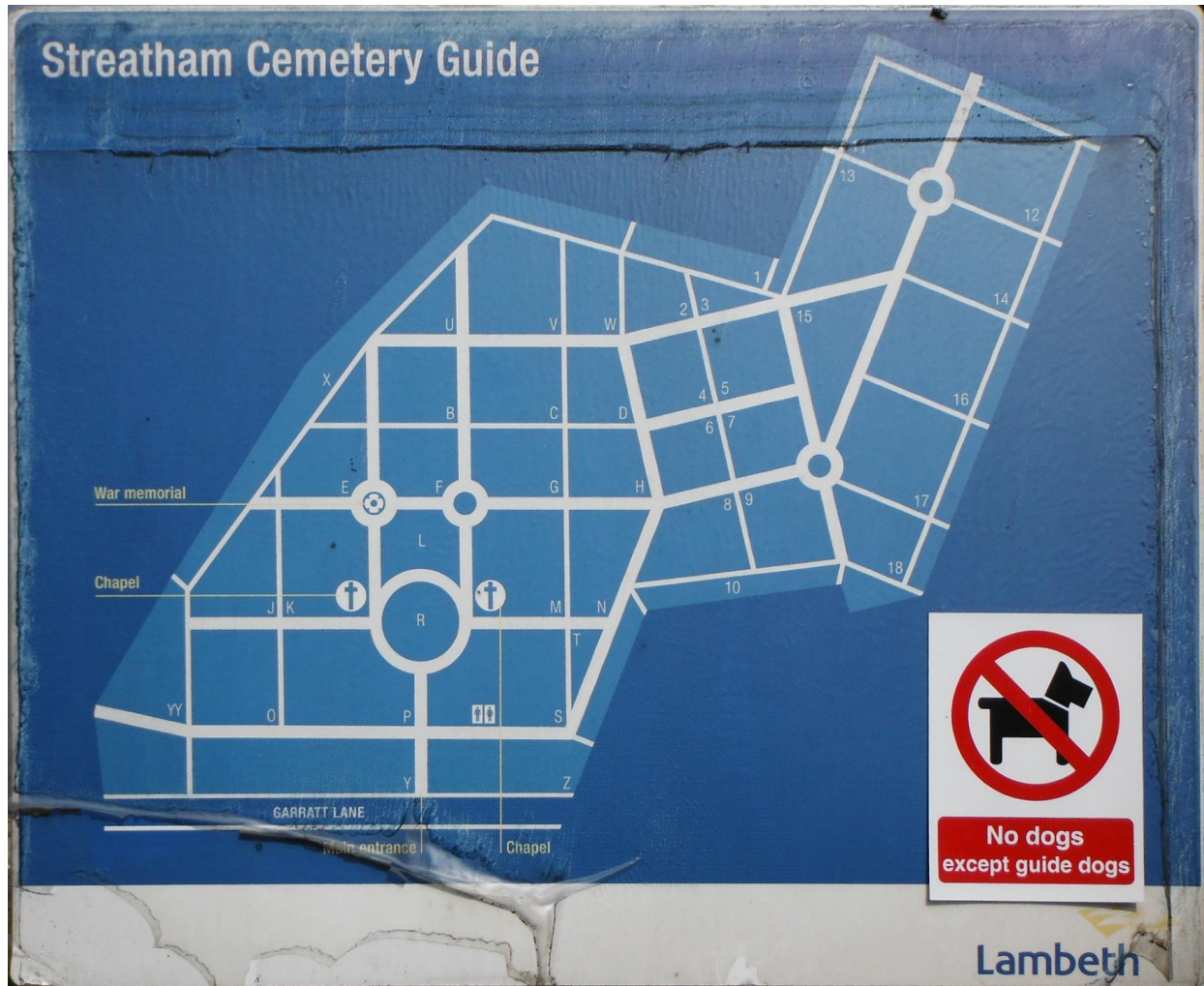
*(Australian Imperial Force)*

*Both Toowoomba, Queensland 15 February 1885*

*Wounded in Action Pozieres, France 23 July 1916*

*Died Empire Hospital London 12 August 1916*

*For King And Country*



**Map of Streatham Cemetery** (Photo from *Find a Grave* – Chris Doran)