

# Bulford War Graves



*Lest We Forget*

## World War 1



**P. C. BERRIGAN SERVED AS**

**2169 GUNNER**

**P. C. COOPER**

**AUST. FIELD ARTILLERY**

**23RD JULY, 1916 AGE 21**

*Have Mercy Upon Him Lord*

*And Let Perpetual Light*

*Shine Upon Him*

## Percy Cyril BERRIGAN (Served as COOPER)

Percy Cyril Berrigan was born at Bourke Street, West Maitland, NSW in 1894 to mother Emily Berrigan. His birth was registered in the district of West Maitland, NSW. No father is listed.

Percy Cyril Berrigan attended the Public School at East Maitland.

Percy Cyril Berrigan was a 22 year old, single, Horse Trainer when he enlisted at Newcastle on 7<sup>th</sup> September, 1915 with the 7<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment, 15<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). He enlisted under the name of Percy Cyril Cooper. His service number was 2169 & his religion was Presbyterian. His postal address was Royal Oak Hotel, W. Maitland & his next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Emily Cooper of Melbourne Street, East Maitland, NSW.

Pte Percy Cyril Cooper embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Orsova* (A67) on 11th March, 1916 & disembarked at Egypt. Date or place of disembarkation is not recorded in any forms located in Pte Cooper's Service Record file.

Pte Percy Cyril Cooper was taken on strength 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse Regiment at Tel-el-Kebir on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1916.

Pte Percy Cyril Cooper was transferred to Artillery Details on 25<sup>th</sup> May, 1916 at Tel-el-Kebir. He embarked from Alexandria on H.M.T. *Corsican* for England on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1916.

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.

Notification was sent from Base Records, dated 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1916 to Mrs E. Cooper, Melbourne Street, East Maitland that her son Gunner Percy C. Cooper was dangerously ill.

Gunner Percy Cyril Cooper died on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1916 at Lucknow Isolation Hospital, Tidworth from Meningitis. A handwritten Army form B. 2090, located in Gunner Cooper's Service Record file, states cause of death for Gunner Percy Cyril Cooper as Broncho Pneumonia. The typed Army form B. 2090, located in Gunner Cooper's Service Record file, states cause of death as Meningitis.

A death for Percy C. Cooper, aged 22, was registered in the September quarter, 1916 in the district of Pewsey, Wiltshire.

Gunner Percy Cyril Cooper was buried in Bulford Church Cemetery, Wiltshire - Grave No.7, second row, Australian Reserve Section (CWGC Plot number 4. 2. 7.) and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing File for Pte Percy Cyril Cooper contains several memos with differing causes of death. The first memo states Gnr Percy Cyril Cooper, 2169 "Died of Wounds. Reported buried at Tidworth Mil. Cem. Died at Lucknow Isolation Hospital – Meningitis – 23.7.16 buried Mil. Hp. Bulford". The second memo states Gnr Percy Cyril Cooper 7<sup>th</sup> L.H.R. (Light Horse Regiment) "D/Wounds 23-7-16". The third memo has "No. 2169 P. Cooper, 7<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment, died of wounds on 27.7.17." The original letter to the Red Cross stated 2160 Gnr P. Cooper.

Correspondence dated 27<sup>th</sup> September, 1920 from Base Records to Headquarters, 2<sup>nd</sup> Military District states that "Documentary evidence has been received to the effect that the late No. 2169 Gunner Percy Cyril Cooper, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battery Field Artillery, enlisted under an assumed name, his correct name being Percy Cyril BERRIGAN.....Next of kin is his Mother, Mrs E. M. Berrigan, Young Road, Lambton, via Newcastle, NSW who, still wishes to be addressed as Mrs E. Cooper....."

Gunner P. C. Berrigan is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 11.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

P. C. Cooper is remembered on the East Maitland War Memorial, located at the corner of William & Newcastle Streets (New England Highway), East Maitland, NSW.



East Maitland War Memorial (Photos from Register of War Memorials in NSW)

Gunner Percy Cyril Cooper was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Gunner Cooper's mother – Mrs E. Berrigan (March, 1922 & August, 1922). Mrs Emily Berrigan, mother of late Gunner Percy Cyril Cooper wrote to Base Records in March, 1922 returning the signed receipt slip for the Memorial Scroll. She included in the letter "I am pleased the

name on the Memorials are not altered". In a previous letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> December, 1921, in which she signed as Mrs E. Cooper she stated "... and I was not legally married to Cooper. His Birth being registered Percy Cyril Berrigan as Berrigan being my name but he was always known as Cooper.....I might add that I know nothing now of Cooper. I have not seen or heard of him for years....."

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Gunner Percy Cyril Berrigan (served as Cooper) – service number 2169 as being 21 years old & served with 2<sup>nd</sup> Battery, Australian Field Artillery. He was the son of Emily B. Berrigan, of Young St, Lambton, NSW. Born at West Maitland.

A War Pension was granted to Emily Brigid Cooper, mother of the late Gunner Percy Cyril Cooper (Correct name Berrigan) in the sum of 15/- per fortnight granted from 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1916.

(59 pages of Gunner Percy Cyril Cooper'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**

### **Off to the Front**

Trooper Percy Cyril Cooper, who has enlisted and was on final leave, was entertained at the residence of the Mayor of East Maitland (Alderman A. S. Foster), and presented by the Mayoress (Mrs A. S. Foster) with a soldier's kit, containing many useful articles, including a sheepskin vest. In the absence of the Mayor, the Rev. A. Smith presided, and in a few well-chosen words said how proud he was of the young soldiers, and hoped he would be able to welcome him back, and that the war would shortly be over. Trooper Cooper suitably responded. Others spoke of the good qualities of the genial Perc, by which name he is best known.

*(The Maitland Daily Mercury, NSW – Tuesday 1 February, 1916)*

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### **GUNNER COOPER**

The late Gunner Percy Cyril Cooper was a young man much liked by all who knew him, and when news of his death in England became known, keen regret was felt throughout the district. He enlisted in September last, on the day became 21 years of age, and left Australia with the 7th Light Horse Regiment. Shortly after he arrived in Egypt he was transferred to the Field Artillery. A telegram from the Defence Department to the Rev. A. Smith asked him to convey to the mother the deep regret and sympathy of their Majesty, the King and Queen, and the Commonwealth Government, in the loss she and the army had sustained by the death of Gunner Cooper.

*(The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, NSW – Thursday 10 August, 1916)*

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### **Roll of Honour**

COOPER — Died, on the 23rd July, 1916, at the Military Hospital, Tidworth, England, Gunner Percy Cyril Cooper.  
Deeply regretted.

He nobly answered the Empire's call,  
And as a hero he gave his life, his all.

Dearly beloved and only son of Mrs. C. Cooper, of Melbourne-street, East Maitland; aged 21 years and 9 months.

*(The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, NSW – Thursday 10 August, 1916)*

## LATEST CASUALTIES

191<sup>st</sup> LIST

NEW SOUTH WALES

Died of Illness

Gnr P. C. Cooper. East Maitland

(*The Land*, Sydney, NSW – Friday 11 August, 1916)

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## ROLL OF HONOUR

COOPER – In loving memory of my dear son, Gunner Percy Cyril Cooper, died at Tidworth Military Hospital, England, 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1916; aged 21 years and 10 months.

The midnight stars are gleaming  
On a soldier's grave I can never see;  
Where sleeping without dreaming  
Lies the one so dear to me.

COOPER – In loving memory of my brother Gunner Percy Cooper, who died in England on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1916.

His cheery ways, his smiling face,  
Are pleasing to recall;  
He had a kindly word for each,  
And died beloved by all.

Inserted by his sister.

COOPER – A tribute of love to the memory of our comrade, Gunner P. C. Cooper, died at Tidworth Military Hospital, England, 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1916 aged 21 years and 10 months.

In Luxford cemetery, England, we laid him,  
With all military honours due;  
Gone, but not forgotten,  
Our soldier comrade, brave and true.

His cheery ways, his smiling face,  
Are pleasing to recall;  
He had a kindly word for each,  
And died beloved by all.

Inserted by his comrades, who left Australia with him on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 1916; also Lieut. B. S. Saynor and Gunners D. J. Lawford and J. V. Barnes, abroad..

(*The Maitland Weekly Mercury*, NSW – Saturday 28 July, 1917)

(\*Note – Gunner P. C. Cooper was buried in Bulford Church Cemetery not Luxford Cemetery)

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## ROLL OF HONOUR

COOPER – In loving memory of my dearly loved and only son, Gunner Percy Cyril Cooper, died on July 23, 1916 at Tidworth Military Hospital, England, aged 21 years and nine months.

For King and country he laid down his life.  
Fame was achieved, and he had done his share.  
To win those laurels, rich and rare,  
Which now adorn Australia's loyal race,  
Not even time its glory can efface.

Inserted by his sorrowing mother.

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COOPER – A tribute of love to the memory of my comrade, Gunner Percy Cyril Cooper, who died July 23, 1916, at Tidworth Military Hospital, England; aged 21 years and 9 months.

He was a soldier, truly loved,  
A friend both kind and true;  
A better comrade never lived,  
His equals were but few.

Inserted by his comrade, T. V. Barnes (on, Active service).

*(The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, NSW – Tuesday 23 July, 1918)*

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## **ROLL OF HONOUR**

COOPER – In loving memory of my dearly loved and only son, Gunner Percy Cyril Cooper, died on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1916, at Tidworth Military Hospital, England, aged 21 years and nine months.

There's a land that is fairer than day,  
The hymn and the words he loved so well,  
And now he has gone for ever  
In that beautiful land to dwell;  
God will link that broken chain,  
Closer when we sent again

Inserted by his sorrowing mother.

COOPER – Tribute to the memory of our dear friend, Gunner Percy Cyril Cooper, died 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1916, at Tidworth Military Hospital, England; aged 21 years and 9 months.

He had feared no death when honour  
Summoned him to Britain's aid;  
Now he rests in shrouds of glory,  
Every debt of honour paid.

Inserted by Greer family, Brewarrina (and Ruby), Nurse Greer, Sydney, and Sergeant W. F. Greer, on active service.

COOPER – In loving memory of Gunner Percy C. Cooper, who died in Tidworth Military Hospital, on July 23, 1916.

We pictured his safe returning,  
We longed to clasp his hand,  
But God has postponed the meeting,  
'Twill be in a better land.

Inserted by his sincere friends, Nurse and Sergeant Greer, (active service) and Greer family, Bathurst.

COOPER – In loving memory of Gunner Percy Cooper, who died in Military Hospital, London, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1916.

“One of the best.”

Inserted by his sister, and friend C. Rushton, Sydney.

*(The Maitland Weekly Mercury, NSW – Saturday 27 July, 1918)*

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\*Note – Family notices for Gunner Percy Cyril Cooper were also placed in the newspapers from 1919 until 1927.

These can be viewed on the [Trove](https://trove.nla.gov.au) website.

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### Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone in Bulford Church Cemetery. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

*(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)*

Gunner P. C. Berrigan who served as P. C. Cooper does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*Have Mercy Upon Him Lord*

*And Let Perpetual Light*

*Shine Upon Him*



**Bulford Church Cemetery** *(Photo courtesy of Andrea Charlesworth 2012)*

Photo of Gunner P. C. Berrigan who served as P. C. Cooper's Headstone at Bulford Church Cemetery, Wiltshire.



*(Photo courtesy of Andrea Charlesworth 2012)*





**Bulford Church Cemetery** *(Photo courtesy of Andrea Charlesworth 2012)*