

**St. James Churchyard Cemetery,  
Dover, Kent  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**2767 PRIVATE**

**A. BONNING**

**2ND BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**28TH SEPTEMBER, 1917**

## Alexander BONNING

*(alias of Daniel Benney)*

*(Information has been received from Frank Benney who believes that Daniel Benney used the alias of "Alexander Bonning". Information on Daniel Benney has been supplied by Frank Benney.)*

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Alexander Alfred Bonning stated he was born at Brighton, Victoria on 6th April, 1882. (No record can be found on Victorian Births, Deaths & Marriages website.)

Alexander Bonning stated on his Attestation Papers that he had been apprenticed to George Bonning at Benalla, Victoria.

A birth was registered in 1909 for Alexander Thorne with mother's name Marcella A. Thorne. A birth was registered in 1911 with mother's name Amelia (no father listed) for Norman A. Bonning. A birth was registered in 1913 with mother's name Amelia (no father listed) for George D. Thorne in the district of Balmain South.

Alexander Bonning married Marcella Amelia Thorne on 6th September, 1913 in the district of Balmain North, NSW.

A birth was registered in 1914 in the district of Liverpool, NSW for Alice M. Bonning – parents Alexander & Amelia. A birth & death were registered in the district of Liverpool, NSW in 1917 for Arthur Bonning, parents Alexander & Amelia.



**Photo of Alice May Bonning** *(supplied by Frank Benney)*

The above photo was sent to Daniel Benney's sister – Mary Shannon, known as May, (nee Benney) with the following written on back:-

*"To Aunty May and Uncle Dan with fond love from Alice May age 5 years 19 September, 1919 your Brothers only daughter."*

The Bonning ancestors have the same photo.

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Daniel Benney's birth was registered in 1881 in Victoria to parents George Edwin J. Benney & Mary Ann Benney (nee Beggley).

A birth was registered in 1907 in Victoria for Alice Benney with parents Daniel Benney & Alice Emily (Calman).

From the *Benalla Standard*, Victoria – 12 June, 1908:

**CHILD DESERTION** – ON Saturday last Constable Perrett arrested a man name Daniel Benny on a charge of deserting his illegitimate child, He was brought before Mr G. Walker, J.P., and remanded to appear at Shepparton yesterday. Defendant was admitted to bail.

From the *Benalla Standard*, Victoria – 23 June, 1908:

**MAINTENANCE CASE** – Daniel Benney, who was arrested by Constable Perrett in Benalla, and who was before the Shepparton court on the charge of having deserted his illegitimate child at Shepparton on June 2, answered to his bail and appeared on remand before Mr R. Knight, P.M., at the Court of Petty Sessions, Shepparton, on Tuesday last. By consent, an order was made for payment of maintenance at the rate of 7/6 per week, the first payment to be made forthwith a surety in the sum of £25, and give his own recognisances in like amount for future payments of weekly instalments as due. The necessary payment was made and the surety found, upon which defendant was set free to return to his employment.

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From the *NSW Police Gazettes* for 20 August, 1913:

***Deserting Wives and Families, Service etc.***

*Balmain – Three warrants have been issued by the Children's Court Bench, Sydney, for the arrest of Alick Bonning, charged with child desertion (3). He is about 31 years of age, 5 feet 10 or 11 inches high, stout build, dark complexion and hair, turning grey, clean shaved, blue eyes; dressed in a brown suit and green soft-felt hat; a labourer. Sometimes assumes the name of Daniel Bennil. Complainant Amelia Thorne, 130 Beattie-street, Balmain.*

Alexander Bonning married Marcella Amelia Thorne in the district of Balmain North in 1913.

Alexander Bonning voluntarily enlisted in the Citizen Forces on 13th December, 1915. He was aged 33 years & 8 months, married & an Engineer living at Canley Vale, NSW. He was given a Regimental number of 424. Alexander Bonning signed his Oath of Allegiance for 6 months on 25th February, 1916 at Liverpool. Alexander Bonning re-engaged on 13th June, 1916 for another 6 month period.

Alexander Bonning was a 34 year old, married, Engineer from P.O. Cabramatta, NSW when he enlisted at Royal Agricultural Show Grounds Sydney on 21st August, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 38147 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Amelia Bonning, of Fairfield, NSW. Alexander Bonning was 5 feet 11 inches tall, with blue eyes, medium complexion & brown/grey hair.

Private Alexander Bonning was posted to 16th Reinforcements of 18th Battalion at Liverpool, Sydney on 29th August, 1916. He was transferred to Administrative Officer, Invalids Section, Victoria Barracks, Sydney on 16th October, 1916. Pte Bonning was transferred to 18th Battalion on 9th November, 1916 then transferred to 34th Battalion on 21st November, 1916.

Private Alexander Bonning embarked with 9th Infantry Brigade, 34th Infantry Battalion, 6th Reinforcements from Sydney on HMAT *Beltana* (A72) on 25th November, 1916 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 29th January, 1917.

Private Alexander Bonning had one shilling of his pay stopped on 19th January, 1917 on account of deficiencies in his mess equipment while at sea.

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.

Private Alexander Bonning was marched in to Details Camp at Fovant, Wiltshire from Australia on 30th January, 1917

Private Alexander Bonning was marched out from Camp Details at Sutton Mandeville, Wiltshire to 9th Training Battalion at Durrington, Wiltshire on 6th March, 1917.

Private Alexander Bonning proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 22nd May, 1917 from No. 11 Camp at Durrington to reinforce the 2nd Battalion.

Private Alexander Bonning was taken on strength of 2nd Battalion on 10th June, 1917 from 1st Australian Divisional Base Depot.

Private Alexander Bonning was reallocated a Regimental number of 2767 B while in France.

Private Alexander Bonning was wounded in action on 20th September, 1917 in France. He was admitted to 6th Australian Field Ambulance with gunshot wounds to head & arm. Pte Bonning was transferred to 10th Casualty Clearing Station then transferred to Ambulance Train 14 on 20th September, 1917. He was admitted to 47th General Hospital at Le Treport on 23rd September, 1917 with gunshot wounds to face & head. Private Alexander Bonning embarked for England on Hospital Ship *St. Denis* on 27th September, 1917 with gunshot wounds to head & arm.

#### War Diary – 2nd Battalion

*Hooge – 19th September, 1917 – Strength 24 Officers 687 OR*

*Hooge – 20th September, 1917 07.40 Hrs – A & D Cos occupied old front line trench recently occupied by 11th Bn from j8g015 to j14A22 with the 3rd Bn on their right. B and C Cos and Bn H.Q. remained in same position. A & D Cos were shelled very heavily but suffered very few casualties.*

*Strength 26 Officer 670 OR. Lt. D. M. Forrest wounded. Rejoined Capt. \_ Monn, MC, Lt T. B. Smith & J. F. O'Connell. Weather light rain during the night clear during the day.*

(War Diary information from The Australian War Memorial)

Private Alexander Bonning was admitted to Military Hospital, Dover, Kent, England on 27th September, 1917 dangerously ill with gunshot wounds to face, secondary haemorrhage.

Private Alexander Bonning died at 2.10 pm on 28th September, 1917 at Military Hospital, Dover, Kent, England from wounds received in action in France – gunshot wounds to face.

A death for Alexander Bonning, aged 34, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Dover, Kent, England.

Private Alexander Bonning was buried at 3 pm on 2nd October, 1917 in St. James Churchyard Cemetery, Dover, Kent, England – Plot number M. G. 25 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Pte Bonning - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military Funeral, Band, Firing Party, Buglers and Pallbearers under the command of 2/Lieut. J. A. Lasbrey, having been supplied by the 3rd East Surrey Regiment. A memorial service was conducted by Senior Chaplain Rev. Haines in the Chapel at the Cemetery, and also at the graveside. The "Last Post" was sounded by four buglers of the 3rd East Surrey Regiment. A memorial cross will be erected by the A.I.F.*

Pte Alexander Bonning requested in his Will, dated 10 June, 1917, that all of his personal estate be bequeathed to his wife – Amelia Bonning of Lackey Street, Fairfield, NSW.

Pte Alexander Bonning was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also to be sent to Pte Bonning's widow as the closest next-of-kin.

Base Records lost contact with Mrs A. Bonning & in September, 1922 the last address they had for her was 30 Ferry Road, Glebe Point, NSW. (Mrs Bonning had contacted Base Records to advise of her new address at 30 Ferry Road, Glebe Point on 16th April, 1918). The Dept. of Repatriation was contacted & the last address they had for Mrs A. Bonning was 347 Crown Street, Sydney. In a letter to Repatriation Commission in August, 1923 Base Records stated that communications sent to the Crown Street address had been returned unclaimed.

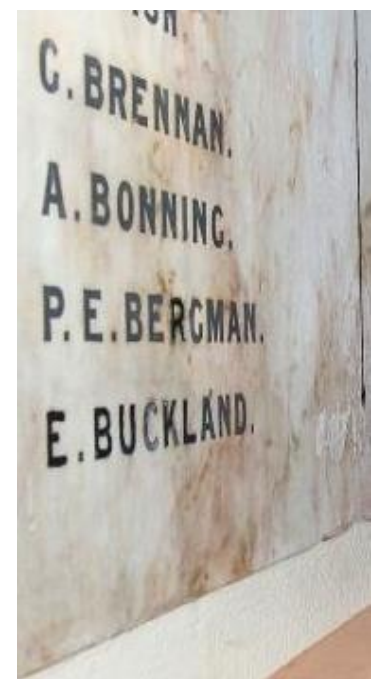
The Medals were originally sent to "Untraceables". Mrs A. Bonning signed receipts for the Victory Medal, Memorial Plaque & Memorial Scroll on 30th August, 1923.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Alexander Bonning – service number 2767B, of 2nd Battalion Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

**Cabra-Vale Park Memorial Bandstand** A. Bonning is remembered on the Cabra-Vale Park Memorial Bandstand, which is located in Cabra-Vale Park, corner of Railway Parade & Bartley Street, Cabramatta, NSW.



(Photos from Register of War Memorials in NSW by Ms Jane Williamson and Peter Levarre-Waters)





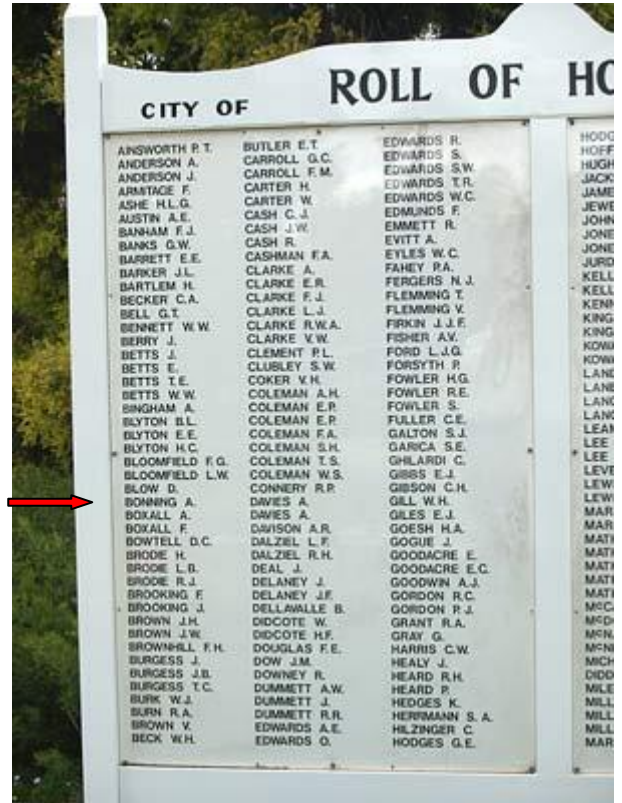
A. Bonning is remembered on the Roll of Honour Board for the city of Fairfield which is located in the McCarthy Memorial Park opposite the Smithfield RSL, Cumberland Highway, Smithfield, NSW.



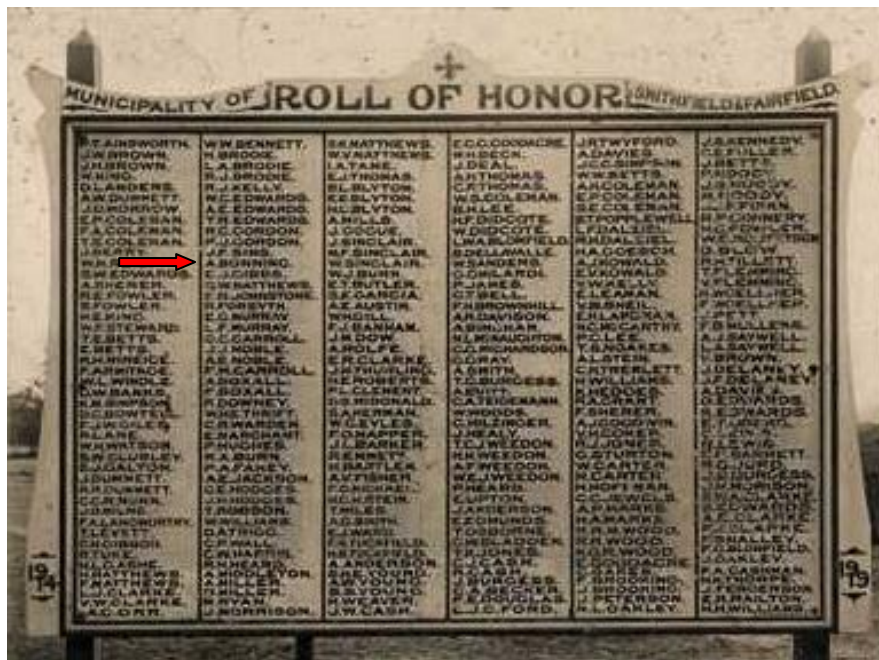
### Roll of Honour in McCarthy Memorial Park, Smithfield

*(Photos from Register of War Memorials in NSW - Mr Ken Thomson (lodged by Fairfield City Library), David Roden and Peter Levarre-Waters)*





A. Bonning was named on the old Roll of Honour for the Municipality of Smithfield & Fairfield, which used to be located in Smithfield Park. The Roll of Honour named the men from the area of Smithfield & Fairfield who enlisted for service in World War 1. The plaque was removed around 1987 due to deterioration & vandalism.



(Photo courtesy of Fairfield City Library's Historical Photographs collection)



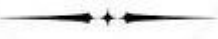
Private A. Bonning is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 31.



*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

(84 pages of Pte Alexander Bonning'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*



## **Newspaper Notices for BENNEY**

### **ROLL OF HONOUR**

#### **Died on Service**

Mrs D. Shannon, of Smythe street, last week received word that her brother, Pte D. Benney, of the 2nd Battalion (late 34th) had died from face wounds and hemorrhage on August 28th. The deceased, who was 34 years of age, for many years resided in Benalla and worked at the Broken River Butter factory. He enlisted in Sydney eighteen months ago. He leaves a widow and four children.

*(The Benalla Standard, Victoria – 9 October, 1917)*

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### **In Memory of the Fallen**

#### **Officers**

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#### **N.C.O.'s and MEN**

.....

BENNEY, D.

*(The Benalla Standard, Victoria – 31 January, 1919)*



## **HONOR BOARD UNVEILED AT ST. JAMES**

On Sunday evening last the Honor-board of St. James Presbyterian and Anglican Churches was unveiled in the Presbyterian Church in the presence of a large congregation.....

Following is a list of names enrolled:-

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\* Benney, D.

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The asterisk denotes that the soldier so indicated died abroad.

*(The Benalla Standard, Victoria – 23 January, 1920)*

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**\*\*NOTE:** - *There is no record on Commonwealth War Graves Commission or the Australian War Memorial for a "D. Benney" who died in World War 1.*

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## **Newspaper Notices for BONNING**

### **LATEST CASUALTIES**

#### **343rd LIST**

#### **NEW SOUTH WALES**

Died of Wounds

Pte A. Bonning, Fairfield

*(The Land, Sydney, NSW – 26 October, 1917)*

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### **IN MEMORIAM**

#### **On Active Service**

BONNING - In sad but loving memory of my dear husband and our father, Alexander Bonning killed in action in France, September 28, 1917.

His heart was good, his spirit brave  
His resting place a hero's grave  
To have to love and then to part  
Is the saddest pain to a human heart  
He leaves behind him many aching hearts  
That loved him ever dear  
Hearts that never shall forget  
His memory written here

Inserted by his lonely wife and children

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 28 September, 1918)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

BONNING – In loving remembrance of my dear husband, Private Alexander Bonning, late 2nd Batt., died in Dover Military Hospital, September 28, 1917.

Our home is always lonely,  
Our hearts are always sad.  
I miss my loving husband,  
The children miss their dad.  
Your loss I cannot realise,  
Nor really think you're gone;  
But I know the grief I'll have to bear  
When they all return and you're not there.

Inserted by his loving wife and children.

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 29 September, 1919)*

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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. 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)*

A letter from Base Records, dated on 27th June, 1921, to Mrs A. Bonning of 347 Crown Street, Sydney, NSW, advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of her husband the late Pte A. Bonning had not been answered & non-receipt of a reply within 21 days would have to be accepted as indicating that no further action was to be taken. Another similar letter was sent to Mrs Bonning at 30 Ferry Road, Glebe Point on 19th October, 1921. Mrs Bonning had advised Base Records on 30th October, 1918 that her address was no longer at Ferry Road but at Vulcan Street, Granville, NSW. Base Records acknowledged Mrs Bonning's letter & stated that the change of address had been noted on the records in November, 1918.

Pte A. Bonning does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

### **St. James Churchyard Cemetery, Dover, Kent, England**

St. James Churchyard Cemetery, Dover contains 719 identified casualties. There are 8 Australian servicemen from World War 1 buried here – 7 Australian Imperial Force soldiers & 1 Royal Flying Corps.

During the First World War, Dover was a port of embarkation for troops bound for the Western Front and between August 1914 and August 1919 some 1,300,000 Commonwealth sick and wounded were landed there. The port was bombed in 1915 and again in August 1916.

There are 373 identified burials of the 1914-1918 war here. In addition there are 19 unidentified burials, 9 of whom can be named as victims of the Zeebrugge Raid, and these 9 are inscribed on a Special Memorial on the Cross of Sacrifice in the Zeebrugge Plot.

In 1940, Dover was the headquarters for the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk and nearly 200,000 of the 366,000 British and Allied troops brought back during the operation were landed there. Throughout the

war Dover was a particular target for the long range guns on the French coast and between September 1939 and May 1945 there were no less than 742 attacks by air raid and shelling.

Most of the 356 Second World War burials are contained in a special war graves plot at the far end of the cemetery. The plot, known as the Dunkirk plot, contains many graves from the Dunkirk operation. 22 of these burials are unidentified. There are also 8 Foreign National war burials and 3 non war service burials in the cemetery.

*(Information & photos from CWGC)*





Photo of Pte A. Bonning's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. James' Churchyard Cemetery, Dover, Kent, England.



*(Photo courtesy of Kyle Tallett)*