

**Melcombe Regis Cemetery,
Weymouth, Dorset, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



3520 PRIVATE

W. G. BRUHN

32ND BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

31ST MARCH, 1917 Age 18

Walter Gustavo/Gustav/Gustive BRUHN

Walter Gustav Bruhn was born on 13th May, 1890 in South Australia to parents Joehann & Friedricke Bruhn (nee Matthias). His birth was registered in the district of Kapunda, South Australia in 1890.

[Note: The Australian Birth Index 1788 – 1922 on Ancestry recorded he was born at Lindley, birth registered at Kapunda. The Attestation Papers record he was born near the town of Morgan, South Australia as does information provided by his brother for the Roll of Honour. The CWGC has recorded that he was born at Waterloo, South Australia. Lindley is about 10 kms northwest of Morgan on the Burra-Morgan Road.]

[Note: The father's name of "Joehann" is as recorded on The Australian Birth Index 1788 – 1922 on Ancestry & also on Genealogy SA. Several family trees on Ancestry have the father's name as "*Joachim Carl Theodore Martin Bruhn*" & mother's name as "*Maria Sophie Friederick Matthias*"]

Walter G. Bruhn attended Morgan Public School, South Australia.

[Note: the middle name for Walter Bruhn is listed differently depending on the source of information. The Australian War Memorial Honour Roll has his middle name as Gustavo while the Embarkation Roll has the middle name as Gustav. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission has the middle name as Gustive. The National Archives of Australia has one file listed as Gustav & his Service Record file as Gustive. His brother completed information for the Roll of Honour & listed the middle name as Gustave. The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file has his middle name as Gustavo. The Attestation Papers have the middle name recorded as Gustive.]

Maria Sophie Friederick Bruhn, mother of Walter Gustav Bruhn, died on 18th August, 1907 at Waterloo, South Australia.

Walter G. Bruhn was a 26 year old, single, Blacksmith from Waterloo, South Australia when he enlisted in Adelaide, South Australia on 9th May, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his brother – Edgar Herbert Bruhn, Farrel's Flat, South Australia.

Private Walter G. Bruhn was posted to B Company, 2nd Depot on 9th May, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 8th Reinforcements of 32nd Battalion on 16th May, 1916.

Joachim Carl Theodore Martin Bruhn, father of Walter Gustav Bruhn, died on 27th June, 1916 at Waterloo, South Australia.

Private Walter Gustav (name as per Embarkation Roll) Bruhn, Service number 3520, embarked from Adelaide, South Australia on HMAT *Ballarat (A70)* on 12th August, 1916 with the 8th Infantry Brigade, 32nd Infantry Battalion, 8th Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 30th September, 1916.

32nd Battalion

The 32nd Battalion was raised as part of the 8th Brigade at Mitcham, on the outskirts of Adelaide, on 9 August 1915. Only two companies were raised from South Australian enlistees - another two were formed in Western Australia and joined the battalion at the end of September. The battalion sailed from Adelaide on 18 November 1915.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

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 Walter G. Bruhn was admitted sick (slight) to Military Hospital at Devonport on 30th September, 1916. He was discharged to Perham Downs on 5th October, 1916.

Private Walter G. Bruhn was taken on strength of No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 7th October, 1916 & medically classified as C1 (permanently unfit for General Service but fit for Home Service). He transferred & taken on strength of 8th Training Battalion at Codford, Wiltshire on 9th October, 1916

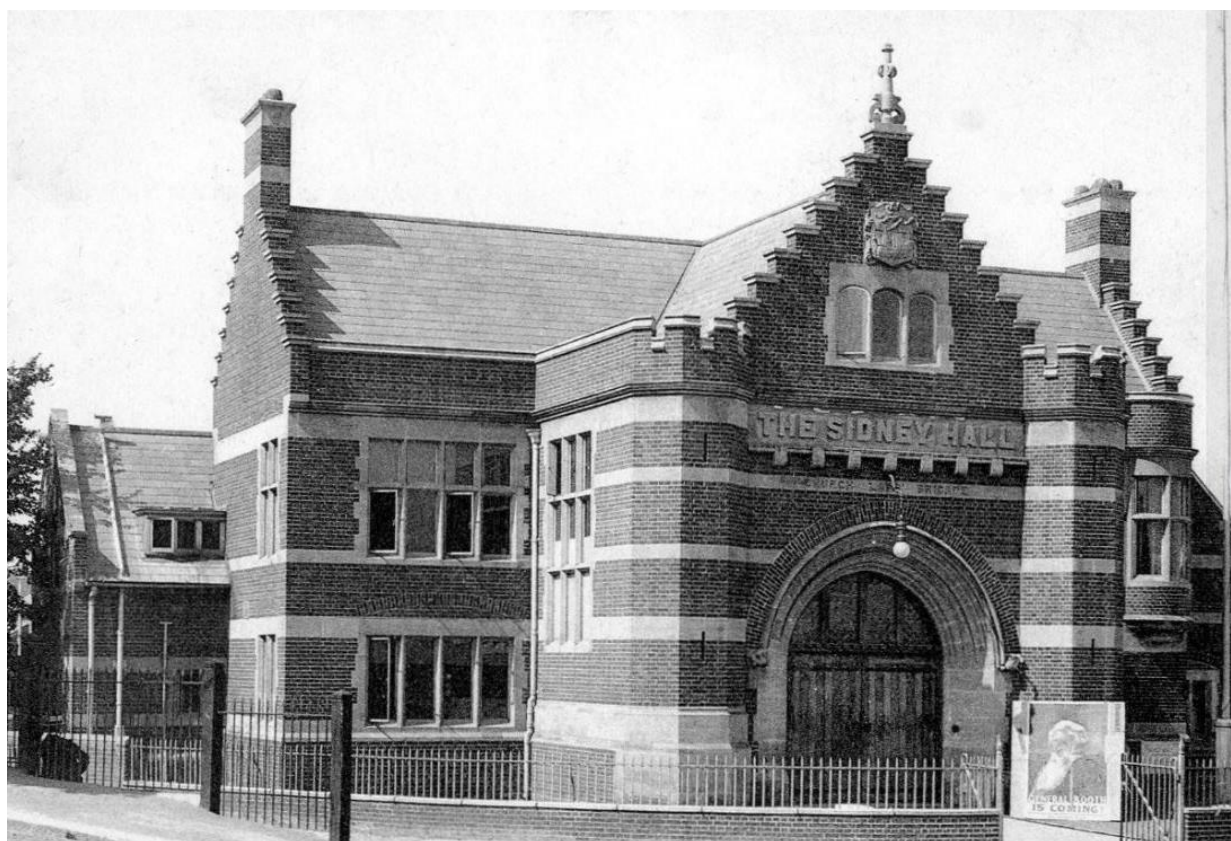
Private Walter G. Bruhn was taken to Camp Hospital at Codford on 12th November, 1916 & was admitted to Codford Group Clearing Hospital, Wiltshire, England on 13th November, 1916 with Mumps. He was discharged on 22nd November, 1916.

Private Walter G. Bruhn was marched in to 8th Training Battalion at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 23rd November, 1916.

A Medical Report was completed on Private Walter Gustive Bruhn on 29th January, 1917 at No. 8 Training Battalion, Hurdcott, Wiltshire. He disability was recorded as "*Recurrent Hernia left side*". "*Had a hernia 9 years ago was operated on 1st time Nov 1914. Operated on 2nd time March 1916. 1st Operation was performed by advice of military before enlistment. The 2nd was also prior to enlistment and was considered cured. The hernia recurred after enlistment in Sept 1916 during the voyage to England. Was classified at Perham Downs as C1.*" Private Bruhn's present condition was listed as "*There is a scar over the inguinal canal. There is a large well marked swelling on the left inguinal region extending down to the testicle with an impulse on coughing. The swelling can be reduced when lying down. The swelling is increasing in size and incapacitates the patient from any useful work. Further operation was not advised by surgeon at Devonport Hospital.*" The Officer in charge of the Medical case recommended Private Bruhn be classed as C3 (Permanently unfit for Service) & have a change to Australia. The Medical Board decided on 26th February, 1917 that Private Walter Bruhn be discharged as permanently unfit.

Private Walter G. Bruhn was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, Dorset, England on 15th March, 1917 from Hurdcott. He was admitted to Camp Hospital at Monte Video, Dorset on 18th March, 1917 seriously ill. Private Bruhn was transferred to Sidney Hall Hospital at Weymouth on 21st March, 1917.

Private Walter G. Bruhn was admitted to Weymouth (Sidney Hall) Military Hospital, Dorset, England on 21st March, 1917. The Hospital Admissions form recorded "*Both lungs extensively involved with tubercle, Pneumothorax on L side. Treated with stimulants & oxygen. Died of cardiac failure.*"



Sidney Hall Military Hospital, Weymouth

Base Records advised Edgar Bruhn, Gawler, S.A., next of kin of Private Walter G. Bruhn, on 28th March, 1917 that Private Walter Bruhn had been admitted to Hospital on 18th March – ill severe.

Private Walter G. Bruhn died at 6.55 pm on 31st March, 1917 at Sydney Hall Military Hospital, Weymouth, Dorset, England from Tubercle of Lung & Pneumothorax.

A death for Walter Bruhn, aged 26, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Weymouth, Dorset, England.

Private Walter G. Bruhn was buried on 3rd April, 1917 in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England – Grave No. 2952. This is now recorded by CWGC as Plot number III. C. 2592 and he now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

From the burial report of Private W. G. Bruhn - Coffin was Elm Wood. The Burial was conducted by Captain R. H. Pitt-Owen, No. 2 Command Depot, Weymouth, England. *“The above soldier left Hurdcott on 14.3.17 and reported here the same day. He was admitted to the Camp Hospital in 15.3.17, transferred to Sidney Hall Hospital in 21.3.17; became dangerously ill on 26.3.17. He was too ill to leave any message.”*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Walter Gustavo Bruhn contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of the relatives in Australia to obtain the fullest details possible into his wounds, death and burial.

- The M. O., Sydney Hall Military Hospital, Weymouth replied with the following: *“Patient was admitted to the Sidney Hall Hospital, Weymouth on March 21st 1917 with advanced tuberculosis of lungs, causing Pneumothorax. His condition was very grave from the beginning and he was put on the danger list. Pulse was very rapid and weak. Respiration rapid and difficult with the temp varying from 101 – 104. Patient went rapidly downhill and in spite of oxygen and stimulants with occasionally morphine and atrophine to relieve pain – death took place from cardiac failure on 31.8.17. He was buried in Melcombe Regis Cemetery on 3.4.17.”*
- The Matron, Military Hospital, Weymouth replied with the following: *“I have to inform you that he died on 31.3.17 of the disease Pneumothorax following pneumonia I believe. He was buried in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth on 3.4.17. I regret that I am unable to give more particulars than this, as being nearly a year ago, many of the staff have changed and I was not in Weymouth at the time either.”*

Messrs Homburg, Melrose & Homburg, Solicitors & Public Notaries, Adelaide, South Australia, wrote to Base Records on 18th April, 1917 requesting *“the Official Certificate of Death of Private Walter Gustav Bruhn No. 3520 32nd Battalion, A.I.F. who died at Sidney Hall Military Hospital on the 31st March 1917. Mr E. H. Bruhn of Willaston if this State, the sole beneficiary of the Will of the deceased, brother of the deceased, requires the Certificate of Death to enable the Will of the deceased to be proved....”*

Base Records replied to Messrs Homburg, Melrose & Homburg on 2nd July, 1917 enclosing a certificate of report of death of the late No. 3520 Private W. G. Bruhn, 32nd Battalion.

Base Records contacted Mr E. H. Bruhn, Willaston, South Australia on 10th March, 1921 stating he was noted as the registered next-of-kin on the records of the late No. 3520 Private W. G. Bruhn, 32nd Battalion but desired to know if there were any nearer blood relatives than himself & was specifically asked if his mother was living or if he has any older brothers due to the “Deceased Soldiers Estates Act 1918” which stated that the War Medals & Mementoes of a deceased soldier were to be handed in the following order of relationship – Widow, eldest surviving son, eldest surviving daughter, father, mother, eldest surviving brother, eldest surviving sister etc.

Mr E. H. Bruhn replied to Base Records on 21st March, 1921 advising *“...I beg to inform you that I am the youngest Brother, my Father and Mother are dead. My oldest Brother is entitled to the War medal & his address is Richard Bruhn, Willaston via Gawler, S.A.”*

Private Walter G. Bruhn 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 Private Bruhn’s eldest brother – Mr Richard Bruhn, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent July, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Walter Gustive Bruhn – service number 3520, aged 18, of 32nd Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the brother of Richard W. Bruhn, of Willaston, Gawler, South Australia.

W. G. Bruhn is remembered on the Burra District Honour Roll, located in R.S.L. Meeting Room, Burra Council Chambers, Market Square, Burra, South Australia.



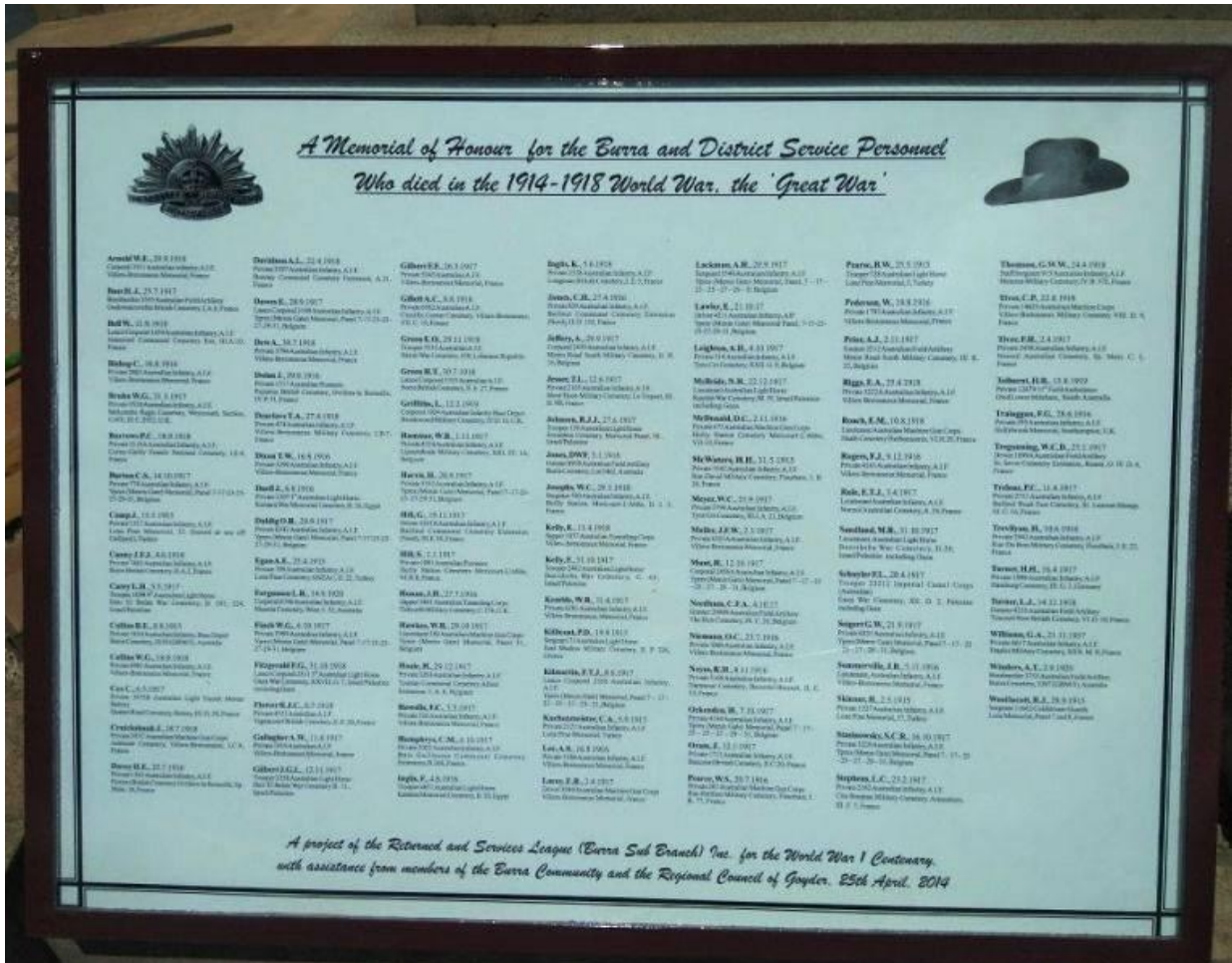
Burra District Honour Roll (Photos from Monument Australia – Chris McLaughlin)



W. G. Bruhn is remembered on the Burra War Memorial, located at Market & Kingston Streets, Burra, South Australia.



Burra War Memorial (Photos from Monument Australia – Damian Quinn)





Burra War Memorial (Photos by Henry Moulds)



W. G. Bruhn is remembered on the National Soldiers Memorial in Adelaide. The Adelaide National War Memorial commemorates those from South Australia that served in the First World War. The names of those that died are listed inside the Memorial, which is located on the corner of North Terrace & Kintore Avenue, Adelaide.



National War Memorial – Adelaide (Photos by Bilby)

Private W. G. Bruhn is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 120.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

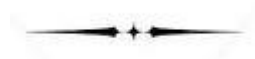
(66 pages of Private Walter Gustive Bruhn's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

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





Private Walter Bruhn



Newspaper Notices

THE ROLL OF HONOR

285th CASUALTY LIST

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Seriously Sick

3520 Pte W. G. BRUHN, Gawler

(The Advertiser, Adelaide, South Australia – 6 April, 1917)

287th CASUALTY LIST

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Died – Cause Not Stated

3520 Pte W. G. BRUHN, Gawler, Mar. 31

(Chronicle, Adelaide, South Australia – 21 April, 1917)

The Burra Record

Mrs James McDonald, of Willalo, has received the following letter: — No. 2 Command Depot, Weymouth, 3 April, 1917 —"You have no doubt had word before now of the death of your brother, Pte. W. G. Bruhn, No. 3520, of the 30th Battalion, A.I.F., which took place at Sydney Hall Hospital, Weymouth, on the 30th March. The cause of death was pleurisy. Everything possible was done to help your loved one during his illness, and no stone was left unturned to bring about his recovery. The nurses and doctors were very kind and he wanted for nothing he needed. He was given a full military funeral and his remains were laid to rest in grave No. 2952, Section C, Melcombe Cemetery, Weymouth, in the presence of a large number of his comrades. I am very sorry for you in your loss, but your brother has died in a noble cause and God will reward his sacrifice. Believe me, yours sincerely, R. H. Pittowen, C. of E. Chaplain, A.I.F.

(Burra Record, South Australia – 1 August, 1917)

HEROES OF THE GREAT WAR

BRUHN – In loving memory of our dear brother, Private W. G. Bruhn, who died at Weymouth, England, on 31st March, 1917. – Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Hilda and George Arbon.

BRUHN – In loving memory of Private W. Bruhn, died of illness, Weymouth, March 31st, 1917. Too far away your grave to see, But not too far to think of you. -Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, E. and J. McDonald.

BRUHN – In loving memory of my dear brother, Private Walter G. Bruhn, who died in England of pleurisy, March 31, 1917.

They loved him most who knew him best.

-Inserted by his loving brother and sister-in-law, A. H. and J. Bruhn, Mypolonga.

(Chronicle, Adelaide, South Australia – 6 April, 1918)

HEROES OF THE GREAT WAR

BRUHN – In loving memory of our dear brother, Private W. Bruhn, who died of illness, in England, March 31, 1917.

"Sadly missed"

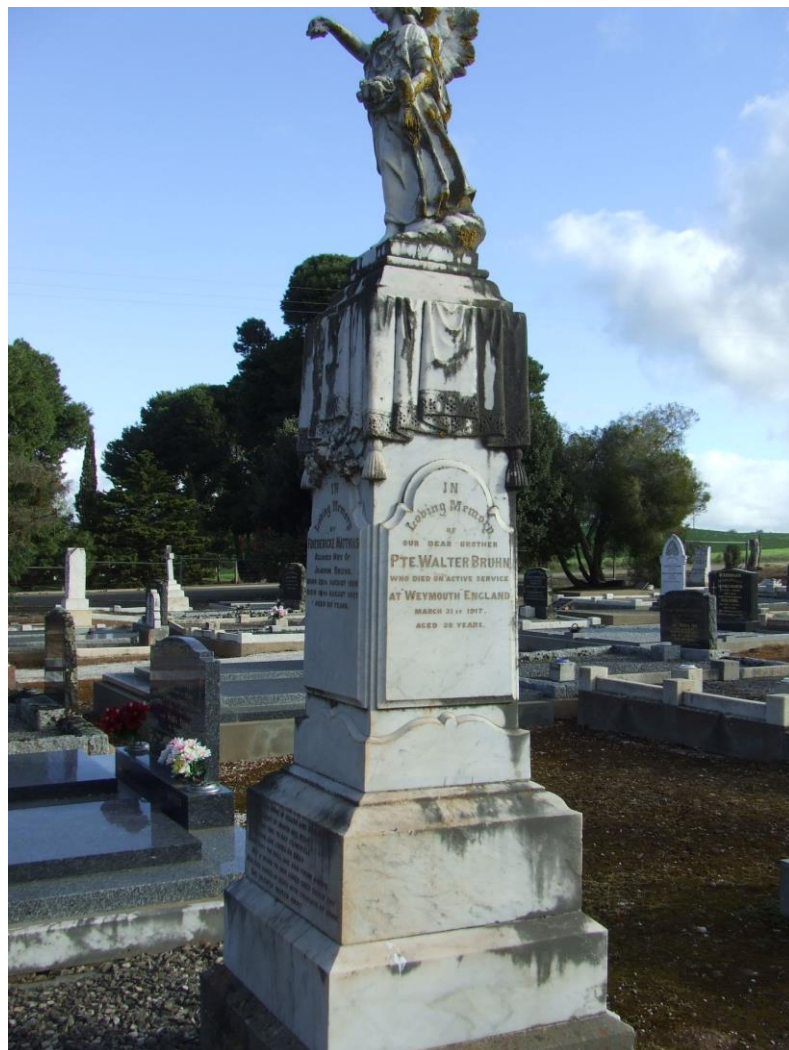
-Inserted by Em and Jim and Private O. Bruhn.

(Chronicle, Adelaide, South Australia – 5 April, 1919)

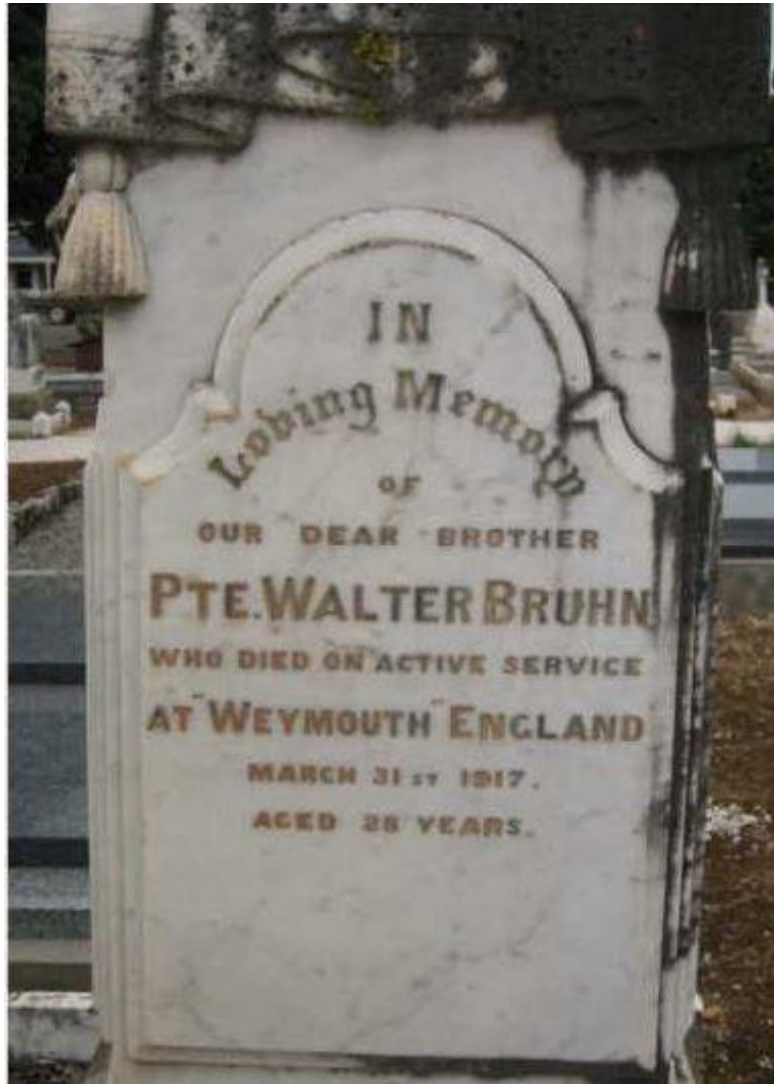
Walter Bruhn is remembered on the Family Headstone in St. John's Lutheran Church Cemetery, Waterloo, South Australia.



St. John's Lutheran Church Cemetery



(Photos from Find a Grave)



(Photo from Find a Grave – RJK)

*In
Loving Memory
Of
Our Dear Brother
PTE WALTER BRUHN
Who Died On Active Service
At "Weymouth" England
March 31st 1917
Aged 26 Years*

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)

Private W. G. Bruhn does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England

Weymouth became a depot for Australian forces in 1916 and 83 of the 147 First World War burials in Melcombe Regis Cemetery are of Australian servicemen; most of these graves are scattered in the old part. The 36 Second World War burials are in the extension. The cemetery also contains seven war graves of other nationalities and one non-war burial.

(Information from CWGC)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00332

Some of the Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919

Identified, left to right: Captain Francis Arthur Deravin, Australian Army Medical Corps, died 8 July 1917 aged 41 years (large headstone); 138 Private Louis Nelson Matthews, 27th Battalion, 4 July 1917; 5082 Private Victor George Smith, 21st Battalion, died 13 November 1918.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00333

Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919

Identified, front row, left to right: unidentified; Butler; 5917 Private Edgar Allan Thornell, 22nd Battalion (Bn), died 9 August 1918; 1207 Corporal Jesse Adams Davis, 12th Bn, died 15 November 1918.

Back row: 5329 Private Frederick Albert Archer, Anzac Provost Company, died 6 November 1918; 5990 Private Albert Robert Blackmore, 12th Bn, died 2 November 1918; 11099 Driver Matthew Charles Percival Nettle, 6th Australian Field Artillery Brigade, died 22 October 1918; 3942 Private Walter Alick Weckman, 51st Bn, died 9 November 1918.



(Photo courtesy of Steve Stewart)



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)





(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

Australians in Weymouth

What was life like for the Australians?

The Camp

Within the camp, there were educational facilities as well as medical rooms which helped to recover and re-educate the soldiers. There was help provided for soldiers suffering with physical or emotional impairments, such as massage rooms, psychotherapy training rooms and a remedial gymnasium. This strengthened the men to help them recover from their injuries. The educational aspects were diverse, allowing soldiers to pick a completely different profession for when they went back home. This included architecture, motor engineering, electrical and carpentry classes. Another option allowed the soldiers to be retrained in their previous professions which may have become more difficult, due to loss of limbs or new techniques that may have been created whilst they were at war.

The Town

Weymouth benefited hugely from the influx of Australian and New Zealand soldiers. One shop that still exists today is the Acutt's clothing store, which used to sell everything a soldier could possibly need for his uniform, from the whole jacket to just the buttons and epaulettes. As well as Acutt's, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia also opened up their own branch in Weymouth, for the soldiers to use during their time over here, which highlighted the permanence of their stay. There was also a monthly newsletter that circulated amongst the men, which was produced by local company Sherrens, which still operates on the Granby Industrial estate.

Special Events

The Australian recovery camps took special occasions very seriously, such as Christmas and Easter, to try and reduce the ache of home sickness and being away from their family and friends. Most camps tried to make their soldiers feel at home, with large celebrations with Christmas dinners and special guest performances at Easter. However, there were also other special events that gained press attention, such as the opening of the YMCA building, which used to be on Abbotshay Road. This provided help and welfare to the Australian soldiers, such as free food and blankets. There were fundraising days for the prisoner-of-war soldiers that had been captured during the fall of the Kut, who were mainly Dorset soldiers. From these fundraising days in Weymouth, Dorchester and Bridport, the towns managed to raise £3,600 to help comfort the prisoners.

Entertainment

Entertainment was a highly important aspect of the soldiers' lives whilst they were in Weymouth. It kept the soldiers motivated and in high spirits whilst they were ill or injured, in hopes of helping to speed up their recovery. Throughout the camps in Weymouth, there was always something to watch or listen to, whether it was singing and acting companies who toured round the camps or at the Pavilion Theatre on the Esplanade. Sometimes, the soldiers even made their own entertainment, with marching bands and choirs being set up by the YMCA building in Westham. There were also balls and dances at the camps themselves and even a small trip to the Alexandra Garden along the Esplanade. Dating also became a significant part of the soldiers' lives, with many Weymouth women losing husbands and boyfriends at war. Finding comfort with the new soldiers at the camp, this led to many marriages between the two groups, and some migrating back to Australia with their new families, or staying here and leaving their families.

3

THESE BOYS BEARING ACUTT BROTHERS

AMERICAN OFFICERS UNIFORMS.

THE JUBILEE HALL

ROYAL PALM COURT

#weyforward

The National Lottery

Images courtesy of Australian War Memorial, Newsletter originals published by Sherrens, Ltd. Weymouth



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

Australians in Weymouth

From Weymouth to Auswey - A Soldier's Récovery



During the First World War between 1914 and 1918, many injured soldiers who were mostly from Australia and New Zealand, were brought to Weymouth. They were known as ANZACS (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps). They were placed in Repatriation and Rehabilitation camps in Westham, Littlehampton, Chichester and Portland. This was in the hope of sending them back to the line of action in France or back home to Australia due to lack of fitness. Weymouth was picked as the place to set up camp, as it was seen as a relaxing seaside location. This would help to heal the sick and injured Australians who had been fighting in major battles of the war or on the Western Front between France and Belgium.



Although thousands of ANZACS passed through Weymouth during the First World War, there are some soldiers who unfortunately did not make it home. These soldiers are proudly buried in the Melcombe Regis cemetery. This is only 100 metres away from one of the major camps in Westham, with 142 soldiers buried in the cemetery, 83 from Australia and 59 from New Zealand. These graves are similar to some of the war memorials and graves placed around Europe, much like the Somme in France. Unfortunately, there are too many grave names to be displayed on this board, but they can be found on the website link at the bottom of this board.



Past and Present Westham

As you can see on the map of the Westham camp, many of the street names have an Australian connection, highlighting the history of the area. Residents of the housing estates, which are now built where the camp once stood, are still digging up remains of the camp, such as bullets or cooking equipment.



Modern Day Street Names	Westham Camp - December 1916
Queen Close	Soldiers Huts
Swine Road	Company Officers
Queensland Road	Regimental Institute
Kitchener Road	Minutemen Rifle Range
Cooperation Road	Officers' Mess
Shark Road	Shower Block
Longcroft Road	Vehicle Shed, Mob Store
Wessex Road	Home Shelter
Parth Street	Cool Yard
Melbourne Street	Cook House
Adelaide Crescent	YMCA
Abbotsbury Road	Dung Pit
Sydney Street	Fire Hydrant
Shirecroft Road	





Photo of Private W. G. Bruhn's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England.

(Note: The age of 18 engraved on CWGC is wrong – age should be 26. CWGC were advised at the time of researching – March, 2023)



(Photo courtesy of Allan Wood)



(Photo courtesy of Allan Wood)