

**Ann's Hill Cemetery,  
Gosport, Hampshire, England  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**LIEUTENANT**

**A. BURNS**

**ROYAL FLYING CORPS**

**20TH APRIL, 1917 Aged 24**

## Alexander (Alec) BURNS

Alexander Burns was born at Rosewood, Queensland on 11th February, 1893 to parents James Kerr Burns & Helen Burns (nee Johnman).

Alexander Burns was a 22 year old, single, Mechanical Draftsman (Engineer listed on Embarkation Roll) from Brisbane, Queensland when he enlisted on 16th August, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). Alexander Burns stated he had been an apprentice for 5 years with Queensland Government Railway Works. His service number was 5237 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs H. Burns, “Hazeldean”, Lambert Road, Indooroopilly, Queensland.

Alexander Burns' Statement of Service form records that he was posted to 301st M.T.A.S.C. (Motor Transport, Army Service Corps) 3rd & 4th Sec. 17th D.A.P. from 15th July, 1915. He was transferred to No. 2 Depot Battalion on 2nd November, 1915.

Second Lieutenant Alexander Burns embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Star of Victoria (A16)* on 31st March, 1916 with the 4th Infantry Brigade, 15th Infantry Battalion, 16th Reinforcements. He was marched in at Tel-el-Kebir on 5th May, 1916 from Australia.

Second Lieutenant Alexander Burns was allotted to & proceeded to join 47th Battalion from 15th Battalion on 20th May, 1916.

Second Lieutenant Alexander Burns was reallocated from 4th Training Battalion to 12th Training Battalion as Reinforcements for 47th Battalion on 24th May, 1916.

Second Lieutenant Alexander Burns was marched out from 4th A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) & embarked from Alexandria on 7th June, 1916 on H.T. *Huntspill*. He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 14th June, 1916.

Second Lieutenant Alexander Burns was marched out to his Unit from Reinforcements Camp at Etaples on 8th August, 1916 & taken on strength of 47th Battalion in France on 10th August, 1916.

Second Lieutenant Alexander Burns was promoted to Lieutenant in the Field on 11th October, 1916. (Note: the Statement of Service form state Alexander Burns was Lieutenant from 17th January, 1916).

Lieutenant Alexander Burns was transferred to R.F.C. (Royal Flying Corps) on 20th October, 1916.

Lieutenant Alexander Burns was discharged from Australian Imperial Force in UK & appointed to a Commission in Royal Flying Corps on 22nd October, 1916.

Lieutenant Alexander Burns joined No. 2 Royal Flying Corps School of Instruction at Oxford on 23rd October, 1916.

Lieutenant Alexander Burns, attached to No. 59 Reserve Squadron, was flying a De Havilland D. H. 1A, serial number A1625, on 20th April, 1917. He was practising stalling & failed to regain control of the aeroplane at Grange, Gosport, Hampshire, England.

Lieutenant Alexander Burns died at 9.30 pm on 20th April, 1917 in Hospital at Gosport, Hampshire, England from injuries sustained in an aeroplane accident – both legs broken.

(Note – the Royal Air Force Casualty Card for Lieutenant Alexander Burns has his date of death as 21st April, 1917. Information received by Telephone on 21st April, 1917 from the War Office states that Lieutenant Alexander Burns died at 9.30 pm on 20th April, 1917. A Telegram was sent from London at 8.10 pm on 20th April, 1917 advising Mrs Helen Burns that her son had been injured in an aeroplane accident. Another telegram was sent from London at 12.30 am on 21st April, 1917 advising Mrs Helen Burns that her son had died at “9.30 pm tonight in hospital”.)

A Court of Inquiry found that the machine was in perfect flying condition & that the accident was due to pilot failing to regain control of the machine after stalling.

A death for Alexander Burns, aged 23, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Fareham, Hampshire, England.

Lieutenant Alexander Burns was buried on 26th April, 1917 in Ann's Hill Cemetery, Gosport, Hampshire, England – Plot number 29. 23291 and has a Private Headstone. His death is still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Lieutenant Alexander Burns was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal which were sent to his father – Mr James Burns, as the next of kin.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Second Lieutenant Alexander Burns, aged 24, of Royal Flying Corps. He was the son of James Kerr Burns and Helen Burns, of Hazeldean, Lambert Rd, Indooroopilly, Queensland.

Flight Pilot Alexander Burns is remembered on the Commemorative Roll Book, located in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. The Commemorative Roll records the names of those Australians who died during or as a result of wars in which Australians served, but who were not serving in the Australian Armed Forces and therefore not eligible for inclusion on the Roll of Honour.

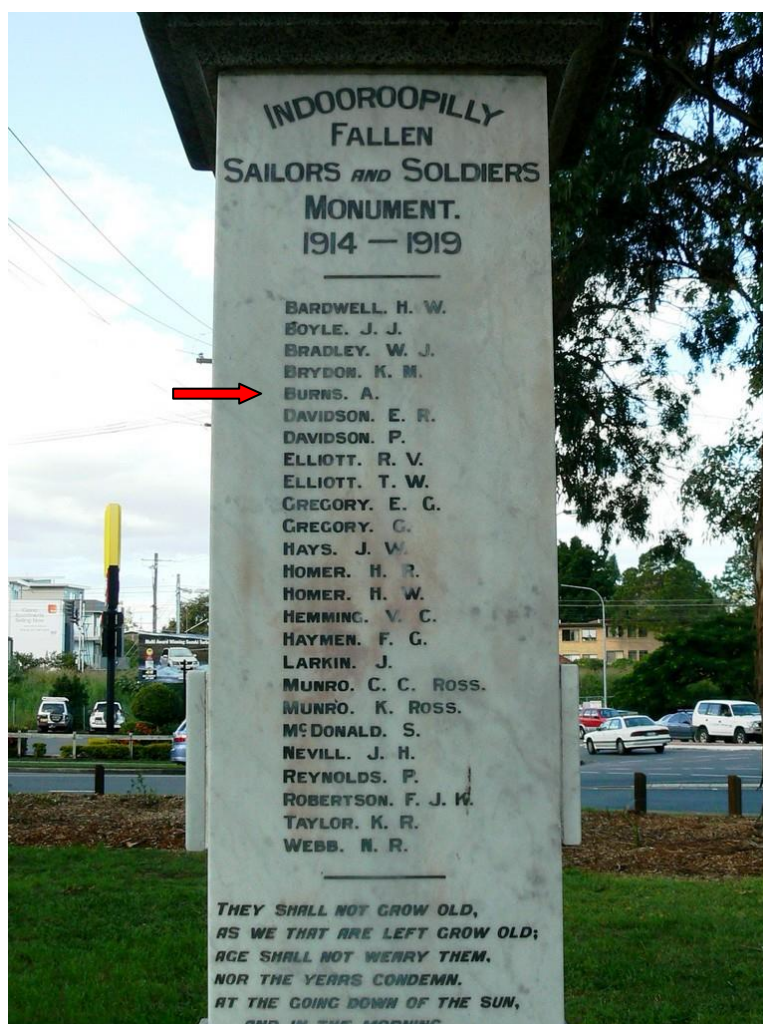


**Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial** (*Capital Photographer*)

A. Burns is remembered on the Indooroopilly Fallen Sailors and Soldiers Monument located in Keating Park, Belgrave Road, Indooroopilly, Queensland, Australia.



Indooroopilly Fallen Sailors and Soldiers Monument (Photos by Kgbo)



(46 pages of Lieutenant Alexander Burns' Australian Army 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*



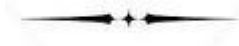
**Alexander Burns**



**Alexander Burns**



**Alexander Burns (left) & James Burns (right)**



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **A FLYING FATALITY**

Lieut. Alexander Burns, of the Royal Flying Corps, died in hospital on Sunday from injuries sustained while making a flight on the South Coast last Friday. His machine apparently got out of control, and nose-dived to earth.

*(Daily Record, Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Scotland – 24 April, 1917) \*The same item appeared in several newspapers across the country*

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The death is reported as the result of a flying accident of Lieut. Alexander Burns, Royal Flying Corps. He was making an ascent on the South Coast of Friday evening, and appeared to lose control of the machine which nose-dived to earth. He was still alive though badly injured when picked up, but died some time after removal to hospital.

*(Hull Daily Mail, Hull, Yorkshire, England – 24 April, 1917) \*The same item appeared in several newspapers across the country*

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### **News in Brief**

Lieutenant Alexander Burns, Royal Flying Corps, was making an ascent on the South Coast on Friday evening when he appeared to lost control of the machine, which nose-dived to earth. He was still alive, though badly injured, when picked up, but died after his removal to hospital.

*(The Times, London, England – 24 April, 1917)*

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### **ROLL OF HONOUR**

BURNS – on the 21st April, at Gosport, England, died of injuries received in aeroplane accident, Flight Lieutenant Alec Burns, younger son of Mr and Mrs J. K. Burns, Indooroopilly.

*(The Brisbane Courier, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia – 26 April, 1917) &*

*(The Queenslander, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia – 5 May, 1917)*

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### **CASUALTIES**

#### **295th and 296th LISTS**

#### **BIG LOT OF QUEENSLANDERS**

#### **DIED**

Lieut. A. Burns, Indooroopilly, 20/4/17; (result of accident).

*(Daily Standard, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia – 12 May, 1917)*

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### **ROLL OF HONOUR**

BURNS – In loving memory of our dearly beloved son and brother, Flight Lieutenant Alec Burns, Royal Flying Corps, who died of injuries received in aeroplane accident at Gosport, England, 20th April, 1917.

Inserted by his sorrowing parents and sisters.

*(The Telegraph, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia – 18 April, 1918 & 20 April, 1918)*

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## ROLL OF HONOUR

BURNS – In loving memory of our dearly beloved son and brother, Flight Lieutenant Alec Burns, Royal Flying Corps, who died of injuries received in aeroplane accident at Gosport, England, 20th April, 1917.

Inserted by his sorrowing parents and sisters.

BURNS – In loving memory of our dearly beloved brother, Flight Lieutenant Alec Burns, Royal Flying Corps, who died of injuries received in aeroplane accident at Gosport, England, 20th April, 1917.

Inserted by his sister and brother-in-law, Mr and Mrs C. W. Boyling.

*(The Brisbane Courier, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia – 20 April, 1918)*

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## ROLL OF HONOUR

BURNS – In loving memory of our dearly beloved son and brother, Flight Lieutenant Alec Burns, Royal Flying Corps, who died of injuries received in aeroplane accident at Gosport, England, 20th April, 1917.

Inserted by his sorrowing parents and sisters.

*(The Week, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia – 26 April, 1918)*

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## Ann's Hill Cemetery, Gosport, Hampshire, England

During both wars, Gosport was a significant sea port and Naval depot, with many government factories and installations based there, as well as the Haslar Naval Hospital. No 5 Squadron Royal Flying Corps were based at Gosport just before the outbreak of the First World War and during the Second World War the town acted as base to No 17 Group Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy Light Coastal Forces.

Gosport (Ann's Hill) Cemetery contains 104 scattered graves from the First World War. A number of the 144 Second World War burials form a plot at the western end of the cemetery. 1 of these is an unidentified Merchant seaman. There are also 31 German burials, including 2 unidentified, and 1 Belgian burial in the cemetery.

There are 3 Australians buried in this cemetery.

*(Information from CWGC)*



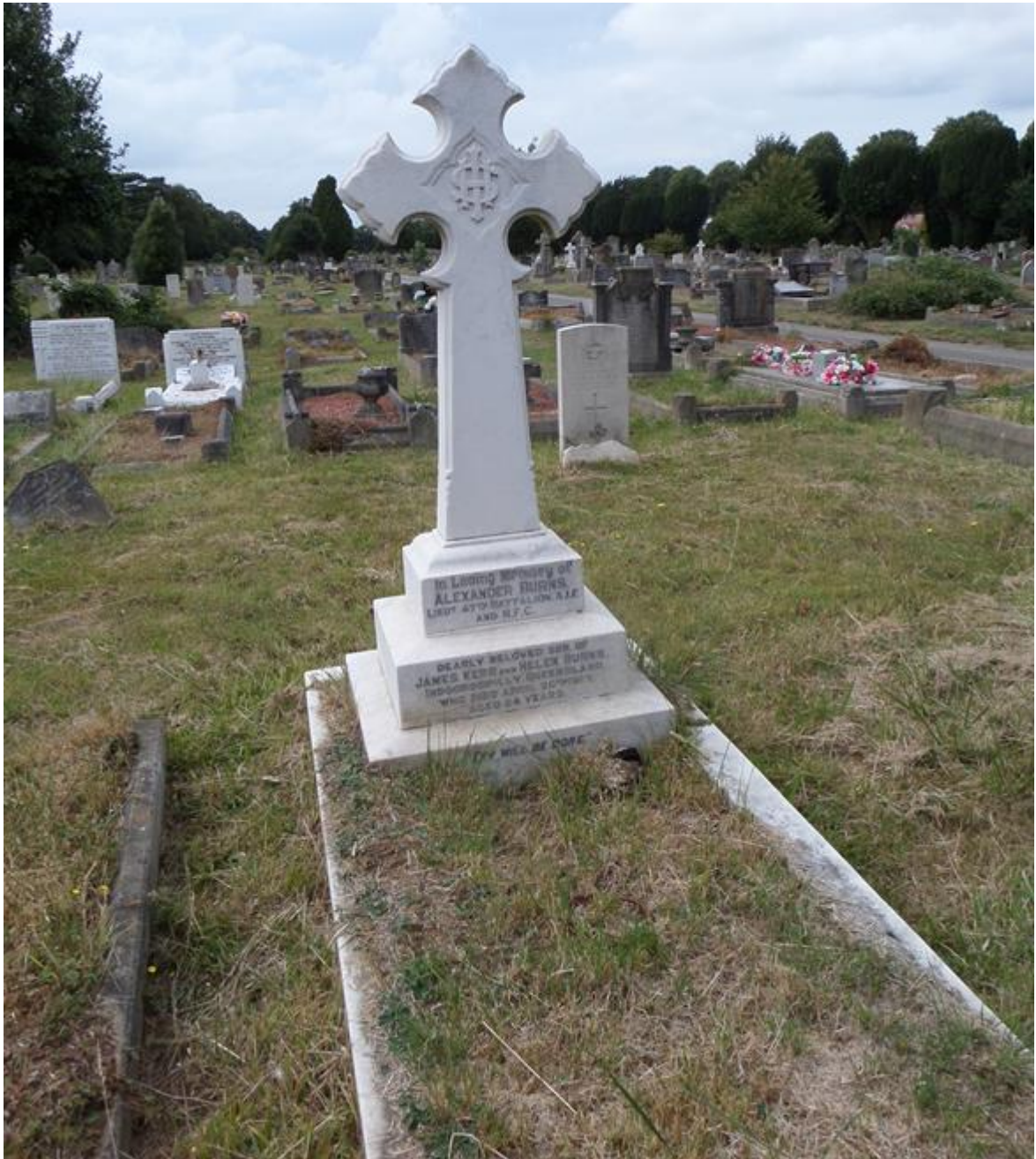
**Ann's Hill Cemetery, Gosport, Hampshire** *(Photo by soilsister)*



Photo of Lieutenant A. Burns' Private Headstone in Ann's Hill Cemetery, Gosport, Hampshire, England.



*(Photos by julia&keld)*



*In Loving Memory of*  
**ALEXANDER BURNS**  
*Lieut. 47TH Battalion, A.I.F.*  
*And R.F.C.*

*Dearly Beloved Son Of*  
**JAMES KERR and HELEN BURNS**  
*Indooroopilly, Queensland,*  
*Who Died April 20TH, 1917,*  
*Aged 24 Years*



**Ann's Hill Cemetery, Gosport, Hampshire** *(Photo from CWGC)*