

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

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



839 PRIVATE

P. BUTLER

39TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

8TH JULY, 1917

Patrick BUTLER

Patrick Butler was born at Ballarat, Victoria in 1894 to parents John & Elizabeth Butler (nee Diamond).

John Butler, father of Patrick Butler, died on 4th June, 1900.

Patrick Butler was a 22 year old, single, Farmer from Dunnstown, Victoria when he enlisted on 30th March, 1916 at Ballarat, Victoria with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Roman Catholic & his next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Elizabeth Butler, of 48 Hopetoun Street, Ballarat, Victoria.

Private Patrick Butler was posted to 39th Battalion "C" Company at Ballarat on 30th March, 1916 for recruit training.

Private Patrick Butler, Service number 839, embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Ascanius (A11)* on 27th May, 1916 with the 10th Infantry Brigade, 39th Infantry Battalion "C" Company. He was admitted to Ship's Hospital on 31st May, 1916 with Influenza & was discharged on 6th June, 1916. Private Butler disembarked at Devonport, England on 18th July, 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.

Private Patrick Butler was sent to Hospital with Pneumonia on 29th July, 1916 from Australian Command Depot. He was transferred to 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth, London, England (no date recorded).

Private Patrick Butler was admitted to 10th Brigade Field Hospital, Larkhill, Wiltshire on 22nd September, 1916 with Measles. He was transferred the same day to Brimstone Bottom Hospital, Wiltshire. Private Butler was reported to be seriously ill with Measles at Tidworth, Wiltshire on 2nd October, 1916. He was marched out to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 23rd October, 1916 having been discharged from Military Hospital, Tidworth. (Note: The Hospital Admission form recorded he was admitted to Brimstone Bottom on 22nd September, 1916 & transferred on 6th December, 1916 to Military Hospital, Tidworth with Tubercle of Lung).

Base Records advised Mrs E. Butler, 48 Hopetoun Street, Ballarat, Victoria on 10th October, 1916 that her son Private P. Butler was seriously ill with Measles. She was advised on 1st November, 1916 that her son Private Patrick Butler was progressing favourably.

Private Patrick Butler was reported to be convalescent on 1st December, 1916. Mrs Butler was advised by Base Records on 3rd December, 1916 that her son Private Patrick Butler was convalescent.

Base Records advised Mrs E. Butler, 48 Hopetoun Street, Ballarat, Victoria on 14th December, 1916 with the following: "*Referring to this office telegram to you of the 3rd inst., advising that your son, No. 839 Private P. Butler, 39th Battalion, was convalescent, cable advice has now been received stating that this report is incorrect, the message should have read – "Improving from an attack of slight broncho pneumonia." Should any further reports come to hand you will be promptly communicated with.*"

A Medical Report was completed on Private Patrick Butler on 18th December, 1916 while at Tidworth, Wiltshire. His disability was listed as Tubercle of Lung which had originated in September, 1916 at Larkhill Camp, Salisbury Plain, England. "*On 22 September was admitted to Isolation Hospital suffering from Measles. He developed Broncho Pneumonia which did not clear up readily and an examination of sputum T.B. found present. He was transferred to T.B. wards at Military Hospital, Tidworth.*" The Officer in charge of the case recommended that Private Butler be discharged as permanently unfit. The Medical Board agreed on 18th December, 1916 that Private Patrick Butler was suffering from Acute Tuberculosis of the Lungs & was permanently unfit for all military service.

Private Patrick Butler was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot from Tidworth on 29th December, 1916.

Private Patrick Butler was sent sick to Sidney Hall Hospital on 8th January, 1917 from No. 2 Command Depot, Weymouth, Dorset.

39th Battalion

The 39th Battalion was formed on 21 February 1916 at the Ballarat Showgrounds in Victoria and drew most of its recruits from the state's Western District. It became part of the 10th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division. Sailing from Melbourne on 27 May, the battalion arrived in Britain on 18 July and commenced four months of training. It crossed to France in late November and moved into the trenches of the Western Front for the first time on 9 December, just in time for the onset of the terrible winter of 1916-17.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Patrick Butler died at 8.45 pm on 8th July, 1917 at Sidney Hall Military Hospital, Weymouth, Dorset, England from Tubercle of Lung.



A death for Patrick Butler, aged 22, was registered in the September quarter, 1917 in the district of Weymouth, Dorset, England.

Private Patrick Butler was buried on 11th July, 1917 in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England – Grave Number 3169 Section “C”. This is now recorded by the CWGC as Plot number II. C. 3169 and he now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

From the burial report of Private Patrick Butler - Coffin was Elm with brass fittings. During his illness, which last many months, Pte Butler was visited regularly by the local Priests – Fathers Sheehan & Tyndal – and by myself. The medical and nursing staff of Sidney Hall Military Hospital showed him every kindness and attention in their power. His unfailing patience and sweetness of disposition during his long and somewhat painful illness had endeared him to each and everyone. He died a quiet peaceful death fortified by the rites of his church.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Patrick Butler contains a request from the Red Cross (Australian Bureau) dated 28th October, 1916 *“to obtain a bulletin and ascertain the nature of the sickness or wounds of 839 Private P. Butler, 39th Battalion, A.I.F. “*

- A letter date 1st November, 1916 from London reads: *“Measles – Oct. Admitted to Gen. Hosp. Tidworth – seriously ill. He is suffering from measles and pneumonia and is still very ill, but his progress is satisfactory.”*
- The Matron, E. Schafer, Q.A.S.M.N.S., Sidney Hall Military Hospital, Weymouth wrote the following: *“In reply to your letter of 6th I received a letter asking me for information and particulars of Pte Patrick Butler’s, 39th Batn death some time ago and have already written fully to his Mother in Australia. She will receive my letter very shortly if not having done so already. He died gradually of Tuberculosis and was with us for several weeks under treatment. I was very glad to be able to furnish her with news of her son.”*

A War Pension was granted to Elizabeth Butler, 48 Hopetoun St, Ballarat, Victoria, widowed mother of the late Private Patrick Butler, in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 11th September, 1917.

Private Patrick Butler 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 Butler’s widowed mother – Mrs E. Butler, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent February, 1922 & Plaque sent August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Patrick Butler – service number 839, of 39th Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

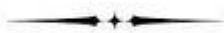
Private P. Butler is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 131.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(66 pages of Private Patrick Butler’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

236th CASUALTY LIST

SERIOUSLY ILL

P. Butler, Ballarat

(Leader, Melbourne, Victoria – 21 October, 1916)

OBITUARY

BUTLER – ON the 18th July, at Weymouth Hospital, England, Private Patrick Butler, dearly loved youngest son of Mrs Butler, Hopetoun st., Ballarat East, late of Dunnstown. Aged 23. R.I.P.

(The Evening Echo, Ballarat, Victoria – 20 July, 1917)

A Soldier's Death – The Rev. Father Hennebry has conveyed the sad news to Mrs Butler, Hopetoun street, Ballarat East, that her son, Private Patrick Butler, had died at Weymouth Hospital, England. The deceased soldier, who left with the 39th Battalion, contracted pneumonia and pleurisy, to which he succumbed on the 8th July. He was a great favorite with all with whom he had been associated, and was expected to reach home shortly.

(The Ballarat Star, Victoria – 21 July, 1917)

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

326TH LIST

Died of Illness

Pte P. BUTLER, Ballarat

(The Bendigo Independent, Victoria, 24 July, 1917)

CONCENTRATES

HERE THERE EVERYWHERE

The flags at the City and Town Halls were flown at the half-mast yesterday morning to mark a civic tribute of respect to the memory of the Ballarat soldiers whose deaths on active service, were recorded during the week. The names are as follows:- Ptes P. Butler, J. Chisholm, W. Edwards, R. Franks, L. McDonald.

(The Evening Echo, Ballarat, Victoria – 30 July, 1917)

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 5th July, 1921, to Mrs E. Butler, 48 Hopetoun Street, Ballarat, Victoria, advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of her son, the late No. 839 Private P. Butler, 39th Battalion, 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.

Private P. Butler 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)



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



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 Biddport, the towns managed to raise £5,600 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 BEING ASSISTED BY ACUTT BROTHERS

AMERICAN OFFICERS UNIFORMS.

THE PAVILION THEATRE, THE ESPLANADE, WEYMOUTH.

#weyforward

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
Sussex Road	Company Officers
Queensland Road	Regimental Institute
Kitchener Road	Minutemen Rifle Range
Corporation Road	Officers' Mess
Shark Road	Shower Block
Longcroft Road	Vehicle Shed, Mob Store
Wessex Road	Home Shelter
Parth Street	Cool Yard
Melcombe Street	Cook House
Adelaide Crescent	YMCA
Abbotsbury Road	Dung Pit
Sydney Street	Fire Hydrant
Shirecroft Road	





Images courtesy of Australian War Memorial

Photo of Private P. Butler's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England.



(Photos courtesy of Allan Wood)

