

**Brookwood Military Cemetery,
Brookwood, Surrey
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



37414 GUNNER

J. CHALMERS

AUST. FIELD ARTILLERY

25TH AUGUST, 1918

James CHALMERS

James Chalmers was born at Galton, Queensland on 5th September, 1889 to parents James Campbell Chalmers & Harriett Chalmers (nee Mahaffrey).

James Chalmers was a 27 year old, single, Public Accountant from Hotel Carlton, Sydney, NSW when he enlisted on 20th February, 1917 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 37414 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr James Campbell Chalmers, "Heatherglen," Baroona Road, Milton, Brisbane, Queensland.

Private James Chalmers was posted to Show Ground Camp Sydney on 21st February, 1917 for recruit training. He was transferred to 15th Field Artillery Brigade, 18th Reinforcements as Gunner on 20th February, 1917 (date as listed on Statement of Service form). Gunner Chalmers was transferred to 30th Reinforcements, Field Artillery as Acting Corporal on 4th September, 1917.

Gunner James Chalmers was appointed as Voyage Only Corporal & embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Port Sydney (A15)* on 5th November, 1917 with the Field Artillery, 30th Reinforcements.

Voyage Only Corporal James Chalmers was written up for an Offence at Colombo on 28th November, 1917. He was reported as A.W.L. (absent without leave) from 5.30 pm on 26th November, 1917 until 12 noon on 27th November, 1917. He was reduced to permanent rank of Gunner & forfeited 2 days' pay by order of Lt. Colonel F. J. Alverson.

Gunner James Chalmers was admitted to Ship's Hospital on 8th December, 1917 & was discharged from Ship's Hospital on 12th December, 1917. He disembarked at Suez on 12th December, 1917.

Gunner James Chalmers embarked from Alexandria on 18th December, 1917. He disembarked at Taranto on 22nd December, 1917. Gunner Chalmers was written up for an Offence at Taranto – on 25th December, 1917 - while in Isolation Camp he was found beyond the limit fixed by Camp Order & without a pass or written leave from his Commanding Officer. He was awarded 10 days Field Punishment by Lt. Colonel F. J. Alverson.

Gunner James Chalmers disembarked at Southampton, England on 5th January, 1918.

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.

Gunner James Chalmers was marched in to R.B.A.A. (Reserve Brigade Australian Artillery) at Heytesbury, Wiltshire, England from Australia on 5th January, 1918.

Gunner James Chalmers proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 4th June, 1918 from R.B.A.A. Heytesbury. He was marched in to A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot) at Rouelles, France on 5th June, 1918 & marched out to 3rd Divisional Artillery on 28th June, 1918. Gunner Chalmers was taken on strength of 3rd D.A.C. (Divisional Artillery Column) on 4th July, 1918 from A.G.B.D.

Gunner James Chalmers was transferred to 7th F.A.B. (Field Artillery Brigade) on 23rd July, 1918. He was taken on strength of 26th Battery, 7th F.A.B on 23rd July, 1918 from 3rd D.A.C.

Gunner James Chalmers was wounded in action on 8th August, 1918. He was admitted to 13th Australian Field Ambulance on 8th August, 1918 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to Back. Gunner Chalmers was transferred to 61st Casualty Clearing Station on 8th August, 1918 then transferred to Ambulance Train 24 on 9th August, 1918. He was admitted to 32nd Stationary Hospital at Wimereux, France on 10th August, 1918 with fractured Spine with lesions on Spinal Cord. Gunner Chalmers embarked from France for England on 12th August, 1918 on Hospital Ship "*St. Denis*" with G.S.W & Fractured Spine.

War Diary – 7th Field Artillery Brigade

8th August, 1918:

Barrage began at 4.20am and the attack went on with little opposition. Prisoners were soon pouring back. At 7 am an Advance Party of 1 Officer per Battery went, forward to reconnoitre the Road between HAMELET and CERISY and also a position of Assembly the vicinity of Hazel Wood Q. 13. c. 4.2. Barrage finished at 8.20 a.m. and the Brigade moved forward to the position of Assembly already selected. 9000 rounds 18—pdr and 2200 rounds 4.5 How were expended during the Barrage. No casualties were sustained and the enemy retaliation was very weak and confined to the front line.

At 8 .20 a.m. the Brigade Commander and Staff proceeded to reconnoitre. At Q.7.c.2.2, the C.O., 10th Aust. F.A. Bde was met and the information obtained that one of his Batteries was pushing forward to the vicinity of Forbes Wood. Briage Commander then proceeded to reconnoitre GREEN Line and Valley in Q. 14.d. Returning to Brigade rendezvous it was noticed that 16th Brigade R .H.A. was still in action in Q. 19.c. Efforts were made to find 4th Inf. Bde Hqrs. and 16th R.H.A. Bde. Hqrs. but without avail. By 10.20 am the Brigade had arrived at the rendezvous and as no definite information was obtainable as to the progress of the Infantry from the GREEN LINE the Brigade Commander decided as follows:—

25th Battery was ordered to reconnoitre and select position in Q. 14.d.

26th, 27th and 107th Batteries were ordered into action in Q.13.d and Q. 19.b.

This movement complete by 11 a.m. and Headquarters established at P.18.d.7.2. Shortly after, 4th Infantry Brigade Hqrs was located and it was ascertained that the Infantry were making excellent progress. A line was run to Infantry Brigade immediately.

26th, 27th and 107th were then ordered forward to about Q. 14.d. in succession and the Brigade finally settled down as follows, under command of 16th Bde. R.H.A. covering 4th Inf. Bde.

Headquarters,	P. 18.d.7.2.
25th Battery	Q.20.b.15.20
26th Battery	Q. 15.c.26.82
27th Battery	Q.20.b.20.30
107th Battery	Q. 14.d.7C.25.

During the move forward HAMELET—CERISY Road was shelled at Intervals by a 4.2 gun
Casualties were sustained by 25th Battery who had one man killed and two wounded. The same Battery also had an ammunition wagon destroyed and 2 horses killed by a tank trap.

The situation on the left around CHIPPIILLY and MALARD WOOD remained obscure. until 8 p.m.
Enemy guns firing from this direction caused considerable damage to our Batteries. The 107th Battery on coming into action was shelled by an 8 inch How. and had one man killed, 3 wounded and 10 horses killed. Forward O. P's were established and opportunity targets engaged by our Batteries during the afternoon, whilst at night harassing fire was maintained beyond the BLUE LINE. Towards evening the situation North of the SOMME was cleared up and the night passed quietly.

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Gunner James Chalmers was admitted to King George Hospital, London, England on 12th August, 1918 with G.S.W (gunshot wounds) to back – penetrating abdomen. He was reported as dangerously ill.

Mr J. C. Chalmers, "Heatherglen," Baroona Road, Milton, Brisbane, Queensland, father of Gunner Chalmers, was advised by Base Records on 22nd August, 1918 that Gunner J. Chalmers was suffering from penetrating gunshot wound to back and abdomen.

Gunner James Chalmers died at 8.55 am on 25th August, 1918 at King George Hospital, Stamford Street, London, England from wounds received in action – G.S.W Spine & Paraplegia.

A death for James Chalmers, aged 30, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of Lambeth, Greater London, England.

Gunner James Chalmers was buried at 1.30 pm on 27th August, 1918 in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England – Australian Military Burial Ground - Plot number 181,431.

From the burial report of Gunner James Chalmers - Coffin was good Polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers being in attendance from Administrative Headquarters, London. The coffin was draped with the Australian Flag and surmounted by a beautiful wreath sent by comrades in hospital. Prior to the interment a service was conducted at the graveside by Chaplain the Rev W. J. Gray, Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside. An oak cross has been erected on the grave. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.

Base Records wrote to Mr J. C. Chalmers, Walsh St., Milton, Brisbane, Queensland, on 24th March, 1923 to advise that the site of Gunner J. Chalmers' grave in Brookwood Military Cemetery had been officially registered as Plot 4 Row B Grave 7.

This is now recorded by CWGC as Memorial reference – IV. B. 7. Gunner J. Chalmers has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Corporal (at time of writing his Will) James Chalmers requested in his Will, dated 10th October, 1917, that he bequeathed to Harriett Chalmers, wife of James Campbell Chalmers, all his estate & appointed William Chalmers & George Campbell Chalmers as Executors.

Communications from Base Records addressed to Mr J. C. Chalmers, "Heatherglenn," Baroona Road, Milton, Brisbane, Queensland, father of Gunner Chalmers, were returned in 1920.

Communications from Base Records addressed to Mr J. C. Chalmers, Miles Street, Clayfield, Queensland, father of Gunner Chalmers, were returned in February, 1922.

Gunner James Chalmers was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Gunner Chalmers' father – Mr J. C. Chalmers, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent June, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

Communications from Base Records addressed to Mr James C. Chalmers, "Emoh Ruo," Walsh Street, Milton, Brisbane, Queensland, father of Gunner Chalmers, were returned in September, 1930.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Gunner J. Chalmers – service number 37414, of 7th Bde., Australian Field Artillery. No family details are listed.

Gunner J. Chalmers is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 15.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(75 pages of Gunner James Chalmers' 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

ROLL OF HONOUR

CHALMERS – Died of wounds, St. George Hospital, England, Gunner James Chalmers, 7th Artillery Reinforcements, 25th August, 1918.

Inserted by his loving mother, father and brothers.

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 7 September, 1918)

TOWN & COUNTRY

Information has been received of the death from wounds in King George's Hospital, London, on August 25, of Gunner James Chalmers, formerly auditor and accountant in Brisbane. He was a son of Mr and Mrs J. G. Chalmers, of Baroona-rd, Milton.

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 9 September, 1918) & (Cairns Post, Queensland – 16 September, 1918)

TOWN & COUNTRY

Mr and Mrs J. G. Chalmers, of Baroona Road, Milton, have received word that the former's brother, Gunner James Chalmers, died of wounds in King George's Hospital, London on August 25.

(Cairns Post, Queensland – 14 September, 1918) & (The Queenslander, Brisbane, Queensland – 14 September, 1918)

ROLL OF HONOUR

CHALMERS – In loving remembrance of our dear son and brother, James Chalmers, A.I.A.Q., who died from penetrating gun shot wounds in King George's Hospital, England, August 25th, 1918.

“Sadly missed.”

Inserted by his loving mother, father, and brothers, William, Jack and Campbell.

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 25 August, 1919) & (The Telegraph, Brisbane, Queensland – 25 August, 1919) &

(The Week, Brisbane, Queensland – 29 August, 1919)

ROLL OF HONOUR

CHALMERS – In sad and loving memory of Gunner James Chalmers, A.I.A.Q., late auditor and accountant, who died of penetrating gun shot wound, King George's Hospital, London, 25th August, 1918.

Sadly missed.

Inserted by his loving mother and father, brothers and sister.

(The Telegraph, Brisbane, Queensland – 25 August, 1920)

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 6th July, 1921, to Mr J. C. Chalmers, Miles Street, Clayfield, Brisbane, Queensland, advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of his son, the late No. 37414 Gunner J. Chalmers, 7th Field Artillery Brigade, 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.

Gunner J. Chalmers does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England

Located 30 miles from London in Surrey, Brookwood Military Cemetery is the largest CWGC cemetery in the United Kingdom. The cemetery contains the graves of more than 1,600 servicemen of the British Empire in the First World War and over 3,470 from the Second World War.

Brookwood Military Cemetery lies adjacent to Brookwood Cemetery (The London Necropolis), a vast space which covers 500 acres. In 1917, an area to the north of the cemetery was set aside as Brookwood Military Cemetery for men and women of Commonwealth forces who died, many of battle wounds, in the London district. This site was further extended to accommodate Commonwealth casualties of the Second World War. *(Information from CWGC)*

There are 446 Australian War Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery – 351 from World War 1 & 95 from World War 2.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00185

A large crowd attends an A.I.F. military funeral at Brookwood Cemetery. In the foreground wooden crosses mark rows of graves. (Photo c1919)

Identified: Front row, left to right: Second Lieutenant Douglas Abbott Ferguson, Australian Flying Corps, died of accidental injuries 18 August 1918; Lieutenant (Lt) Francis John Smedley MC, 7th Battalion, died of wounds 20 August 1918.

Second row: 6860 Private (Pte) James Alexander McKeown, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 20 June 1918; 3622 Pte S T Wilson, 2nd Australian Pioneers, died of wounds 4 July 1918; 2390 Sergeant Frederick Charles Stronell, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 9 July 1918; Lt Arthur Melville Lilburne MC, 6th Brigade Australian Field Artillery, died of disease 11 July 1918.



Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photo from CWGC)



Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photos by Magicfingers)



Australian Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photos by Magicfingers)





(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher)



Australian War Graves *(Photo courtesy of Neil Bright 2020)*

Photo of Gunner J. Chalmers' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England.

***[Note: The CWGC headstone for Gunner Chalmers has the incorrect year of death. CWGC were advised at the time of researching – August 2021 of the error.]*

****Update – see below for new headstone photos**



In March, 2022 a tour was being conducted through Brookwood Military Cemetery, England at the same time as Gunner James Chalmers' headstone was being replaced & thanks to Eugenie Brooks (Twitter) the moment was captured with the following photos. Also thanks to Helen Roberts for the final 2 photos.







Photo of Gunner J. Chalmers' NEW Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England. (Replaced March, 2022)



(Photo courtesy of Helen Roberts)



(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher – Jan 2021)

