

**All Souls Cemetery,  
Kensal Green, London, England  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**SECOND LIEUTENANT**

**J. C. CHAMBERS MM**

**25TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**31ST JANUARY, 1917 Age 25**

*Think Of Him As The Same*

*I Say He Is Not Dead*

*He Is Just Away*

## John Cyril CHAMBERS

John Cyril Chambers was born in Brisbane, Queensland on 18th December, 1891 to parents Harry & Ellen Chambers (nee Earwaker). His birth was registered in 1892

John Cyril Chambers attended Brisbane Grammar School, Queensland.

The 1916 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Darling Downs, subdivision of Crow's Nest, Queensland listed John Cyril Chambers, Farmer, of Crow's Nest.

John Cyril Chambers was a 23 year old, single, Farmer from Crow's Nest, Queensland when he enlisted at Toowoomba, Queensland on 15th February, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 327 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as Mr H. Chambers, "Wyalla", Crow's Nest, Queensland.

Private John Cyril Chambers embarked from Brisbane, Queensland on HMAT *Aeneas (A60)* on 29th June, 1915 with the 7th Infantry Brigade, 25th Infantry Battalion "B" Company.

According to a letter written by his father on 14th September, 1920 regarding the 1914/15 Star, Private John Cyril Chambers was at Gallipoli from September, 1915 with his Battalion until the evacuation.

Private John Cyril Chambers disembarked at Alexandria from Mudros on H.T. *Hororata* on 9th January, 1916.

Private John Cyril Chambers was admitted to 7th Field Ambulance at Ismalia on 17th February, 1916 with Influenza. He was discharged to duty on 20th February, 1916 & rejoined his Battalion the same day.

Private John Cyril Chambers proceeded to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) from Alexandria on 14th March, 1916 & disembarked at Marseilles, France on 19th March, 1916.

Private John Cyril Chambers was recommended for the Military Medal on 18th June, 1916 for "*showing coolness and courage on patrol, particularly in bombing an enemy patrol. In another occasion he bombed the enemy trenches while under machine gun rifle fire.*"

Private John Cyril Chambers was admitted to 7th Field Ambulance on 22nd June, 1916 with Gonorrhoea. He was transferred to Casualty Clearing Station then admitted to No. 1 Command Depot on 23rd June, 1916. On 24th June, 1916 Pte Chambers was transferred to Hospital at Havre, France & admitted to 9th Stationary Hospital, Havre on 25th June, 1916. He was transferred to 18th General Hospital at Camiers, France on 30th June, 1916. Pte Chambers was discharged to Base Details on 4th September, 1916.

Private John Cyril Chambers joined Divisional Base from Hospital on 4th September, 1916. He rejoined his Battalion on 21st September, 1916.

Private John Cyril Chambers was detached from 25th Battalion on 2nd October, 1916 & proceeded to England to join No. 4 Officers Cadet Battalion at Oxford for 3 months training. He joined the No. 4 Officers Cadet Battalion on 5th October, 1916.

### 25th Battalion

The 25th Battalion was raised at Enoggera in Queensland in March 1915 as part of the 7th Brigade. Although predominantly composed of men recruited in Queensland, the battalion also included a small contingent of men from Darwin. The battalion left Australia in early July, trained in Egypt during August, and by early September was manning trenches at Gallipoli.

At Gallipoli the 7th Brigade reinforced the depleted New Zealand and Australian Division. The 25th Battalion, however, had a relatively quiet time because the last major Allied offensive had been launched, and turned back, in the previous month. It left the peninsular on 18 December 1915.

After further training in Egypt, the 25th Battalion proceeded to France. Landing on 19 March 1916, it was the first AIF battalion to arrive there. Now fighting as part of the 2nd Division, it took part in its first major battle at Pozieres between 25 July and 7 August in the course of which it suffered 785 casualties. After a spell in a quieter sector of the front in Belgium, the 2nd Division came south in October to attack again in the Somme Valley. The 25th Battalion took part in two attacks to the east of Flers, both of which floundered in the mud.

*(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

Private John Cyril Chambers was awarded the Military Medal. The notification was made in the *London Gazette* on 27th October, 1916 & in the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* on 19th April, 1917. A letter dated 6th February, 1918 was sent to Base Records by Harry Chambers, father of the late Private John Cyril Chambers, stating that a receipt for the Military Medal awarded to his son the late 2nd Lieutenant J. C. Chambers was enclosed. Another letter was written to Base Records on 22nd June, 1918 by Harry Chambers, father of the late Private John Cyril Chambers, stating that the Military Medal had been forwarded to him some time ago & he was asking "for what particular deed this was awarded" to his son. A receipt for the Military Medal was signed for by his father – Harry Chambers on 1st October, 1921.



**Obverse and reverse of Military Medal and ribbon**

Having been passed as qualified for commission, Private John Cyril Chambers was appointed 2/Lieutenant on 25th January, 1917. He completed his Course of Instruction at Oxford on 26th January, 1917 & reported at Administrative Headquarters, London. He was granted leave from 26th January, 1917 to 3rd February, 1917 inclusive. He was allotted to Infantry Reinforcements.

Second Lieutenant John Cyril Chambers died on 31st January, 1917 at Imperial Hotel, Southampton Row, London, England from wounds self-inflicted. (Note: Some forms in the service Record file of John Cyril Chambers record that he died on 26th January, 1917 from a gunshot wound to head – self inflicted) A Court of Enquiry was held on 4th February, 1917 & found he was "dead, with wound." The Jury returned an open verdict.

A letter was written by Harry Chambers, "Wyalla" Crows Nest, via Toowoomba, Queensland on 8th February, 1917 stating in the "Brisbane Courier" of Tuesday Feb 6th a cabled account appears "*An open verdict was returned at the inquest on the body of John Cyril Chambers, formerly of Queensland, Farmer, who was found shot in a bedroom at the Imperial Hotel, with a revolver in his right hand. He had served with the Australians at Gallipoli & in France where he won the Military Cross. He completed training with the Officers Cadet Battalion, & was awaiting a Commission. He left a cheerful letter address to his sister. I beg to state the deceased soldier was my son, everything points to this. He enlisted Jan 26th 1915 at Toowoomba & proceeded to Enoggera Camp, Brisbane. Private J. C. Chambers No. 327 B Co. 25th Battalion A.I.F. I shall be glad if you could please confirm if correct..... I might say, that at first I feel very much annoyed & angry to think that the Military Authorities allowed this Cable to appear in the papers. But on second thought I realized that I could not justly blame them.*"

Newspaper article – *The Brisbane Courier*, Queensland – 6 February, 1917:

## **SUICIDE OF A QUEENSLAND**

### **HOLDER OF A MILITARY CROSS.**

*London, Sunday*

*“An open verdict was returned at the inquest on the body of John Cyrel Chambers, formerly a Queensland farmer, who was found shot in a bedroom at the Imperial Hotel, with a revolver in his right hand. He had served with the Australians at Gallipoli and in France where he won the Military Cross. He completed training with the Officers’ Cadet Battalion, & was awaiting a commission. He left a cheerful letter addressed to his sister.*”

Base Records wrote to A/Secretary on 2nd March, 1917 regarding the late No. 327 Private J. C. Chambers, 25th Batt. A.I.F. *“The cable advising that this soldier had died of wounds (self inflicted) was received at 5 pm on 4.2.17 and the Commandant 1st Military District was advised by letter-gram at 9.30 am on 6.2.17. This, however, would not be despatched until that night, reaching Brisbane on the morning of the 7th February. The release to the Press of the message quoted in the Cutting attached, seems to be a matter for the D.C.C. and as such instance are not very numerous, it is suggested that perhaps the D.C.C. could enquire as to whether such a message had been received and despatched as before allowing the same to be published.”*

A letter dated 14th February, 1917 was sent from Base Records to Mr H. Chambers advising that his son, *“No. 327, Private J. C. Chambers, 25th Battalion, died on the 31st January 1917 at Leicester Square Hospital, London, of wounds, self-inflicted.”*

A death for John C. Chambers, aged 25, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of St. Giles, London, England.

Second Lieutenant John Cyril Chambers was buried on 7th February, 1917 in All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green, London, England – Plot reference 173 and 174.9 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

A letter was sent on 1st March, 1917 sent from Base Records to Mr H. Chambers advising the loss of his son, the late No. 327 Private J. C. Chambers, 25th Battalion, *“the result of the Court of Inquiry as received by cable shows that he was found dead, with wound, at the Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, London; the Jury returned open verdict. The body was then removed from Mortuary to Endell Street Hospital.”*



**Postcard of the Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, London**

Madge L. Chambers, Nurse, General Hospital, Brisbane, sister of the late John Cyril Chambers, wrote to Base Records on 26th March, 1917, stating *“On February 6th of this year a paragraph appeared in the Brisbane Courier in which it stated that my brother John Cyril Chambers of the 25th Battalion A.I.F., was found shot in his room at the Imperial Hotel, London. Four days later we received a cable from the Military Authorities stating that he died in Fargo Military Hospital. I understand from the Red Cross Society that the above Hospital is situated at Rolleston on Salisbury Plain, I am rather puzzled to understand how the boy could die in both places situated as they are some distance apart. If the Hospital were in London he could easily have been taken there after he was found. I would be very glad if you could give me any information, as this uncertainty is awful.”* Base Records replied on 4th April, 1917 stating that they were enclosing a letter which was addressed to her father but was returned through the post as insufficiently addressed, The letter they stated contained all the information available to date.

A letter was written from Base Records to Mr H. Chambers, father of the late 2/Lieut. J. C. Chambers, M.M., 25th Battalion, advising that the remains of his son had been exhumed from the former site & re-interred in Grave No. 5 Section 174, Kensal Green Cemetery, London. The letter stated that *“This work is carried out with every measure of care and reverence in the presence of a Chaplain.”* (Note: Other letters to next-of-kin of Australian Soldiers buried in Kensal Green Cemetery, London were sent in April, 1920 regarding the exhumation.)

A War Pension was applied for by Harry Chambers, father of the late 2nd Lieutenant John Cyril Chambers, “B” Coy., 25th Battalion but was rejected on the grounds that *“you were not dependent on your late son during the 12 months prior to his enlistment.”*

Second Lieutenant John Cyril Chambers was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Second Lieutenant Chambers’ father – Mr Harry Chambers, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent August, 1921 & Plaque sent December, 1922).

Madeline Louise Annat, sister of the late Second Lieutenant John Cyril Chambers, applied for the Gallipoli Medallion in respect of the service of her brother John Cyril Chambers, 327, 25th Infantry Battalion, on 6th July, 1967.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Second Lieutenant John Cyril Chambers, aged 25, of 25th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Harry and Sarah Ellen Chambers, of Wyaela, Crow’s Nest, Queensland, Australia. Born at Crow’s Nest, Queensland.

Second Lieutenant J. C. Chambers is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 104.



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

Private J. C. Chambers is mentioned in the Roll of Honour in the Brisbane Grammar School Magazine, June 1917 edition.

J. C. Chambers is remembered on the Brisbane Grammar School Memorial Library WW1 Honour Board.



War Memorial Library, c 1925 Brisbane Grammar School

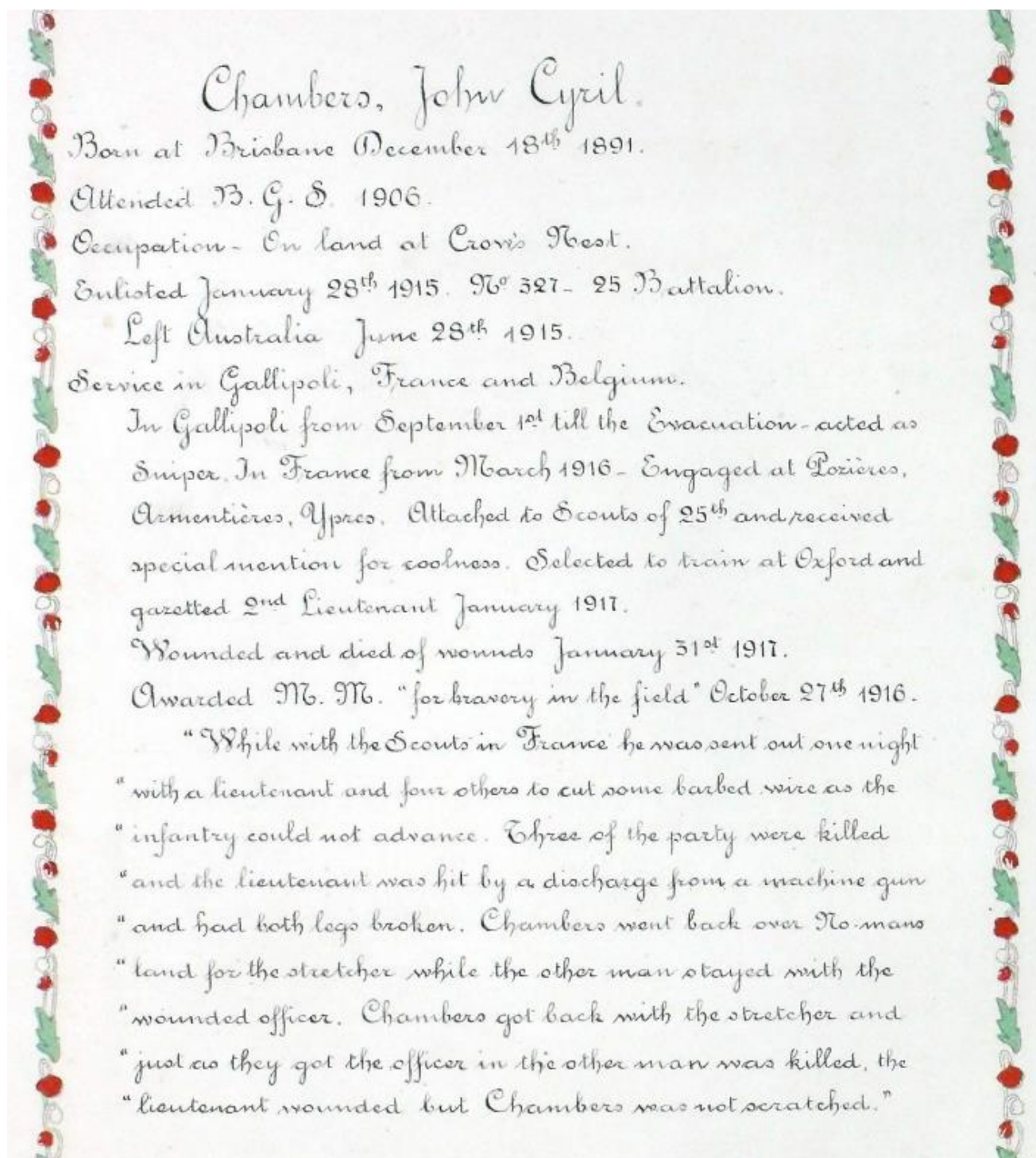
(Photo courtesy of Brisbane Grammar School)



Brisbane Grammar School Memorial Library WW1 Honour Board

(Photo from Queensland War Memorial Register – Lesley McBurney)

John Cyril Chambers is remembered in The Golden Book at Brisbane Grammar School. The volumes contain the names and records of the known 1020 Old Boys who volunteered for service in the First World War. Each name and record occupies an entire page, surrounded by an interlacing border of Flanders poppies.



*Born at Brisbane December 18th 1891*

*Attended B. G. S. 1906*

*Occupation - On land at Crow's Nest.*

*Enlisted January 28th 1915 no. 327 - 25 Battalion*

*Left Australia June 28th 1915*

*Service in Gallipoli, France and Belgium.*

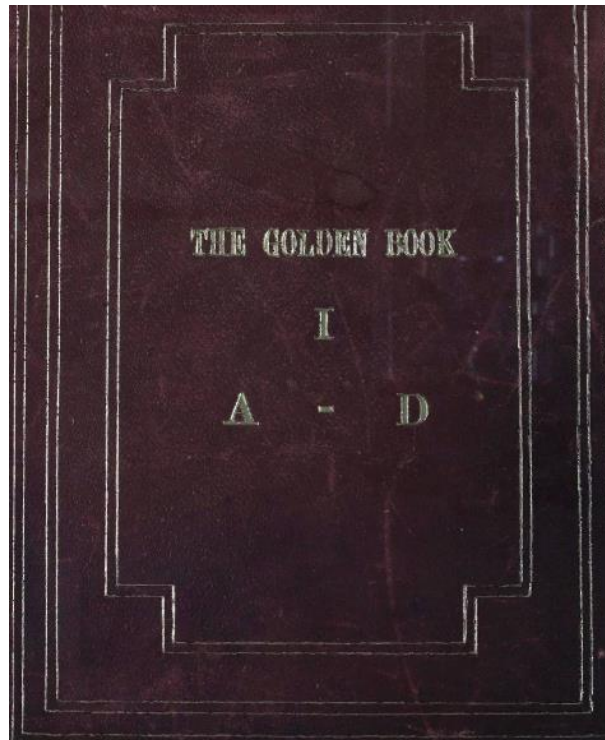
*In Gallipoli from September 1st till the Evacuation – acted as Sniper. In France from March 1916 – Engaged at Pozieres, Armetieres, Ypres. Attached to Scouts of 25th and received special mention for coolness. Selected to train at Oxford and gazetted 2nd Lieutenant January 1917.*

*Wounded and died of wounds January 31st 1917.*

*Awarded M.M. “for bravery in the field” October 27th 1916.*

*“While with the Scouts in France he was sent out one night  
“with a lieutenant and four others to cut some babed wire as the  
“infantry could not advance. Three of the party were killed  
“and the lieutenant was hit by a discharge from a machine gun  
“and had both legs broken. Chambers went back over No mans  
“land for the stretcher while the other man stayed with the  
“wounded officer. Chambers got back with the stretcher and  
“just as they got the officer in the other man was killed, the  
“lieutenant wounded but Chambers was not scratched.”*

(Photo courtesy of Brisbane Grammar School)



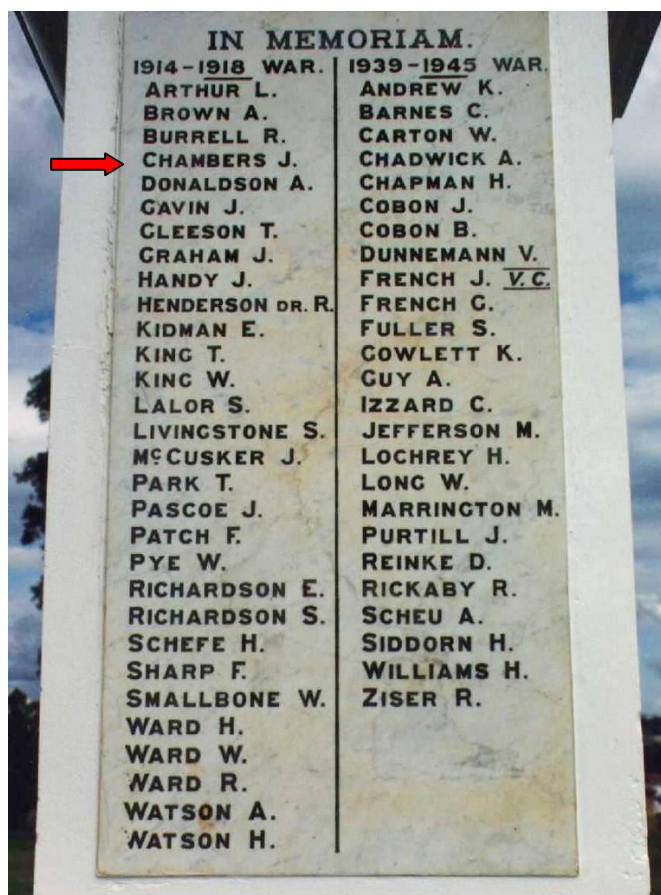
**John Cyril Chambers' page in The Golden Book, Brisbane Grammar School**



J. Chambers is remembered on the Crows Nest War Memorial located in Centenary Park, William Street, Crows Nest, Queensland.



Crows Nest War Memorial (Photos from Queensland War Memorial Register – Shirley & Trevor McIvor)



(85 pages of Second Lieutenant John Cyril Chambers' 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*



**John Cyril Chambers**

## **Newspaper Notices**

### **PERSONAL NOTES**

CROW'S NEST, February 7

John Cyril Chambers, who, as reported by cable in Tuesday's "Courier," was found shot in a London hotel, was a well-known resident in this district, and was highly esteemed. His parents are prominent in the civil life of Crow's Nest, and most earnest workers in all patriotic efforts. Young Chambers (known to his friends as "Sid' Chambers) was only 25 years of age, and enlisted in the early part of the war while still only convalescent after an operation for appendicitis. He tried to get into the Light Horse, but there were no vacancies and he joined the ranks of the Infantry at Enoggera. He went through the campaign in Gallipoli and afterwards was sent to France, where he worked as a non-commissioned officer to the admiration of his officers. In France "Sid" 'Chambers did great work as a Scout. Some weeks ago news reached Crow's Nest that he had won the Military Cross, and although the official news never appeared, the cablegram in Monday's "Courier" confirmed the statement. Evidently the incident which won him this distinction was the following: – While with the Scouts in France young Chambers was sent out one night with a

lieutenant and four others to cut some barbed wire, so that the Infantry could advance, three of the party were killed, and the lieutenant was hit by machine gun, and both legs were broken. Chambers went back over "No Man's Land" for the stretcher, while the other man stayed with the wounded officer. Chambers got back with the stretcher, and just as they got in the other man was killed. Out of the party of six, four were killed, and the lieutenant wounded, but Chambers was not scratched. Recent letters to his parents advised his presence in England and that he had been selected out of a battalion to go to Oxford for training for a commission. He was evidently in London waiting for his commission when he met his death.

*(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 8 February, 1917)*

---

## **ROLL OF HONOUR**

CHAMBERS – On January 31st., at Fargo Military Hospital, London, Lieut. John Cyril (Cyd) Chambers, M.C. (of Gallipoli and France), eldest son of Mr and Mrs Harry Chambers, Crow's Nest; age 25 years.

For King and Country.

*(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 15 February, 1917)*

---

## **AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES**

Australian casualty list No. 272 was issued to-night and reads:.....

Died of Wounds

Cadet J. C. Chambers (Crow's Nest).

*(The Capricornian, Rockhampton, Queensland – 17 February, 1917)*

---

## **A HERO'S FINISH**

An open verdict was returned at the inquest at Holborn (Eng.) on February 32rd on John Cyril Chambers, 25, a cadet, of the Australian Imperial Forces, who was found shot on February 1 at the Imperial street, Russell-square. According to the evidence, Chambers was formerly a Queensland farmer. He took part in the Gallipoli campaign, and for distinguished service in France was awarded the Military Cross. Leaving hospital, he came to England, and in October, 1916, was sent into the Officers' Cadet Battalion at New College, Oxford. He finished his course of training, and successfully passed his examination, and was waiting to be gazetted to a regiment. Granted a week's leave, he took apartments at the Imperial Hotel, and later was found by the chambermaid seated in a chair, dead, with a revolver in the right hand. The thumb was still on the trigger, and blood was coming from a wound in the forehead. A letter was found addressed to his sister, and written in a happy and cheerful tone, and it was stated that he was the last man one would think likely to take his life, so bright was his disposition.

*(Warwick Examiner and Times, Queensland – 21 April, 1917)*

---

## **FOR BRAVERY**

### **Awards to Queenslanders**

#### **Military Medals**

No. 327, Pte J. C. Chambers (since deceased), Infantry

*(Cairns Post, Queensland – 21 May, 1917)*

---

## ROLL OF HONOUR

CHAMBERS – In proud memory of Lieut. John Cyril (Cyd) Chambers, M.C., 25th Bat. (Gallipoli and France), who died in London on January 31st, 1917, while on active service. Aged 25 years.

Think of him as the same, I say

He is not dead, he is just away.

Inserted by his parents, Crow's Nest, and sister, General Hospital, Brisbane.

*(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 31 January, 1918)*

---

## ROLL OF HONOUR

CHAMBERS – In proud memory of Lieut. John Cyril Chambers (Sid), M.M., 25th Batt., Anzac and France, who died in London, on Jan. 31st, 1917, aged 25 years.

Who suffered that we might all be saved.

Inserted by his parents, Crow's Nest, and sister, General Hospital, Brisbane.

*(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 31 January, 1919)*

---

## ROLL OF HONOUR

CHAMBERS – In proud memory of Lieut. John Cyril (Sid) Chambers, M.M., 25th Battalion, who died in London, while on active service, January 31st, 1917.

Who suffered that we might be saved.

Inserted by his parents, Crow's Nest.

*(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 31 January, 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)*

Second Lieutenant J. C. Chambers does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*Think Of Him As The Same*

*I Say He Is Not Dead*

*He Is Just Away*

## All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green, London, England

All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green contains burials of both wars - 538. Half of the 482 First World War graves form a plot in the south-west section of the cemetery, the rest form small groups or are scattered throughout the cemetery. All of the 5s Second World War graves are scattered. There are also 2 non war burials here. A screen wall in the First World War plot (Sect. 213) records the names of casualties of both wars whose graves could not be individually marked. Also recorded on the wall are the names of five servicemen whose remains were cremated in Kensal Green Crematorium.

*(Information from CWGC)*



**All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green** *(Photo by Rodney Burton)*



**Cross of Sacrifice - All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green** *(Photo by Chris Doran)*

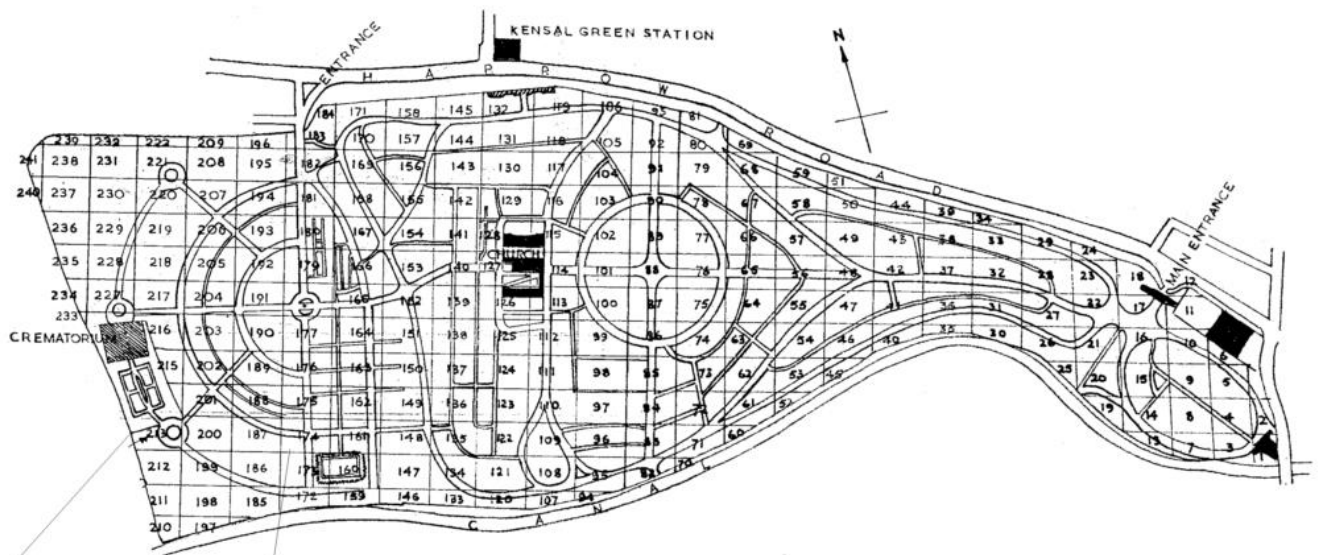
Photo of Second Lieutenant J. C. Chambers' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green, London, England.



*(Photo courtesy of Francios Greeff)*



All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green (Photo courtesy of Francios Greeff)



Sect. 213 : Main U.K. and N.Z. Plot.  
Sect. 173 and 174 : Main Dominion Plot