

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

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



4804 PRIVATE

J. T. CRANE

25TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

17TH MAY, 1917 Age 34

Lost Awhile

Our Treasured Love

Gain'd For Ever Safe Above

John Thomas (Jack) CRANE

Jonathan Thomas Crane was born at Drayton, Toowoomba, Queensland on 20th September, 1881 to parents Thomas and Annie Catherine Crane (nee Oldenburg).

Jonathan Thomas Crane attended North State School, Toowoomba, Queensland.

The 1903 & 1905 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Darling Downs, subdivision of Toowoomba, Queensland recorded Jonathan Thomas Crane, Labourer, of Jones Street.

Jonathan Thomas Crane married Catherine Jane Boodle on 24th February, 1909 in Queensland.

The 1912 & 1913 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Maranoa, subdivision of Goondiwindi, Queensland recorded Jonathan Thomas Crane, Bookkeeper & his wife Catherine Jane Crane, Home Duties, of Francis Street, Goondiwindi.

Births were registered in Queensland to the following children of Jonathan Thomas & Catherine Jane Crane (nee Boodle) – George Thomas Crane (born 23rd January, 1910; died 23rd January, 1910); Jessie Margaret Crane (born 19th January, 1911) & May Catherine Crane (born 10th August, 1913).

The 1913 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Darling Downs, subdivision of Highfields, Queensland recorded Jonathan Thomas Crane, Butter Cutter & his wife Catherine Jane Crane, Home Duties, of Harlaxton.

The 1916 & 1917 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Darling Downs, subdivision of Highfields, Queensland recorded Jonathan Thomas Crane, Butter Cutter of Harlaxton. An "Annie Catherine Crane" was listed at Harlaxton.

John Thomas Crane was a 33 year old, married, Butter-cutter from Klein Street, Toowoomba, Queensland when he enlisted on 13th November, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 4804 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Catherine Jane Crane, Klein Street, Toowoomba, Queensland. He had 2 children at the time of enlisting.

Private John Thomas Crane was posted to No. 10 Depot Battalion on 16th December, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to 36th Battalion on 22nd January, 1916 then transferred on 18th February, 1916 to 42nd Battalion. Private Crane was transferred to 12th Reinforcements of 25th Battalion on 7th April, 1916.

Private John Thomas Crane embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on RMS *Mooltan* on 12th April, 1916 with the 7th Infantry Brigade, 25th Infantry Battalion, 12th Reinforcements.

May Catherine Crane, daughter of Jonathan Thomas & Catherine Jane Crane (nee Boodle), died on 2nd May, 1916.

Private John Thomas Crane embarked from Fremantle, Western Australia on RMS *Mooltan* on 28th August, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 21st September, 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 John Thomas Crane proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 16th November, 1916 on S.S. *Victoria* from 7th Training Battalion. He was posted to Base at Etaples, France on 17th November, 1916 & proceeded from there on 30th November, 1916 to join his Unit. Private Crane joined 25th Battalion on the Field on 2nd December, 1916 from Reinforcements.

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.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private John Thomas Crane was admitted to 7th Field Ambulance then transferred to 39th Casualty Clearing Station on 9th December, 1916. He was transferred to Ambulance Train on 14th December, 1916 & admitted to 25th Stationary Hospital at Rouen, France on 15th December, 1916 with Dysentery. Private Crane was transferred to England on Hospital Ship *St Andrew* on 2nd January, 1917.

Private John Thomas Crane was admitted to 3rd Southern General Hospital (Cowley Section) in England on 3rd January, 1917 with Dysentery (slight). He was discharged from 3rd Southern General Hospital on 12th February, 1917.

Private John Thomas Crane was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, England on 13th February, 1917 from Larkhill, Wiltshire.

Private John Thomas Crane was admitted to The Sidney Hall Military Hospital at Weymouth, England on 22nd February, 1917 with Amoebic Abscess & was reported to be seriously ill.

Mrs C. J. Crane, Klein Street, Toowoomba, Queensland was advised by Base Records on 2nd March, 1917 that Private John Crane had been admitted to Hospital on 22nd February with an Abscess severe. Mrs Crane was advised again by Base Records on 20th March, 1917 that Private John Crane's condition was stationary.

On 2nd April, 1917 Base Records advised Mrs C. J. Crane that Private John Crane was improving. She was advised again on 10th May, 1917 that Private John Crane was slightly improved.

Mrs C. J. Crane, Klein Street, Toowoomba, Queensland was advised by Base Records on 17th May, 1917 that Private John Crane was progressing favourably.



The Sidney Hall Military Hospital

Private John Thomas Crane died at 4.10 am on 17th May, 1917 at Sidney Hall Military Hospital, Weymouth, Dorset, England from Dysentery & Pleurisy.

A death for John T. Crane, aged 33, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Weymouth, Dorset, England.

Private John Thomas Crane was buried on 19th May, 1917 in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England – Plot number III. C. 2707 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private John Thomas Crane - *Coffin was Elm Wood. "Reported to this depot from 3rd Southern General Hospital on 13.2.17 and was admitted to Hospital Hut No. 82, where he remained till 22.2.17 when he was transferred to Sidney Hall Military Hospital Weymouth. The cause of death was Pleurisy supervening on Dysentery and Malaria."*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private John Thomas Crane contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of the relatives to obtain any details into his death and burial. A reply was sent from E. L. McAllister, Sidney Hall, Weymouth which reads: *"Pte Crane died from Dysentery complicated by Pleurisy and was buried in the cemetery at Westham, Weymouth. The patient had been with us for some time, but I regret to say his condition was never very satisfactory and the doctor had little hopes of his ultimate recovery."*

Private John Thomas Crane requested in his Will dated 22nd February, 1917 that in the event of his death the whole of his property & effects be given to his wife – Catherine Jane Crane of Goondiwindi, Queensland.

A War Pension was granted to Catherine Jane Crane, "Allan Bank," Goondiwindi, Queensland, widow of the late Private John Thomas Crane, in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 20th July, 1917. A Pension was also granted to Jessie Margaret Crane, daughter of the late Private John Thomas Crane, in the sum of £1 per fortnight from 20th July, 1917.

Private John Thomas Crane was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Crane's widow - Mrs C. J. Crane, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent January, 1922 & Plaque sent August, 1922).

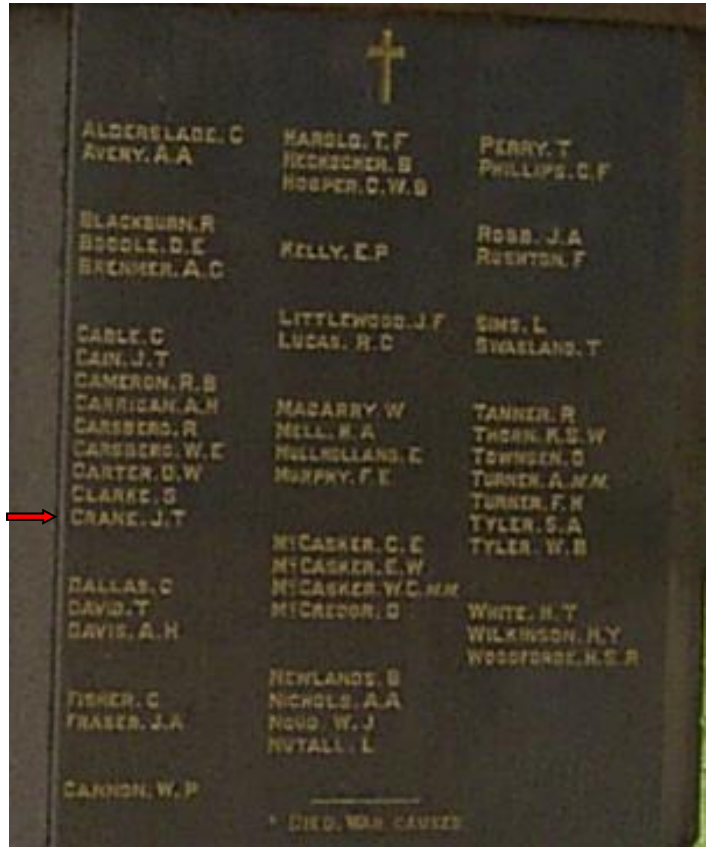
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John Thomas Crane – service number 4804, aged 34, of 25th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Thomas and Annie Crane; husband of Catherine Jane Crane, of Goondiwindi, Queensland.

Private J. T. Crane 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

J. T. Crane is remembered on the Goondiwindi War Memorial, located at Marshall & Moffat Streets, Goondiwindi, Queensland.



Goondiwindi War Memorial (Photo above from Monument Australia; below by Lankiveil)



J. T. Crane is remembered on the Toowoomba Roll of Honour, located in Toowoomba RSL Club, 549 Ruthven Street, Toowoomba, Queensland.



Toowoomba Roll of Honour (Photo from Monument Australia)

J. T. Crane & his 3 brothers are remembered on the Raff Street Methodist Church Roll of Honour, later the Uniting Church, which was located at Bridge Street & Raff Street, North Toowoomba, Queensland. This Church is now privately owned.

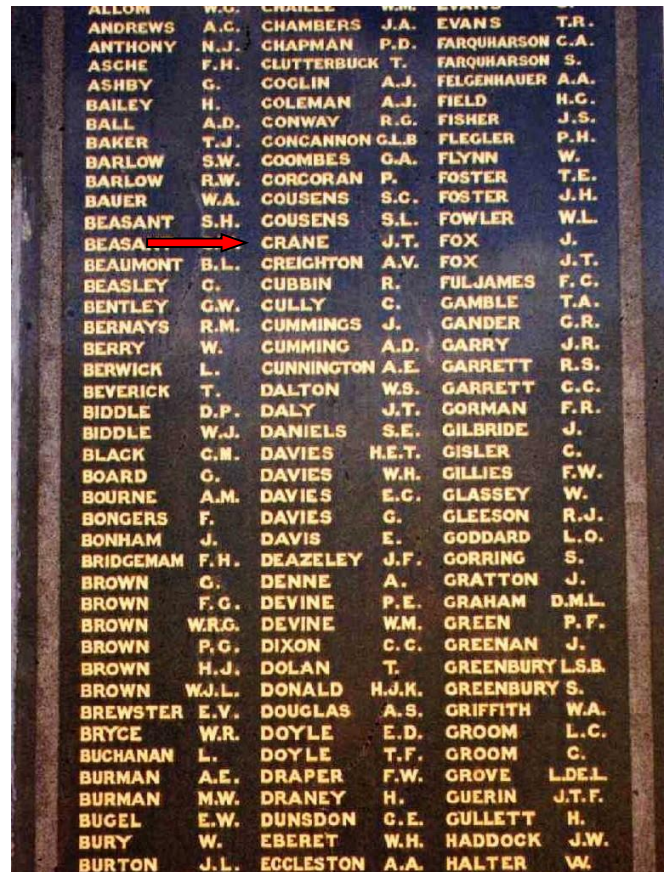


Former Raff Street Methodist Church, Toowoomba
(Photo above by John Huth; below from Queensland War Memorial Register)



Former Raff Street Methodist Church, Toowoomba Roll of Honour

J. T. Crane is remembered on the Toowoomba Mothers' Memorial, located at East Creek Park, Margaret Street, Toowoomba, Queensland.



Toowoomba Mothers' Memorial (Photo (left) by John Huth; (right) Queensland War Memorial Register)

(68 pages of Private John Thomas Crane'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



(Queenslander Pictorial – 15 July, 1916)



Private—John Thomas CRANE

Died of illness

Listed on WW1 Goondiwindi Memorial

(Photo from Discovering Anzacs – CareGoondiwindi4390)

Connected to Private John Thomas Crane:

Older Brother – Willian Charles Crane (b. 11 July 1879) – Enlisted 30 November, 1915 as a 37 year old, married. Contractor from Toowoomba, Queensland. He embarked from Sydney, NSW on RMS Mooltan on 12th April, 1916 with 7th Infantry Brigade, 25th Infantry Battalion, 12th Reinforcements as Private 4689.

Returned to Australia 10 September, 1917 with Rheumatic pains of muscle of limbs & back for Home Service.

Medically discharged from Australian Imperial Force on 15 December, 1917.

Entitled to British War Medal & Victory Medal.

Died 20 June, 1955 Toowoomba, Queensland.

Younger Brother – Stephen Edward Crane (b. 1888) – Enlisted 28 July, 1915 as a 27 year old, single, Labourer from Toowoomba. He embarked from Adelaide, South Australia on HMAT Geelong (A2) on 18th November, 1915 with 4th Light Horse Brigade, 11th Light Horse Regiment, 7th Reinforcements as Private 1545.

Returned to Australia 22 July, 1919. Discharged from Australian Imperial Force 29 October, 1919.

Entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal.

Died 3 September, 1977

Younger Brother – Herbert Crane (b. 13 Nov 1891) - Enlisted 6 December, 1915 as a 24 year old, married, Carter from Toowoomba, Queensland. He embarked from Sydney, NSW on RMS Mooltan on 12th April, 1916 with 7th Infantry Brigade, 25th Infantry Battalion, 12th Reinforcements as Private 4688.

Reported "Missing" in France – 3 / 4 May, 1917 then reported wounded in action – GSW to Hand.

Wounded in Action in France 2 September, 1918 – GSW to right Arm. Promoted Corporal 26 July, 1918.

Returned to Australia 14 January, 1919. Discharged from Australian Imperial Force 9 March, 1919.

Entitled to British War Medal & Victory Medal.

Died 20 January, 1980 Toowoomba, Queensland



Thomas Crane & sons (Photo from Debbie Keillor)

Newspaper Notices

CASUALTIES

280th LIST

ILL

J. T. Crane, Toowoomba (Ser)

(Daily Standard, Brisbane, Queensland – 20 March, 1917)

Roll of Honour

Queensland Casualties

The 306th Australian casualty list was released by the censor on June 1.

DIED – CAUSE NOT STATED

Pte J. T. Crane, Toowoomba, 17/5/17, p, r, ser. ill

(The Week, Brisbane, Queensland – 8 June, 1917)

PUBLIC NOTICES

RETURN THANKS

MR and MRS CRANE, Senr., of Jones street, Toowoomba, desire to Thank their many Friends for their kind sympathy in their time of sorrow in the death of heir son, J. T. Crane, who died in London of wounds received in action in France. Mrs J. T. Crane, of Goondiwindi, also returns thanks.

(Toowoomba Chronicle, Queensland – 29 June, 1917)

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

LIST No. 317

Died of Illness

Private J. T. Crane (Toowoomba – previously reported – died, cause not stated)

(Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton, Queensland – 3 July, 1917)

HEROES OF THE GREAT WAR

CRANE – In loving memory of our dear Son (Private J. T. Crane), who died from wounds in London Hospital, May 17, 1917.

In a soldier's grave he is sleeping,
 One of earth's bravest and best;
In our hearts we shall miss him for ever,
 Though we know he is only at rest.

The midnight stars are gleaming,
 On a grave I cannot see,
Where, sleeping without dreaming,
 Lies the one so dear to me.

Inserted by his loving Father and Mother.

He sleeps besides his comrades,
 In a hallowed grave unknown,
But his name is written in letters of love
 On the hearts he left at home.

Inserted by his loving Sisters and Brothers.

(Toowoomba Chronicle, Queensland – 17 May, 1918)

HEROES OF THE GREAT WAR

CRANE – In proud and loving memory of our dear son, Private J. T. Crane, who died in Weymouth Hospital, England on May 17th, 1917.

Just when his life was brightest,
Just when his hopes were best;
His country called; he answered,
Now in God's hand he rests.
Though lost to sight, to memory dear.

Inserted by his sorrowing parents; also brothers and sisters.

(Toowoomba Chronicle, Queensland – 16 May, 1919)

ROLL OF HONOR

CRANE – In fondest memory of my dear Son (Private L. T. Crane), 25th Battalion, who died in London Hospital May 17, 1917.

He did not shun his country's call,
He gave his best, his life, his all;
He died the helpless to defend-
An Australian soldier's noble end.

Inserted by his loving Parents

Rest, dearest Brother, sweetly rest,
We miss you most who loved you best.

Inserted by his loving Brothers and Sisters.

(Toowoomba Chronicle, Queensland – 18 May, 1920)

ROLL OF HONOR

CRANE – In loving memory of our beloved son Jack, who died of illness in London, Hospital, Weymouth, <ay 17, 1917.

There is a link death cannot sever,
Love and remembrance last for ever.

Inserted by his loving Parents.

(Toowoomba Chronicle, Queensland – 18 May, 1921)

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 7th July, 1921, to Mrs C. J. Crane, Klein Street, Toowoomba, Queensland, advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of her husband, the late No. 4804 Private J. T. Crane, 25th 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 J. T. Crane does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Lost Awhile Our Treasured Love

Gain'd For Ever Safe Above

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

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.



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.



(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 £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

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, Littleton, Chickerell 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
Cheset Close	Soldiers Huts
Sussex Road	Company Officers
Queensland Road	Regimental Institute
Kitchener Road	Minutemen Rifle Range
Corporation Road	Officers' Mess
Shorn 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 J. T. Crane's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England.



(Photo from Find a Grave – Janice Dennis)



Private A. Hayes (left) & Private J. T. Crane (right)

(Photo courtesy of Allan Wood)