

**Reading Cemetery,
Reading, Berkshire
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



412 SAPPER

M. CUNNINGHAM

1ST AUSTRALIAN TUNNELLING CORPS

8TH MAY, 1918 Age 36

Michael CUNNINGHAM

Michael Cunningham was born at Wirrabera, near Murray Town, South Australia on 8th June, 1881 to parents James & Catherine Cunningham (nee Herring).

Catherine Cunningham, mother of Michael Cunningham, died on 15th November 1911 in the district of Perth, Western Australia. She was buried in Karrakatta Cemetery, Western Australia on 25th November, 1911.

Michael Cunningham attended the State School at Lorne, Victoria.

The 1903 & 1905 Australian Electoral Rolls for the district of Coolgardie, subdistrict of Laverton in Western Australia listed Michael Cunningham, Miner, of Augustus G.M. (Gold Mine).

The 1910 Australian Electoral Roll for the district of Coolgardie, subdistrict of Mount Magnet in Western Australia recorded Michael Cunningham, Miner, of Sandstone.

Michael Cunningham had been President of the Miners' Union, Laverton in 1912 & President of Miners' Union, Comet Vale in 1913 & 1914.

The 1916 & 1917 Australian Electoral Rolls for the district of Kalgoorlie, subdivision of Mount Margaret in Western Australia recorded Michael Cunningham, Miner, of Beria.

Michael Cunningham was a 34 year old, single, Miner from Laverton, Western Australia when he enlisted on 16th February, 1916 with the Mining Corps – No. 1 Company of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 412 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his brother – James Cunningham, Secretary Miners' Union, Boulder City, Western Australia.

Private Michael Cunningham was posted to No. 3 Area on 16th February, 1916.

Sapper Michael Cunningham embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Ulysses (A38)* on 20th February, 1916 according to the First World War Embarkation Roll listed on the Australian War Memorial. The Statement of Service form for Michael Cunningham lists that he embarked from Australia as a Private on 8th March, 1916.

Private Michael Cunningham, according to his Statement of Service form lists that he was Sapper from 8th April, 1916 with Mining Corps then transferred to 1st Tunnelling – no date recorded.

Sapper Michael Cunningham disembarked at Marseilles, France on 5th May, 1916. He detrained at Hazebrouck, France on 8th May, 1916.

Sapper Michael Cunningham was admitted to 47th D.R.S. (Divisional Rest Centre) on 5th April, 1917 suffering from Pyrexia. He was taken to 6th Field Ambulance on 5th April, 1917 & admitted with Bronchitis. Sapper Cunningham was transferred to 10th Casualty Clearing Station on 10th April, 1917 then transferred to 2nd Ambulance Train on 13th April, 1917. Sapper Cunningham was admitted to 3rd Canadian General Hospital at Boulogne on 13th April, 1917. He was transferred to 7th Convalescent Camp on 20th April, 1917 with Bronchitis then transferred again on 23rd April to No. 3 Large Rest Camp.

Sapper Michael Cunningham was marched in from Hospital to A.G.B.D (Australian General Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 26th April, 1917. He proceeded to join the 1st Tunnelling Co. from A.G.B.D. at Etaples on 3rd May, 1917 & rejoined from Hospital on 3rd May, 1917.

Sapper Michael Cunningham was wounded in action on 10th June, 1917. He was admitted to 17th Casualty Clearing Station with gunshot wounds to leg. Sapper Cunningham was transferred by No. 15 Ambulance Train on 11th June, 1917 & admitted to 22nd General Hospital at Camiers, France on 11th June, 1917 with gunshot wound to right leg. Sapper Cunningham was invalided to England from Calais, France on 16th June, 1917 on Hospital Ship *Pieter de Coninch*.

Sapper Michael Cunningham was admitted to Kitchener Military Hospital at Brighton, England on 16th June, 1917 with a gunshot wound to right leg "thro & thro". He was transferred to Hill House Hospital at Wadhurst on 2nd July,

1917 & discharged on 30th July, 1917 with his wound healed. Sapper Cunningham was transferred to Kitchener Hospital, Brighton, Convalescent Huts on 30th July, 1917 for massage treatments. He was discharged from Hospital on 6th August, 1917 for furlough & was to report to Perham Downs.

Sapper Michael Cunningham was marched in from furlough to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 20th August, 1917 & medically classified as A3 (Fit for overseas training camp, to which transferred for hardening, prior to rejoining unit overseas).

Sapper Michael Cunningham was marched out to Overseas Training Brigade from No. 1 Command Depot on 22nd August, 1917.

Sapper Michael Cunningham proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 12th September, 1917. He was marched in to A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot) at Rouelles, France on 14th September, 1917.

Sapper Michael Cunningham was marched out from A.G.B.D. on 21st September, 1917 & rejoined his Unit in the Field on 24th September, 1917.

Sapper Michael Cunningham was sent to Hospital sick on 21st November, 1917 & rejoined his Unit the same day.

Sapper Michael Cunningham's Casualty Form has stamped "Blue Chevrons Due" then proceeded on leave 5th March, 1918. He rejoined from leave on 21st March, 1918.

Sapper Michael Cunningham was sent to Hospital sick on 11th April, 1918. He was admitted to 90th Field Ambulance with P.U.O (Pyrexia (fever) of unknown origin). He was admitted to 6th Stationary Hospital on 12th April, 1918 then transferred to Ambulance Train 3 on 12th April, 1918. Sapper Cunningham was admitted to 26th General Hospital at Etaples, France on 12th April, 1918. He was placed on list for England on 13th April, 1918 & embarked on Hospital Ship "St. Andrews" on 15th April, 1918 suffering from Bronchitis.

Sapper Michael Cunningham was admitted to Reading War Hospital, Berkshire, England on 16th April, 1918 with P.U.O. – severe.

Sapper Michael Cunningham died at 1.55 am on 8th May, 1918 at Section 3, Reading War Hospital, Reading, Berkshire, England from Pneumonia.

A death for Michael Cunningham, aged 37, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Reading, Berkshire, England.

Sapper Michael Cunningham was buried at 2.30 pm on 11th May, 1918 in Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire – Screen Wall. 72. 16439. Those buried in Plot 72 & buried in other parts of the cemetery that do not have headstones marking their graves are named on the Memorial Screen Wall located near the Cross of Sacrifice. Their deaths are still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. From the burial report of Sapper Michael Cunningham - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The cortege moved off from the Hospital, the coffin on a Gun Carriage draped with the "Union Jack", followed by a party of 30 men of the R.A.M.C. Six Australian patients marched alongside the gun carriage and the bearers 6 in number were men of the R.A.M.C. Several comrades of deceased also followed the remains. At the graveside the last rites of the Roman Catholic Church were performed and the bugler sounded the "Last Post". Wreaths from the patients in the ward and the Red Cross Society were placed on the grave. The grave will be immediately turfed and an oak cross will be erected. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Certificates of death for his three sons were forwarded to James Cunningham of 10 Coronation Street, North Perth, Western Australia on 25th November, 1918 at his request. No. 412 Sapper M. Cunningham, 1st Tunnelling Company; No. 2354 Lance Corporal P. R. Cunningham, 11th Battalion & No. 2586 Private T. R. Cunningham, 11th Battalion.

Sapper Michael Cunningham was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Sapper Cunningham's father – Mr James Cunningham, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent December, 1921 & Plaque sent October, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Sapper Michael Cunningham – service number 412, aged 36, of 1st Coy., Australian Tunnelling Corps. He was the son of James and Katherine Cunningham, of 10 Coronation St., North Perth, Western Australia. Born at Werrabera, South Australia.

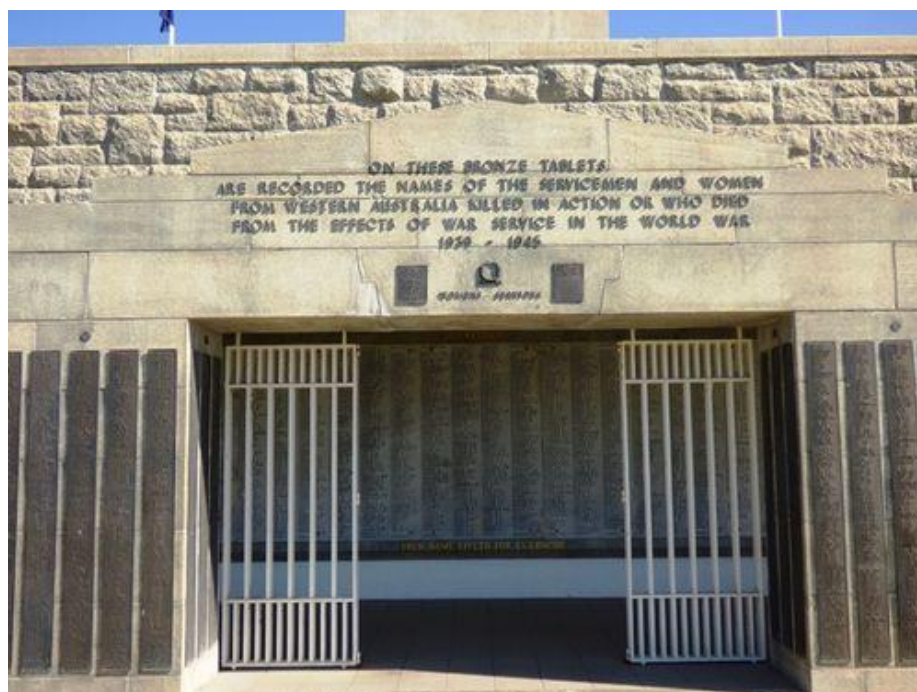
M. Cunningham is remembered on the Western Australia State War Memorial which is located at the top of Kings Park and Botanic Garden escarpment, ANZAC Bluff, Fraser Avenue, Perth, Western Australia. The memorial was developed around an 18 metre tall obelisk as the principal feature, which is almost a replica of the Australian Imperial Force Memorials erected in France and Belgium.

The heavy concrete foundations are supplemented by heavy brick walls which enclose an inner chamber or crypt. The walls surrounding the crypt are covered with The Roll of Honour; marble tablets which list under their units the names of more than 7,000 members of the services killed in action or as a result of World War One.



**Western Australia State War Memorial Cenotaph, Kings Park (above)
& (below) The Crypt with the Roll of Honour names**

(Photos from Monument Australia – Kent Watson/Sandra Tattersall/Graeme Saunders)





Corps of Engineers Panel (Photo courtesy of Gordon Stuart)

Michael Cunningham is remembered with a Memorial Plaque (M 312) on the Kings Park Honour Avenues. At the base of each commemorative tree is a plaque inscribed with details of the deceased: name, age, unit in which they served, nature of death, place of death, and who dedicated the plaque. Honour Avenue memorials commemorate service personnel who are listed at the State War Memorial, Kings Park. These soldiers enlisted in Western Australia, died overseas on active service, and were either buried overseas or have no known graves.



(Photos from Kings Park Botanic Gardens & Parks Authority)



Memorial Plaque on the Kings Park Honour Avenues

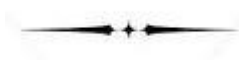
Sapper M. Cunningham is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 26.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(54 pages of Sapper Michael Cunningham'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) & National Archives



Connected to Sapper Michael Cunningham:

- Younger brother - Lance Corporal Phillip Roderick Cunningham, 2354, 11th Battalion, died of wounds as Prisoner of War on 16th April, 1917. Buried in Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery, Souchez, France – Plot IX. D. 8.
- Younger brother - Private Thomas Richard Cunningham, 2586, 11th Battalion, killed in action 2nd November, 1917. Buried in Tyne Cot Cemetery, Belgium – Plot XLII. C. 5.



(Photo from Western Mail, Perth, Western Australia – 31 Aug 1917)

Newspaper Notices

DIED OF GAS POISONING

SAPPER CUNNINGHAM

Mr J. Cunningham, M.L.C., has been informed of the death from gas, at the age of 37, of his brother, Sapper Michael Cunningham, on May 8 at the Reading Hospital, England. Sapper Cunningham, who leaves a wife and two children, resident in Perth, enlisted from Laverton in February, 1916. Prior to his enlistment he was employed upon the Beria gold mine. He was at one time president of the Miners' Union at Laverton and at Comet Vale, and was well known on the eastern goldfields. Two other brothers, Private Thomas Cunningham and Private Phil Cunningham, have also made the supreme sacrifice. The former was killed in action on November 2 1917, and the latter died whilst a prisoner of war in Germany on April 16, 1917.

(Kalgoorlie Miner, Western Australia - 28 May, 1918) & (The Daily News, Perth, Western Australia – 30 May, 1918) & (Geraldton Express, Western Australia - 31 May, 1918) & (The Daily News, Perth, Western Australia – 30 May, 1918) & (Westralian Worker, Perth, Western Australia – 31 May, 1918) & (The W. A. Record, Perth, Western Australia – 8 June, 1918) & (Camp Chronicle, Midland Junction, W.A. – 13 June, 1918)

The death in an English hospital as a result of gas poisoning, is reported of Sapper Michael Cunningham, a brother of Mr J. Cunningham, M.L.C., and well known at Laverton. He leaves a wife and two children, who live in Perth. Sapper Cunningham is the third of three brothers who have all been killed at the war.

(The Sun, Kalgoorlie, Western Australia – 2 June, 1918)

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

Hereunder is the 407th casualty list issued yesterday morning:-

Died from Other Causes

Spr. M. Cunningham (Boulder City)

(Sunday Times, Perth, Western Australia – 9 June, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

CUNNINGHAM – In loving memory of my dear husband, and dear daddy, Sapper Michael Cunningham, died on 8th May, 1918, from gas poisoning, at Reading War Hospital.

No one knows the silent heartache,

 Only those who've lost can tell;

I have lost the best and dearest,

 Without one word or last farewell.

Day by day the boys returning,

 Cheer the darkened homes of some;

But three hearts are yearning

 For their daddy who will never come.

-Inserted by his loving wife and children.

(Kalgoorlie Miner, Western Australia - 8 May, 1919)

ANZAC HEROES

CUNNINGHAM – In loving memory of my dear brother, Sapper Michael Cunningham, died May 8, of Spanish influenza.

I little thought when I said good-bye
We parted for ever and you were to die.

-Inserted by his loving sister, B. Smith, 94 Charles-street.

(The West Australian, Perth, Western Australia – 8 May, 1920)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for cemeteries and memorials in 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. In all 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth forces from WWI and WWII have been honoured and commemorated in perpetuity.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of its mandate, is responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead individually and equally. To this end, the war dead are commemorated by name on a headstone, at an identified site of a burial, or on a memorial. War dead are commemorated uniformly and equally, irrespective of military or civil rank, race or creed.

Not all service personnel have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. In some instances the relative chose to have their own memorial/headstone placed on the deceased's grave. These private headstones are not maintained by the CWGC as they have no jurisdiction to maintain them.

Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire, England

Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire contains 248 War Graves, 17 of those being from Australian Forces – World War 1.

The War Graves Plot is situated at the back of the cemetery, in the right hand corner from the entrance. A Screen Wall Memorial commemorates those buried in Plot 72 and those buried in other parts of the cemetery whose graves are not marked by headstones. There are 207 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war and 41 of the 1939-1945 war. There is also 1 Serbian burial.

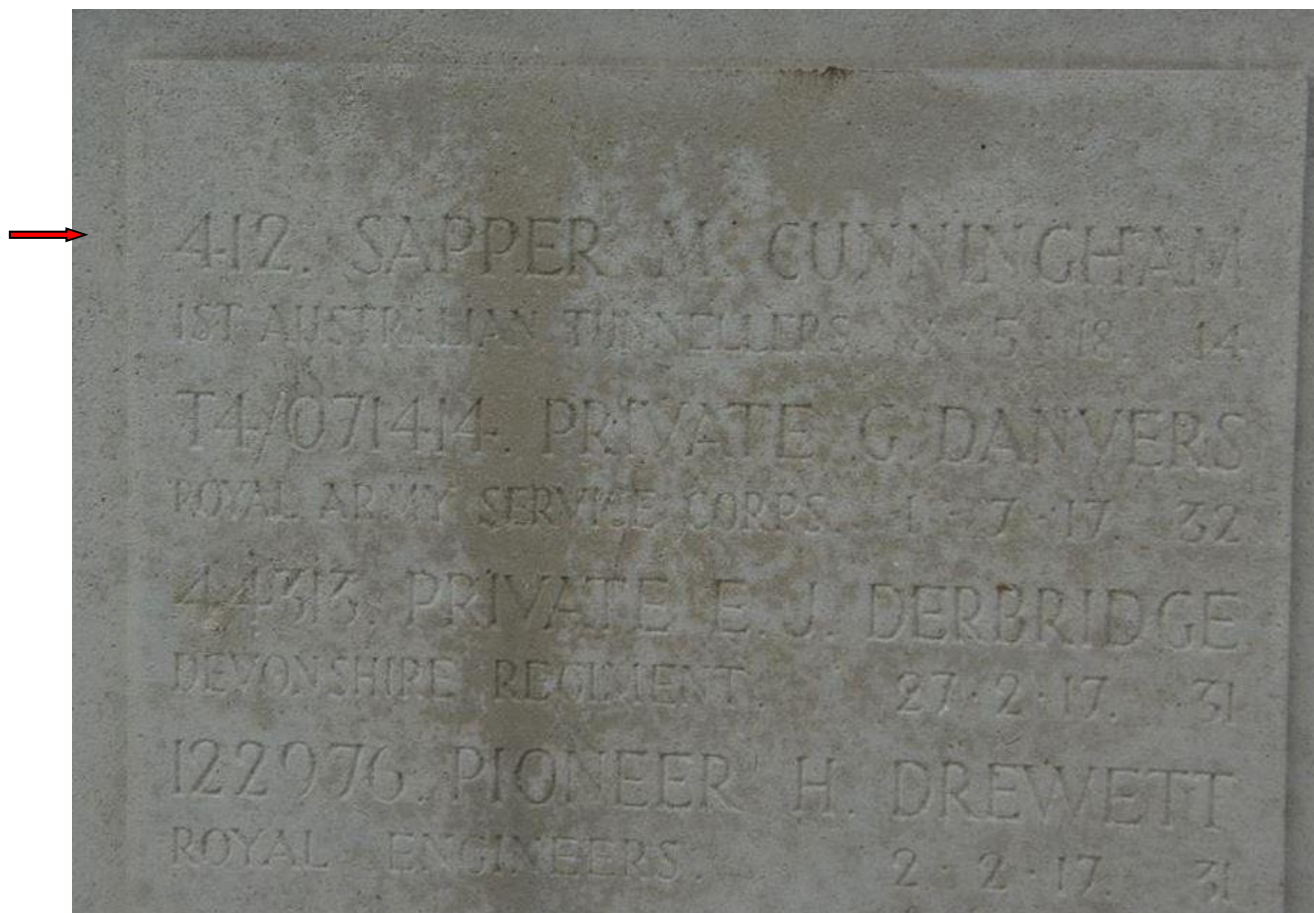
(Information & photos from CWGC)



Cross of Sacrifice & Memorial Screen Wall, Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire (Photos from CWGC)



Photo of Sapper M. Cunningham's name on the Screen Wall Memorial in Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of Phil Wood)