

**Llantwit Cemetery,  
Neath, Wales  
War Grave**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**4274 PRIVATE**

**A. E. CURNOW**

**21ST BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**11TH OCTOBER, 1916 Age 20**

## Arthur Ernest CURNOW

Arthur Ernest Curnow was born at Woodstock West, Victoria in 1895 to parents John & Martha Curnow (nee Tamlyn).

Arthur Ernest Curnow attended Woodstock West State School, Victoria.

A death for James Curnow, father of Arthur Ernest Curnow, was recorded in 1914 in Bendigo, Victoria.

Arthur Ernest Curnow was a 20 year old, single, Farmer from 81 Short Street, Bendigo, Victoria when he enlisted on 14th July, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Methodist & his next of kin was listed as Mrs Martha Curnow, 81 Short Street, Bendigo, Victoria. As Arthur was under the age of 21 his parents were required to sign their consent for their son to enlist for active service abroad. Mrs Curnow signed her consent & Arthur certified that his father was deceased.

Private Arthur Ernest Curnow was posted to "B" Company, at 16th Depot Battalion, Ascot Vale on 14th July, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred in September, 1915 to 8th Reinforcements of 21st Battalion at Bendigo then Williamstown. Private Curnow was written up for disobedience of orders on 23rd October, 1915. He was fined 5/-. Private Curnow was transferred to 10th Reinforcements of 21st Battalion at Broadmeadows on 10th December, 1915.

Private Arthur Ernest Curnow was admitted to Broadmeadows Clearing Hospital on 18th December, 1915 with Measles & discharged the same day to Glenroy Hospital with Measles & Rheumatism. He was discharged on 9th February, 1916.

Private Arthur Ernest Curnow, Service number 4274, embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Wiltshire (A18)* on 7th March, 1916 with the 6th Infantry Brigade, 21st Infantry Battalion, 10th Reinforcements.

Private Arthur Ernest Curnow proceeded to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) per "*Scotian*" from Alexandria on 9th May, 1916. He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 18th May, 1916.

Private Arthur Ernest Curnow was taken on strength of 2nd Australian Divisional Base Depot at Etaples on 5th June, 1916. He joined his Battalion in France on 4th August, 1916.

Private Arthur Ernest Curnow was wounded in action in France on 26th August, 1916. He was admitted to 4th Australian Field Ambulance on 26th August, 1916 with gunshot wounds to right arm (fracture). Private Curnow was then transferred & admitted to 9th General Hospital, Rouen, France on 28th August, 1916. He embarked on Hospital Ship *Asturias* at Havre for England on 3rd September, 1916 with gunshot wounds to right arm.

### **21st Australian Infantry Battalion**

The 21st Battalion was raised, as part of the 6th Brigade, at Broadmeadows in Victoria in February 1915. Its recruits hailed from all over the state. The 21st Battalion arrived in France in March 1916. In April, it was the first Australian battalion to commence active operations on the Western Front. During the battle of Pozieres it was engaged mainly on carrying duties, but suffered its heaviest casualties of the war during the fighting around Mouquet Farm.

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

#### War Diary Extract- 21st Battalion:

*26th August, 1916 – QUARRY*

*1 am – "D" Company moved from SAUSAGE VALLEY to QUARRY and "A" Company from TOM'S CUT to QUARRY.*

*4.45 am – Enemy position 54, 77, 27 attacked with "A" & "B" Companies plus 2 platoons "C" and "D" together with carrying parties. Left flank being protected by one Company 90 strong, 22nd Battalion.*

Attack was successful at point 77. Points 27 and 54 however proved to be very strong in men and machine guns. Reinforcements despatched to both these points and fresh efforts made to carry them by bombing but without success. Some of the Company operating on right flank appeared to go beyond their objective and in falling back suffered heavily. A further attempt on point 54 was made at 12.15 pm after heavy artillery had operated. Owing to artillery not successfully finding the range this attempt was again frustrated by enemy machine gun fire. An enemy trench mortar was captured & destroyed.

On relief of this Unit during night 26/27 position at point 77 and to the eastward handed over to 14th Battalion.

Casualties during 22nd/26th August

Officers	Killed	Wounded	Missing
	(3)	(7)	(3) (Note – actual names listed)
Other ranks	34	213	131

(Extract of War Diary information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Arthur Ernest Curnow was admitted to 3rd Western General Hospital, Neath, Glamorgan, Wales on 4th September, 1916 with gunshot wounds to right arm, fractured humerus - severe.

Mrs Curnow, mother of Private Arthur Ernest Curnow, was advised that her son had been admitted to Third Western General Hospital on 4th September with gunshot wounds to arm & a fractured humerus – severe.

Private Arthur Ernest Curnow died on 11th October, 1916 at 3rd Western General Hospital, Cardiff, Wales from wounds received in action in France - gunshot wounds right arm, fractured Humerus (amputated).

A death for Albert E. Curnow, aged 21, was registered in the December quarter, 1916 in the district of Neath, Glamorganshire, Wales.

Private Arthur Ernest Curnow was buried on 14th October, 1916 in Llantwit Cemetery, Neath, Wales – Plot number C.44 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Letter written from Hospital Matron to Private Arthur Ernest Curnow's mother:

(Letter courtesy of great-niece Philippa Johanson, Strathfieldaye, Victoria)

*"Dear Mrs Curnow, I am not standing on ceremony but writing as if I knew you. I feel so much that you would like to hear from me and know something more about your son, Private Curnow.*

*"I feel it must be a terrible blank to simply receive the official statement, and think it may be some comfort and consolation to you to know that during the short time he was here he made many friends, and that the staff, because of his bright manner and the courage he showed over what was always a painful dressing, had become very attached to him.*

*"We are feeling his death very much, especially I think because of the fact of his being so far away from all that loved him. One's heart went out to him and now in turn to you in your sorrow and loss. I hope this knowledge may help you and to know that if human skill and care could have saved him he would not have died. His poor arm was shockingly wounded, and he must have lost an enormous amount of blood, and heart failure from loss of blood caused the end.*

*"He had no pain in the last few hours and it was just a case of 'falling asleep' with just a gentle little sigh. Poor boy. I was with him at the last and my heart ached for you all so faraway, probably thinking of him safe in England and making satisfactory progress.*

*"Volta A. Billing, Matron, 3rd Western General Hospital, Neath Glam, South Wales. October 15, 1916."*

Private Arthur Ernest Curnow was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Curnow's mother – Mrs M. Curnow, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent November, 1921 & Plaque sent May, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Arthur Ernest Curnow – service number 4274, aged 20, of 21st Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Martha and the late James Curnow. Born at Woodstock West, Victoria, Australia.

Private Arthur Ernest Curnow is remembered on the Bendigo Roll of Honour located at the Soldiers Memorial Institute, Pall Mall, Bendigo, Victoria.



**Soldiers Memorial Institute, Bendigo** (Photos from Monument Australia)







**Soldiers Memorial Institute, Bendigo**

(Photo above from VWMA – Liz Williamson; below from Victorian Heritage Database)



Private A. E. Curnow is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 93.



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

(59 pages of Private Arthur Ernest Curnow'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*



**Private ARTHUR E. CURNOW,**  
Wounded; eldest son of Mrs. M. Curnow,  
of Short-street, Bendigo.

*(Photo from Bendigonian, Bendigo, Victoria – 26 October, 1916)*



**Private ARTHUR E. CURNOW,**  
Died from wounds; son of Mrs. M. Curnow,  
Short-street, Bendigo.  
(Vincent Kelly, photo.)

*(Photo from Bendigonian, Bendigo, Victoria – 2 November, 1916)*



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **THE NEW SOLDIERS**

The following passed the medical test last week at the Bendigo recruiting office, and will leave for camp in due course, most of them this week:- .....Arthur Ernest Curnow, farmer, Short-street, Bendigo;.....

*(Bendigonian, Bendigo, Victoria – 15 July, 1915)*

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### **WOUNDED SOLDIERS**

#### **PRIVATE A. E. CURNOW**

Mrs M. Curnow, of Short-street, received official advice during the week that her eldest son, Arthur E. Curnow, had been reported wounded. He was with his battalion in France, so it is presumed he has been wounded in one of the recent offensives by the British. The advice from the military authorities stated that the nature of his wounds were not yet known, nor the name of the hospital to which he has been admitted. These particulars will be forwarded later on.

*(Bendigo Advertiser, Bendigo, Victoria – 30 September, 1916)*

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### **228th CASUALTY LIST**

#### **WOUNDED**

##### **Victoria**

A. E. Curnow, Bendigo

*(Leader, Melbourne, Victoria – 7 October, 1916)*

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### **DIED FROM WOUNDS**

#### **PRIVATE ARTHUR E. CURNOW**

The sad intelligence was conveyed by the Rev. A. E. Wellard to Mrs M. Curnow, short-street, last week, that Private Arthur E. Curnow had died from gunshot wounds in the 3rd Western General Hospital, Cardiff, Wales, England. Colonel Hawker, in sending the message, also said, "convey sympathy of King, Queen and Commonwealth." Private A. E. Curnow, who was a cousin of the late Captain Curnow, recently killed in action, left Australia with reinforcements about the 8th of March last, and was recently severely wounded in action in France. According to the message received it was necessary to amputate the humerus or upper bone of the arm and it is presumed that the shock, in company with his other wounds, led to his death. Sergeant Willie Curnow, his younger brother, who left here with reinforcements some months ago, is also in France, and a recent letter stated that he was in the trenches. Much sympathy will be felt for Mrs Curnow and the family. It is about two and a half years ago that Mr Curnow died, and the present affliction comes upon the sorrows that were still felt. The family were formerly residents of Woodstock, where the two eldest sons are still in possession of the farm lands, and the news will be lamented by a large circle of friends, with who he was very popular.

*(Bendigo Advertiser, Bendigo, Victoria – 19 October, 1916) & (Bendigonian, Bendigo, Victoria – 26 October, 1916)*

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## LETTERS FROM SOLDIERS

### SERGEANT W. J. AND PRIVATE A. E. CURNOW

Mrs. Curnow and family, of Short-street, have received letters from Sergeant W. T. Curnow and Private A. E. Curnow (prior to the latter being wounded), from which we make the following extracts. Sergeant W. T. Curnow writes:--"I have at last received news from home, and feel that I must drop you a few lines in reply. When they told me there were half-a-dozen letters for me I thought it a joke. When they handed me seven letters you can just imagine what I felt like. It was just great to get some news from home. I met several of Bert's old battalion, and when I asked them, if they knew Captain Curnow they all said, 'Of course. He's the best man in the brigade.' They all give him a great name. Flo and all the others have good reason to be proud of him. I felt quiet relieved to know you are all keeping well. I don't worry about anything, but still like to get a letter once in four months." In another letter he says:--"This'll do me. Seven more letters today and two photos.'..... After enumerating, letters he continues:--"Well, that's 19 I've received now, so can't complain. Of course: I've not received all the letters you and others have written. Those I am getting now are later letters, the first having gone astray. .... Arthur is here in camp with me. We are going to try and get together. .... In another letter to his sister he says:- "We are still quartered in France. Arthur came over, but I was out and missed him, as he had a crowd of letters which he left behind for me to read. I have not had any news myself. This life isn't too bad; but one gets a bit tired of waiting here. We are all anxious to be up and have a go at the Bosche. We may go any day now. I suppose you will have read about the Australians in France. They did very well: didn't they? Part of our division and part of our battalion were in it. Arthur doesn't know anything about his battalion being shifted, so I may be there before him. I haven't seen anything of Carne boys since leaving Australia. I had a good chance of becoming Sergeant-major if I had been a bit older, but as it was I thought I was too young, and the other chap took the job. In future, however, I'll refuse no opportunities that offer, even if its the post of Brigadier-General. I suppose you all are worrying, but what's the use. We're here, and here to conquer or die; and we're here by our own choice. We're all as happy and contented as can be, and I can safely say we're none the worse in any way. Since leaving home you would be surprised how contented the boys get, and how anxious most of them are to be at it. We are always looking out for news of home, etc., of course; but that's only natural. You need not worry about us; at all events, we're satisfied."

On 13th August he wrote:- "Still in the same place. Things are very quiet. We are just waiting for our order to 'emshi,' and pending that are mostly killing time. Have just had an old 7th Battalion man in to see if any of the old 7th boys are in these lines. Have not had a line from Woodstock yet, but Arthur had a letter. Saw R. Scurr, also B. Dickens and J. Armstrong. They were all well. Went to a concert the other night given by Princess Victoria's concert party. It was O.K. It was given by artists of the highest class. I saw that Captain G. G. James had died of wounds. Poor young fellow, I felt awfully sorry for his people, but he was a real good young fellow, so they have some comfort in that.

Private A. G. Curnow, writing to his sister, said: "We've just had another big reading room put up, which was opened by the General. The days are beginning to get shorter, but are still very long. The weather is just the thing. We have a few Australian nurses in the hospitals now, and they can say what they like, I have not seen any girls that can compare with the Australians yet. We have the Rev. Mr. Gault, who used to be in Ballarat, as chaplain. He is liked by all the boys." In a letter to his mother he said:- "We went for a route march in the morning, and to finish up went down to the beach and went in for a bathe. I think we are starting to give the Germans a bit of rough handling at last, and it is not before it is time, but we can't finish in a day, but I'm like a good many others, and don't think it will go for much longer now. But all we can do at the present is to have faith in the Lord." Writing to his mother and sisters, under date 13th August, he says: --"Well, I have had my christening of warfare. Had four days in the trenches, but at present our battalion is out having a rest. ... I think we are making good progress on all fronts now, and are showing Kaiser Bill and his disciples what we are made of. I met Les Anderson and Jim Hutchinson, who were both well. To-day (Sunday) is a lovely day, just like a spring day in Australia. We had church parade this morning, after which we had sacrament, and are having service again this evening. There were a good many young fellows staying to sacrament, also our officer and adjutant. It is all right to think we have men like this to lead us. Our minister is real nice, and thinks the world of the boys."

(*Bendigo Advertiser*, Bendigo, Victoria – 24 October, 1916) & (*Bendigonian*, Bendigo, Victoria – 26 October, 1916)

## 491 CASUALTIES

### IN 238TH LIST

Died of Wounds

Pte A. E. CURNOW, Bendigo, 11/10/16

*(Bendigo Independent, Bendigo, Victoria – 27 October, 1916)*

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### THE LATE PRIVATE A. E. CURNOW

Mrs Curnow, Short-street, is in receipt of a very sympathetic letter from Mr and Mrs Michael, Neath, Glamorganshire, South Wales, in connection with the death of Private A. E. Curnow, who died in the Neath Hospital on 10th October from wounds received in France. In the letter was a photo of Private Curnow in bed in one of the wards, also a photo of the Neath Hospital. A clipping from the local Neath newspaper, also enclosed, read as follows : — "With full military honors Private A. E. Curnow, of the Australian Imperial Forces, was interred at Llantwit Cemetery, Neath, on Saturday afternoon. Private Curnow was wounded in France, and was admitted to the Neath and District War Hospital on 4th September. He was only 21 years of age. The coffin was covered with the Union Jack, and was preceded by the Britonferry Band playing 'The Dead March in Saul.' Amongst those present were : — The Mayor (Mr Thomas Jones), the rector (Rev. A. F. Evans), Rev. Henry Hughes (Britonferry), Rev. W. Bosward (Wesleyan superintendent, Neath), Chief-constable Wm. Higgins, and members of the hospital staff and patients. The service at the graveside was taken by the Rev. W. Bosward." In their letter Mr and Mrs Michael say : — "We have been constantly visiting your son since he has been a patient at the hospital, and by conversing with him we have learned to know you; he was never tired of speaking about you. . . I am enclosing a photo taken by one of the other patients . . . The other patient (in the photo.) is also from Australia, so you see he had friends all round him. . . I can well remember the last conversation; it was on Sunday, 8th October. Little did we think that it would be the last time that we would ever see him again. I seem to hear him calling the sister and asking her 'When can I go out?' and the sister replying, 'Not just yet.' . . . We, too, have lost a loved one, and can understand the feelings of those who are left to mourn. Our dear one is interred close to the spot where your son is laid to rest, and we shall keep his grave clean out of respect to his memory." The kindness of heart of Mr and Mrs Michael who were entire strangers, is greatly appreciated by the members of the Curnow family.

*(Bendigo Advertiser, Bendigo, Victoria – 15 December, 1916) & (Bendigonian, Bendigo, Victoria – 21 December, 1916)*

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Arthur E. Curnow is remembered on his parents' headstone in Eddington Public Cemetery, Victoria.



*(Photos courtesy Carol's Headstone Photographs)*



*In Loving Memory of*

*James Curnow*

*Died 28th March 1914*

*Martha Curnow*

*Died 15th Nov 1940*

*Arthur E Curnow A.I.F.*

*Died Wounds in Wales 8th Oct. 1916*



### 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)*

Private A. E. Curnow does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

### **Llantwit Cemetery, Neath, Wales**

Llantwit Cemetery, Neath contains 62 Commonwealth War Graves – 42 from World War 1 & 20 from World War 2.



**Entrance to Llantwit Cemetery, Neath**

*(Photo from Find a Grave – David Harding)*





**Llantwit Cemetery, Neath** (Photos from CWGC)  
red arrow marking Private A. E. Curnow's CWGC Headstone





Photo of Private A. E. Curnow's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Llantwit Cemetery, Neath, Wales.

