

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



Lest We Forget

World War 1



LIEUTENANT

P. N. DURHAM

51ST BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

22ND APRIL, 1917

Loved By All

Requiescat In Pace

Percy Neil DURHAM

Percy Neil Durham was born at Dum Dum, Bengal, India on 15th November, 1874** (as listed in the India, Select Births and Baptisms 1786 – 1947 database) to parents William and Mary Durham (nee Neal). He was baptised on 25th December, 1874 at Dum Dum, Bengal, India.

*[**Note – There is some discrepancy about the place & date of birth of Percy Neil Durham. According to information supplied by his widow for the Roll of Honour Percy Neil Durham was born at Meerut, India. Also Percy Durham listed his date of birth as 26th June, 1875 when he made an Application for a Commission in the Australian Imperial Force on 17th January, 1916. In another Application for Commission dated 31st January, 1916 – Percy Neil Durham stated his date of birth as 25th June, 1876.]*

Percy Neil Durham attended Le Martinere College, Lucknow, India.

William Durham, father of Percy Neil Durham, died on 7th June, 1890 at Meerut, India.

Mary Jane Durham, mother of Percy Neil Durham, died on 26th August, 1906 at Simla, Bengal, India.

Percy Neil Durham married Christian Chalmers McHardy in 1907 in the registration district of Gravesend, Kent, England.

Neil Durham, son of Percy & Christian Durham, was born on 1st January, 1910

Noreen Durham, daughter of Percy & Christian Durham, was born on 6th February, 1917 at 409 Punt Road, Prahran, Victoria.

The 1916 & 1917 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Fawkner, subdivision of Prahran, Victoria listed Percy Neil Durham, Soldier & his wife Christine Durham, Home Duties, of 407 Punt Rd, Prahran.

Percy Durham's widow stated from information provided for the Roll of Honour that he had the Queen Victoria & Queen Edward's South African War Medals & the Good Conduct Medal of the Imperial Army. She stated he has been Instructional Staff Melbourne & Sergeant Major with 3rd Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers, Imperial Army.

Percy Neil Durham made an application for a Commission in the Australian Imperial Force on 16th January, 1916. He stated he was aged 40 years & 7 months, married & had completed 21 years with Imperial Army & 1 year & 5 months as Instructional Staff C.M.F.

Percy Neil Durham was a 40 year old, married, Soldier in Permanent Forces from 409 Punt Road, Prahran, Victoria when was appointed 2nd Lieutenant in Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.) on 23rd February, 1916. His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his wife Mrs Christine Durham, 409 Punt Road, Prahran, Victoria. Percy Durham stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served for 21 years with British Army.

From Commonwealth of Australia Gazette – 2 March, 1916:

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

APPOINTMENTS

His Excellency the Governor-General, acting with the advice of the Federal Executive Council, has been pleased to approve of the following appointments being made to the Australian Imperial Force, to date from 23rd February, 1916:-

To be 2nd Lieutenants –

.....

Staff Sergeant-Major PERCY NEIL DURHAM, Instructional Staff

Second Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham was promoted to Lieutenant with effect from 1st July, 1916.

Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on RMS *Orontes* on 16th August, 1916 with the 10th Infantry Brigade, 37th Infantry Battalion, 2nd Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 2nd October, 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.

Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham was marched in to 10th Training Battalion in England from Australia on 10th October, 1916.

Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham proceeded overseas to France from England on 21st October, 1916. He proceeded from 4th A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 7th November, 1916 to his Unit. Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham was transferred from 37th Battalion to 51st Battalion on 9th November, 1916 & was taken on strength of 51st Battalion in France on 9th November, 1916 from 37th Battalion Reinforcements.

51st Battalion

The 51st Battalion was raised in Egypt in the first week of March 1916, as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Approximately half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 11th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 11th, the 51st was predominantly composed of men from Western Australia. The battalion became part of the 13th Brigade of the newly-formed 4th Australian Division.

Arriving in France on 12 June 1916, the 51st moved into the trenches of the Western Front within a fortnight. It fought in its first major battle at Mouquet Farm in August and September, and suffered casualties equivalent to a third of its strength in both of the attacks (14 August and 3 September) it launched. After Mouquet Farm, the battalion saw out the rest of the year, alternating between front-line duty, and training and labouring behind the line. This routine continued through the bleak winter of 1916-17.

Early in 1917, the battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

The Divisional Commander "*wishes to congratulate this Officer upon excellent results obtained at a Telescopic Sight School which terminated on 31st December, 1916.*"

Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham was sent to Hospital in France on 4th February, 1917. He was admitted to 12th Australian Field Ambulance on 4th February, 1917 with Parotitis then transferred to 38th Casualty Clearing Station. Lieutenant Durham was admitted to 38th Casualty Clearing Station on 5th February, 1917 with Mumps.

Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham was admitted to 2nd British Red Cross Hospital at Rouen, France on 23rd February, 1917 with Pulmonary T.B. slight. He was diagnosed with Tubercle of Lung & was transferred to Havre on 8th March, 1917 on No. 21 Ambulance Train. Lieutenant Durham embarked for England on Hospital Ship Formosa on 9th March, 1917.

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.

Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham was admitted to 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth, London on 9th March, 1917 with Pulmonary Tuberculosis & was reported to be dangerously ill.

Mrs C. Durham, 409 Punt Road, Prahran, Victoria, wife of Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham, was advised by Base Records on 17th March, 1917 that Lieutenant P. N. Durham had been admitted to the 2nd Red Cross Hospital, Rouen on 20th February, suffering from Pulmonary Tuberculosis, mild. Mrs Durham was advised again on 19th March, 1917 that Lieutenant Durham had been transferred to 3rd London General Hospital on 9th March, 1917, dangerously ill, suffering from Pulmonary Tuberculosis.

Mrs C. Durham, 409 Punt Road, Prahran, Victoria, wife of Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham, was advised by Base Records on 21st March, 1917 that Lieutenant P. N. Durham was seriously ill.

Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham died at 9 am on 22nd April, 1917 at 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth, London, England from Tubercle of Lung.

A death for Percy N. Durham, aged 42, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Wandsworth, Great London, England.

Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham was buried on 27th April, 1917 in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England – Australian Military Burial Ground - Plot number 179, 166

From the burial report of Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham - Coffin was good. Polished Oak. The deceased officer was buried with full Military Honours. Firing Party comprising 40 members of the South African Regiment under the Command of Lieut. Riley were in attendance. There was also a party of about 30 members of the South African Regiment under the Command of an Officer who were present as mourners. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside by 3 buglers of the South African Regiment. The coffin was draped with the Australian flag and covered with several floral tributes. Prior to the interment of the deceased officer's remains a Memorial Service was held by Chaplain F. W. Wray in the Chapel in the Brookwood Cemetery. The deceased officer's remains were borne to the graveside by members of the A.I.F. attached to the Headquarters Staff, A.I.F., London. Mr J. McHardy (Father-in-law of the deceased officer) of No. 13 Norfolk Road, Gravesend, England and Mr R. C. Overmass (friend) of Axminster, Devon were present at the funeral. Lieut C. J. Fegent, representing the Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F., London was also present. Temporary Memorial is being erected by the Commonwealth Military Authorities.

Base Records wrote to Mrs C. Durham, c/o Mrs Corbett, 20 Edward St., Westgarth, Victoria on 27th March, 1923 stating that the site Lieutenant P. N. Durham's grave in Brookwood Military Cemetery had been officially registered as Plot 11 Row F Grave 14. This is now recorded by CWGC as Memorial reference – XI.F.14. Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham contains a letter from Matron, 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth, which reads "*...Lieut. P. M. Durham. 51st Bn., was admitted here on march 9th and died on April 22nd, 1917. He was suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis and was very ill indeed when he was admitted, there being no hope of his ultimate recovery. He was visited several times by his wife's relations from Gravesend and spoke a good deal of his wife to the sister-in-charge of the ward. Everything was done for him that was possible but his case was quite hopeless from the first. The Headquarters of the Australian Imperial Force made all arrangements for the funeral and I understand that he was buried in Brookwood.*"

A War Pension was granted to Christian C. Durham, 409 Punt Rd, Prahran, widow of the late Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham, in the sum of £3 per fortnight from 25th June, 1917. Pensions were also granted to Neil Durham, son of Christian & the late Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham, in the sum of £1 per fortnight & Noreen Durham, daughter of Christian & the late Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham, in the sum of 15/- per fortnight.

Advice was received by Base Records (no date) that the widow of the late Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham – Mrs Christine Durham's new address was Waterdale, Hobart Rd, Murrumbeena, Victoria.

The Immigration and Labor Bureau, Department of Lands & Survey, 555 Flinders Street, Melbourne, wrote to Base Records on 8th May, 1918 regarding Mr Percy Neil Durham: "*I beg to ask if you could be so good as to kindly cause me to be advised as to the present address of the above-named, who, in January 1916, was at the Prisoners of War Depot, Langwarrin, and with whom I am desirous of getting in communication.*"

Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Lieutenant Durham's widow – Mrs C. Durham, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent December, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham, of 51st Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Capt. William and Mary Durham; husband of Christian Durham, of Dalny Rd., Murrumbeena, Victoria, Australia.

Lieutenant P. N. Durham is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 152.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

P. N. Durham is remembered on the Prahran RSL Honour Roll, located at High Street, Prahran, Victoria.



Prahran RSL Honour Roll (Photo from AWM Places of Pride)

(75 pages of Lieutenant Percy Neil Durham'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



Newspaper Notices

DIED ON SERVICE

DURHAM – on the 22nd April, at the Third General London Hospital, Lieutenant P. N. Durham, A.I.F., died of illness.

Sadly missed.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 5 May, 1917)

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCES

293rd CASUALTY LIST

DIED FROM ILLNESS

Lieut. P. N. DURHAM, Prahran, 22/4/17

(Bendigo Advertiser, Victoria – 8 May, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

DURHAM – In loving memory of my dear husband, Lieutenant P. N. Durham, 51st Battalion (late 37th), who passed away at the 3rd General Hospital, London, 22nd April, 1917.

Death may divide us for a while;

Yet fond memories ever linger.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 20 April, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

DURHAM – In proud and loving memory of my dear husband, Lieutenant P. N. Durham, 37th Battalion, who passed away at the 3rd General Hospital, Wandsworth, on April 22, 1917.

“Till the resurrection morning.”

-(Inserted by Mrs Durham, Murrumbidgee.)

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 19 April, 1919)

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)

Lieutenant P. N. Durham does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

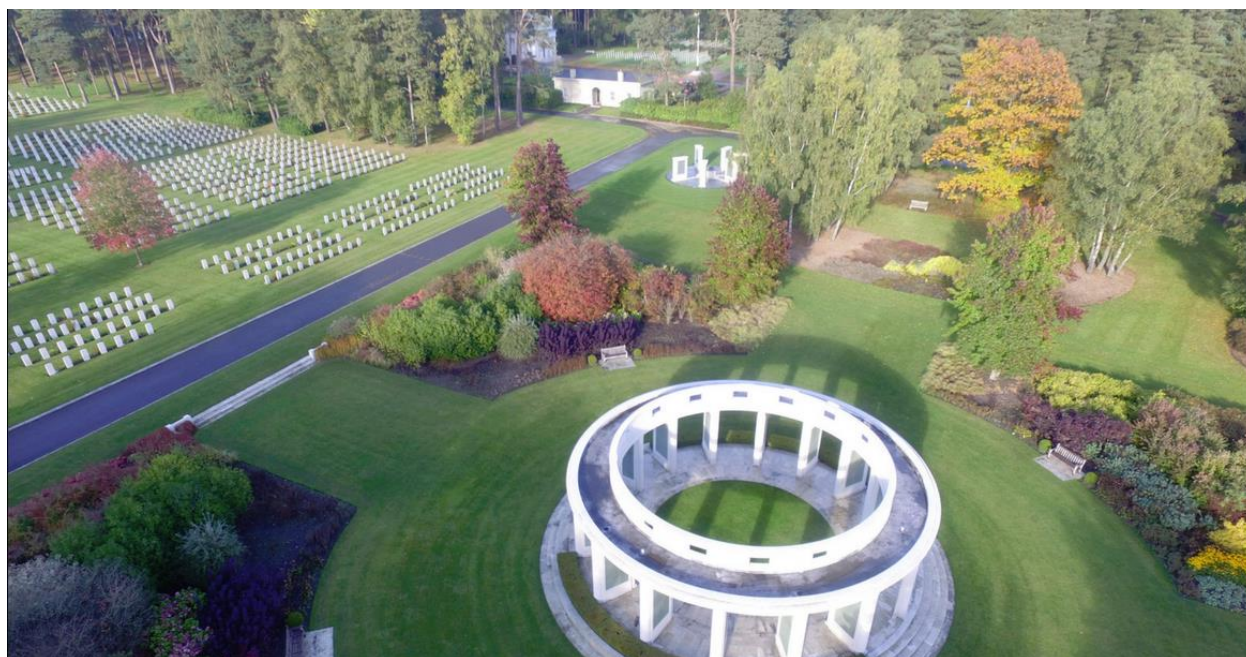
*Loved By All
Requiescat In Pace*

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.



Brookwood Military Cemetery *(Photo from CWGC)*



Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photos by Magicfingers)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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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.



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 Lieutenant P. N. Durham's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England.



(Photo by Neil Bright - 2020)



(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher – Jan 2021)

