

**St. George's Churchyard,
Fovant, Wiltshire
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



6318 PRIVATE

R. R. EDGE

27TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

4TH APRIL, 1918 Age 45

Robert Richard EDGE

Robert Richard Edge was born in 1872 at Wednesfield, near Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, England to parents Robert and Rachel Edge (nee Cooper).

The 1881 England Census recorded Robert Edge as a 9 year old Scholar, living with his family at High Street, Wednesfield, Staffordshire, England. His parents were listed as Robert Edge (Insurance Agent, aged 40, born Wolverhampton, Staffordshire) & Rachel Edge (aged 41, born Wolverhampton, Staffordshire). Robert (jnr) was one of five children listed on this Census (all born at Wednesfield) – Mary Edge (Scholar, aged 13), Ellen Edge (Scholar, aged 11) then Robert, Hyllia Edge (Scholar, aged 6) & Martha Edge (Scholar, aged 5).

Robert Richard Edge attended Bourne College, Birmingham, England.

The 1891 England Census recorded Robert Edge as a 19 year old Chemist Assistant who was listed as a visitor in the home of Elizabeth Hadley (widow, aged 58, living on her own means) at Craisley Lane, Wednesfield, Stafford. Also listed was her son - Albert Hadley (Warehouseman, aged 19) & her daughter – Alice Birch (widow, Living on her own means, aged 32). Alice's 2 sons were also listed – Charles E. Birch (Scholar, aged 8) & Albert Birch (Scholar, aged 7).

[A “Robert Richard Edge” (father’s name Robert Edge), aged 22 & a professional Footballer married Gertrude Taylor on 28th February, 1895 at St. Paul’s Church, Burslem, Stafford, England.] [possibly the same Robert Richard Edge ?]

[The 1901 England Census recorded Robert Edge as a 28 year old Chemist’s Assistant living with his wife & children at Price Street, Cannock, Staffordshire. His wife was listed as Gertrude Edge (aged 26) & their children – Wilfred Edge (aged 3) & Alice (aged 1).]

According to information supplied by his sister for the Roll of Honour - Robert Richard Edge came to Australia when he was 39 years old. A “Mr Robert Edge”, Chemist’s Assistant, aged 36, was a passenger on *Moravain* which had departed from London & arrived at Melbourne, Australia on 2nd March, 1909. Mr Edge had disembarked at the port of Fremantle, Western Australia.

The 1910, 1912 & 1913 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Swan, subdivision of Williams listed Robert Richard Edge, Labourer of Tudor Street, Wagin, Western Australia.

Robert Richard Edge was a 44 year old, single, Labourer from Wagin, Western Australia when he enlisted on 19th October, 1916 with the 27th Infantry Battalion, 18th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 6318 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his sister – Mrs Nellie Mason, of Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, England.

Private Robert Richard Edge was posted to No. 88 Depot on 19th October, 1916. He was transferred to 24th Reinforcements of 11th Battalion on 16th November, 1916 then transferred to 18th Reinforcements of 27th Infantry Battalion on 2nd December, 1916.

Private Robert Richard Edge embarked from Fremantle, Western Australia on HMAT *Berrima* (A35) on 23rd December, 1916 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 16th February, 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.

Private Robert Richard Edge was marched in from Australia to 7th Training Battalion at Rollestone, Wiltshire, England on 18th February, 1917.

Private Robert Richard Edge was sent sick to Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire on 20th April, 1917 & then admitted with Influenza. He was discharged to Depot on 30th April, 1917.

Private Robert Richard Edge was marched in to 7th Training Battalion at Rollestone from Hospital on 30th April, 1917.

Private Robert Richard Edge was classified as P.B. (Permanent Base - usually meant that the soldier was unfit for active service and only employable in the base area) at Rollestone on 16th August, 1917.

Private Robert Richard Edge was marched out from 7th Training Battalion on 7th November, 1917 & marched in to 6th Training Battalion at Fovant, Wiltshire on 8th November, 1917.

Private Robert Richard Edge was admitted to Military Hospital at Fovant on 21st January, 1918 – N.Y.D. (Cause not yet determined). Hospital Report reads that Pte Edge was admitted as Bronchitis but physical examination shows him to be suffering from Tubercle of Lung. He later "*became much emaciated and died from exhaustion.*"

Private Robert Richard Edge died at 5.20 am on 4th April, 1918 at Military Hospital, Fovant, Wiltshire, England from Tubercle of Lung.

A death for Robert R. Edge, aged 45, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Wilton, Wiltshire, England.

Private Robert Richard Edge was buried on 6th April, 1918 in St George's Churchyard, Fovant, Wiltshire, England – Plot number II. C. 5. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Pte Edge - *Coffin was good polished oak with brass mountings. The deceased was buried with full Military Honours. The Band of the 6th Training Battalion, A.I.F. preceded the funeral which consisted of a Firing Party and Pallbearers from the deceased's platoon, and a Company of N.C.O.'s and men from his Battalion. A large wreath from the Officers, N.C.O.'s and men of the 6th Training Battalion was placed on the grave. Private Edge was most popular with both Officers and men of the Battalion.*

Private Robert Richard Edge requested in his Will dated 21st July, 1917 that all his personal estate be bequeathed to his sister – Nellie Mason, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, England.

Private Robert Richard Edge was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Edge's sister - Mrs N. Mason, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent October, 1922 but marked "Retd to London" & Plaque sent October, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Robert Richard Edge – service number 6318, aged 45, of 27th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Robert and Rachel Edge. Born at Wednesfield, Staffs, England.

Private R. R. Edge is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 110.



(Photos Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

R. R. Edge 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.

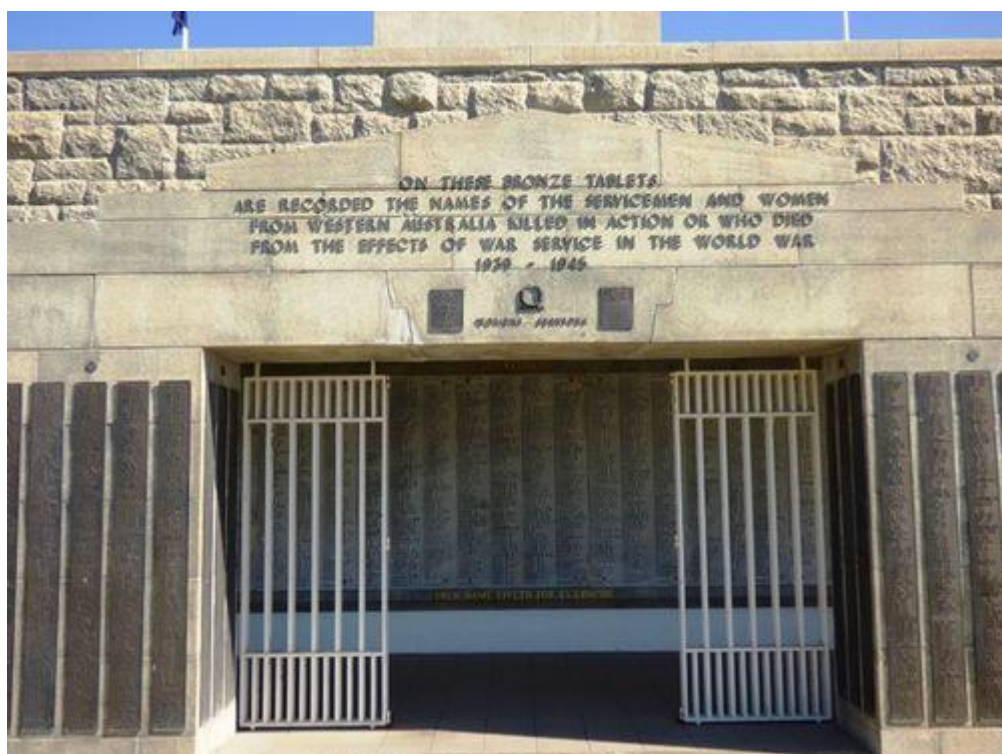
The heavy concrete foundations are supplemented by heavy brick walls which enclose an inner chamber or crypt. The walls surrounding the crypt are covered with The Roll of Honour; marble tablets which list under their units the names of more than 7,000 members of the services killed in action or as a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



Western Australia State War Memorial Cenotaph, Kings Park (above)

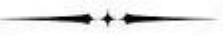
& (below) The Crypt with the Roll of Honour names

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



(43 pages of Pte Robert Richard Edge'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



Newspaper Notices

W.A. Casualties

DIED OF ILLNESS

Robert Richard Edge, England

(The Daily News, Perth, Western Australia – 20 May, 1918)

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 R. R. Edge does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

St George's Churchyard, Fovant, Wiltshire, England

There was a 600 bed hutted military hospital at Fovant during the First World War, and the concentration of Australian depots and training camps in the area is reflected in the 63 First World War burials in this churchyard. The war graves form two groups, one west of the church and the other at the east end. There is also one burial of the Second World War. There are 44 War Graves belonging to those who served with the Australian Imperial Force in World War 1.
(Information from CWGC)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00299

(Photo c 1919)





St George's Churchyard, Fovant – War Graves at front & rear (*Churchyard photos courtesy of Andrew Stacey*)



Photo of Private R. R. Edge's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St George's Churchyard, Fovant, Wiltshire, England.





Cross of Sacrifice (Photo courtesy of Andrew Stacey)