

**Reigate Cemetery,
Reigate, Surrey
War Grave**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



623 PRIVATE

F. W. EDWARDS

24TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

27TH OCTOBER, 1916 Age 24

Frederick William EDWARDS

Frederick William Edwards was born on 2nd November, 1889 at Earlswood, Red Hill, Surrey, England to parents William and Isabella Edwards (nee Ward). He was baptised on 19th January, 1890 at St. John's Church, Red Hill, Surrey, England.

Frederick William Edwards attended school at St. John's, Red Hill, Surrey, England.

The 1891 England Census recorded Frederick W. Edwards as a 1 year old living with his parents at Mont Clear Cottage, Reigate, Surrey. His parents were listed as William Edwards (Stud Groom, aged 36, born Alfrick, Worcestershire) & Isabella Edwards (aged 33, born Birmingham, Warwickshire). There were no others listed in the household.

The 1901 England Census recorded William Edwards as an 11 year old living with his family at 37 Woodlands Road, Reigate, Surrey. His parents were listed as William Edwards (Stud Groom, aged 40) & Isabella Edwards (aged 42). William was one of four children listed on this Census (all born Earlswood, Surrey) – May Edwards (aged 12), then William, George Edwards (aged 9) & Cecil Edwards (aged 7). Also listed was widowed Harriett Ward (Grandmother, aged 74). Two servants – Albert Smith (Groom, aged 24) & Frank Gear (Groom, aged 35) were also listed in the household.

According to information supplied for the Roll of Honour, Frederick William Edwards came to Australia when he was 19 years old. Frederick Edwards, Groom, aged 20, was listed as a passenger on *Orsova* which arrived in Melbourne on 5th July, 1910.

[The 1911 England Census listed Frederick William Edwards' parents living at 37 Woodlands Road, Earlswood, Surrey, a five roomed dwelling. They were listed as William Edwards (Stud Groom, aged 56) & Isabella Edwards (aged 53) William & Isabella Edwards had been married for 24 years & had five children. Also listed in the household was their daughter – Gwendoline Edwards (aged 7, at School) & Harriett Ward (Widowed Mother-in-law of William Edwards, aged 84).]

The 1914 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Wimmera, subdivision of Wycheproof, Victoria listed Frederick William Edwards, Farm Hand, of Kalpienung.

Frederick William Edwards was a 24 year old, single, (Share) Farmer from 26 Greig Street, Albert Park, Victoria when he enlisted at Melbourne, Victoria on 20th March, 1915 with the 6th Infantry Brigade, 24th Infantry Battalion, "C" Company of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 623 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr William Edwards, of 3 Angel Cottages, Woodhatch, Reigate, Surrey, England.

Private Frederick William Edwards was posted to A.I.F. Depot on 26th March, 1915. He was transferred to 24th Battalion, 6th Infantry Brigade on 30th April, 1915.

Private Frederick William Edwards embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Euripides (A14)* on 10th May, 1915.

Private Frederick William Edwards proceeded to join M.E.F. (Mediterranean Expeditionary Force) at Gallipoli Peninsula on 30th August, 1915.

Private Frederick William Edwards disembarked at Alexandria from Mudros on 27th December, 1915.

Private Frederick William Edwards proceeded to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) from Alexandria on 20th March, 1916. He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 26th March, 1916.

Private Frederick William Edwards was "evacuated wounded" while in France between "27th - 31st July, 1916" according to Casualty Form – Active Service. The form should read "evacuated sick". He was admitted to 2nd Field Ambulance on 28th July, 1916 then transferred to 3rd Casualty Clearing Station & admitted with Tonsillitis. Private Edwards was admitted to 1st Canadian General Hospital at Etaples, France on 29th July, 1916 with Tonsillitis. He was transferred to No. 6 Command Depot at Etaples on 2nd August, 1916 then transferred to 2nd A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) from Hospital on 4th August, 1916.

Private Frederick William Edwards returned to his Battalion in France on 16th August, 1916.

Private Frederick William Edwards was wounded on 25th August, 1916. He was admitted to 4th Field Ambulance with gunshot wounds to right thigh & left forearm. Private Edwards was transferred & admitted to 44th Casualty Clearing Station on 25th August, 1916 then transferred to Ambulance Train on 26th August, 1916. Private Edwards was admitted to 3rd Canadian General Hospital at Boulogne, France on 27th August, 1916 with shrapnel wounds to right thigh & left forearm. Private Edwards embarked for England on Hospital Ship *Jan Breydel* on 28th August, 1916.

24th Battalion

The 24th Battalion was raised in a hurry. The original intent was to raise the fourth battalion of the 6th Brigade from the "outer states", but a surplus of recruits at Broadmeadows Camp in Victoria led to a decision being made to raise it there. The battalion was formed during the first week of May 1915, and sailed from Melbourne at the end of that week.

Training shortfalls were made up in Egypt in July and August, and on 4 September 1915 the Battalion went ashore at Gallipoli. It spent the next 16 weeks sharing duty in the Lone Pine trenches with the 23rd Battalion. The fighting at Lone Pine was so dangerous and exhausting that battalions rotated every day. While the bulk of the battalion was at Gallipoli, a small party of 52, trained as packhorse handlers, served with the British force in Salonika.

The Battalion was reunited in Egypt in early 1916 and proceeded to France in March. It took part in its first major offensive around Pozieres and Mouquet Farm in July and August 1917. The Battalion got little rest during the bleak winter of 1916-17 alternating between the front and labouring tasks. When patrolling no-man's land the men of the 24th adopted a unique form of snow camouflage - large white nighties bought in Amiens.

(Information from The Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 24th Battalion – 25th August, 1916:

Mouquet Farm – Heavy shelling all day. Boches (Prussian Guards) noticed carrying cyclinders on their backs – somewhat similar to the cylinder of a vermorce sprayer. One cylinder when struck exploded & blew the man to pieces – another when struck ___went up in a dense cloud of black smoke.

Patrols along Battalion Frontages. Patrols went out on right flank – towards 95 our established an Adv Post about 50yds from advance of our line.

(Information from The Australian War Memorial)

Private Frederick William Edwards was admitted to 2nd Northern General Hospital, Leeds, Yorkshire, England on 27th October, 1916.

Private Frederick William Edwards died on 27th October, 1916 at 2nd Northern General Hospital, Leeds, Yorkshire from wounds received in action – Gunshot wounds to right thigh & Septicaemia.

A death for Frederick W. Edwards, aged 26, was registered in the December quarter, 1916 in the district of Leeds, West Riding of Yorkshire, England.

A form stamped by 2nd Northern General Hospital, Leeds, R.A.M.C. regarding the death of "623 Pte Fredk. Wm. Edwards, C. Company, 24th Aus. Imp. Force, G.S.W. Right Thigh. Septicaemia. Died 27th October, 1916 – Body sent to parents' home as under Mrs Chesteron, 16 Keats Lane, Earl Shelton, Near Hinckley. Railway warrant issued."

Private Frederick William Edwards was buried privately by his parents on 1st November, 1916 in Reigate Cemetery, Woodhatch, Reigate, Surrey, England – Plot number I. 3994 and has a Private Headstone which he shares with his parents & a separate plaque. His death is still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

A letter was sent from Base Records dated 27th December to Mrs Chesteron, of 16 Keats Lane, Earl Shelton, Near Hinckley stating that "Information has been received from the 2nd Northern General Hospital, Leeds, that the body of the late No. 623 Pte Edwards F.W. 24th Battalion A.I.F. was sent to your residence for interment. Could this office be advised please, as to the Grave Site, Grave Site Number and date of Burial of this deceased soldier, for Records

purposes in this office.” The Officer Commanding, 2nd Northern General Hospital, Leeds wrote to Base Records on 10th January and advised that the letter sent to Mrs Chesterton was in error “*as the lady states that the body received by her was that of her son the late No. 20866 L/Cpl. Starbuck W.H. 5th Leicesters*”. Another letter was sent from Base Records on 19th January to Mrs Esabella Edwards, 3 Angel Cottages, Woodhatch, Reigate stating that “*Information has been received from the 2nd Northern General Hospital, Leeds, that the body of the late No. 623 Pte Edwards F.W. 24th Battalion A.I.F. was sent to your residence for interment. Could this office be advised please, as to the Grave Site, Grave Site Number and date of Burial of this deceased soldier, for Records purposes in this office.*”

A letter was sent to Base Records from Mr C. Heather of Lake View St, Boort on 7th November, 1916, enquiring whether the “*F.W. Edwards reported “Died of Wounds” in the papers was 623 Pte F. W. Edwards, C. Coy, 24th Battalion whose parents reside at Woodhatch, Reigate, Surrey, England*”. A reply was sent on 13th November regretting that the soldier concerned was the same one. Mr C. Heather replied on 19th November, 1916 stating that “*the reason for my enquiry was that the soldier came out with me from home per R.M.S. Orsova in July, 1910 and was my only mate till I was married, at the time of his departure I was in Hospital with Typhoid and could not see him. Should further particulars come to hand I will be pleased to receive any information that I may be privileged to get.*” Charles Heather, aged 20, Grocer, was also listed as a passenger with Frederick Edwards on Orsova which arrived in Melbourne on 5th July, 1910.

Private Frederick William Edwards requested in his Will, dated 30th August, 1915, that in the event of his death all money standing to his credit in the Commonwealth Bank be given to his mother – Mrs I. Edwards, 3 Angel Cottages, Woodhatch, Reigate, Surrey.

A claim was made for the War Pension by Isabella Edwards, mother of the late Frederick William Edwards, but later withdrawn.

Private Frederick William Edwards was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Edwards’ father in England - Mr W. Edwards, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque both sent May, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Frederick William Edwards – service number 623, aged 24, of 24th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of William and Isabella Edwards, of 3 Church Rd., South Park, Reigate, Surrey, England. Born at Earlswood, Redhill, Surrey.

Private F. W. Edwards is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 101.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

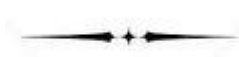
"W. Edwards" is remembered on the Wycheproof War Memorial located in Centenary Park, Wycheproof, Victoria. Frederick William Edwards was from Kalpienung, near Wycheproof.



Wycheproof War Memorial (Photos from Carol's Headstone Photographs)

(42 pages of Private Frederick William Edwards' 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

THE 215TH CASUALTY LIST

WOUNDED

Private F. W. EDWARDS, England

(*The Mildura Cultivator*, Victoria – 23 September, 1916)

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

241ST LIST

Died of Wounds

Pte F. W. EDWARDS, England

(*The Bendigo Independent*, Victoria – 7 November, 1916)

PTE F. W. EDWARDS DIES OF WOUNDS

We record with regret the death of Pte Frederick William Edwards, of the Australian Imperial Force, which occurred on Friday, October 27th at the 2nd Northern General Hospital, Leeds. Pte Edwards was the eldest son of Mr and Mrs W. Edwards, of Woodhatch (late of 47, Woodlands-road, Redhill), who are well known in the Borough, and to whom much sympathy has been extended in their sad loss. The gallant soldier was educated at St. John's School,



Redhill, and after leaving school was for some three years employed in the office of the SURREY MIRROR AND COUNTY POST, where he won the good opinions and respect of those with whom he was brought in contact. At the age of 19 he went to Australia, where he joined the Forces soon after the outbreak of war. He came over with the Australian Contingent and landed in Egypt on June 12th, 1915. From thence he went to Gallipolo, where he took part in the evacuation and came through without a scratch. After a rest in Egypt he landed in France on March 26th, 1916. He took part in several battles there, but received the wounds which caused his death in the "Big Push" on the Somme on August 28th. Pte F. W. Edwards was admitted into hospital on the 29th, and after two serious operations passed away on the above date.

FUNERAL AT REIGATE

The body was brought to Reigate, where the interment took place on Wednesday of last week. The chief mourners were Mr and Mrs Edwards (father and mother), Mrs E. C. Pickard and Miss Edwards (sisters), Pte C. H. Edwards (brother), Pte E. C. Pickard (brother-in-law), Mrs Simpson (aunt), Pte F. C. Pond (cousin), Miss Adams (aunt), Mr and Mrs W. G. Baker, Pte and Mrs E. Baker and Mr Jack Baker (old school friends). His brother, Trooper G. C. Edwards, of the Worcestershire Yeomanry, and his cousin, Driver C. F. Pond, A.S.C., were unable to be present, being on active service in Egypt.

Floral tributes were sent from the following:- "With fondest love to our dear laddie, from his broken-hearted father and mother"; "With fondest love to our dear brother, from his sorrowing brothers and sisters, May, Gwen., George, Cecil and Ted"; "In loving memory of dear Williw, from Uncle, Auntie and Cousins (Enfield)"; "In loving memory of dear Willie from Uncle Tom, Aunt Addie and Cousins, C. F. Pond, 203, and F. C. Pond, 1777"; "In deepest sympathy and love from Aunite Kate"; "In loving memory of our dear friend Will, from Greta and Walter"; "In loving memory of a dear old chum and friend, with deepest sympathy, from Gwen, and Eddie - 'Died for his country'"; "In loving memory from Mr and Mrs E. Baker, and Jack and Dulcie"; "A tribute of sincere sympathy from Mr and Mrs Bishop"; "With deepest sympathy, from Mr and Mrs Revel"; "For one who died for his country, with deepest sympathy, from Hilda, Daisy and May"; "With much sympathy from Em."; and "In memoriam from J. Thatcher." The funeral arrangements were satisfactorily carried out by Messrs. G. Comber and Sons, Redhill.

(*Surrey Mirror*, Reigate, Surrey, England - 7 November, 1916 (no photo in this edition))

& (*Surrey Mirror*, Reigate, Surrey, England - 10 November, 1916)

& (*Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser*, Dorking, Surrey, England - 11 November, 1916)

Reigate Cemetery, Reigate, Surrey, England.

Reigate Cemetery, Reigate, Surrey contains 55 Commonwealth War Graves – 52 relate to World War 1 & only 3 are from World War 2.



Reigate Cemetery Chapel and St Mary's Church (Photo by Robin Webster)

Photo of Private F. W. Edwards' Private Plaque & Private Headstone in Reigate Cemetery, Reigate, Surrey, England. His parents are also included on the main headstone.



(Photos courtesy of Geoffrey Gillon)





In Loving Memory of



PTE FREDERICK WILLIAM EDWARDS.

26TH BATT. A.I.F.

WHO DIED OF WOUNDS

RECEIVED IN FRANCE, OCT 27TH 1916

AGED 26 YEARS.

HE HEARD THE DIN OF WAR'S ALARMS.

HE HEARD HIS COUNTRY'S CALL TO ARMS

AND WITH THE ANZAC INFANTRY

HE CROSSED TEN THOUSAND MILES OF SEA

TO DO HIS BIT 'ON DEMAND.

HE DIED TO SAVE HIS FATHERLAND.



Also ISABELLA.

MOTHER OF THE ABOVE.

AND THE BELOVED WIFE OF

WILLIAM EDWARDS.

DIED JUNE 25TH 1925.

AGED 68 YEARS.

GOD WAS HER HEART AND IN FRIENDSHIP SOUND

PATIENT IN PAIN AND LOVED BY ALL AROUND.

HER STRIFE IS OER HER RACE WELL RUN.

A LIFE OF EVERLASTING JOY SHE'S NOW BEGUN.

Also WILLIAM EDWARDS.

DIED OCT 20TH 1929. AGED 74 YEARS.

TRY WILL BE DONE.

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