

Exeter Higher Cemetery, Devon

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



6354 SAPPER

J. H. B. FURR

AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS

28TH MARCH, 1918 Age 20

James Henry Benson FURR

James Henry Benson Furr was born in South Melbourne, Victoria in mid-1898 to parents James Henry Benson Furr & Grace Ann Furr (nee Tasker).

James Henry Benson Furr attended Albert Park State School.

James Henry Benson Furr was an 18 year old, single, Tinsmith from 170 Pickles Street, South Melbourne when he enlisted on 29th August, 1915 with the 2nd Field Engineers, 15th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 6354 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Grace Ann Furr, of 170 Pickles Street, South Melbourne, Victoria. James Furr stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously served 3 years with Senior Cadets.

As James Henry Benson Furr was under the age of 21 years, his mother gave her signed consent for her son to join the Australian Imperial Force for active service abroad.

Sapper James Furr was in Camp with 24th Depot Battalion at Royal Park from 29th September, 1915. He was transferred to 16th Depot Battalion at Bendigo on 2nd December, 1915.

Sapper James Henry Benson Furr embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Armada* (A26) on 20th March, 1916 & disembarked at Suez on 23rd April, 1916.

Sapper James Furr joined Miscellaneous Reinforcements at Tel-el-Kebir on 23rd April, 1916.

Sapper James Furr embarked on SS *Briton* from Alexandria on 28th May, 1916 & was marched in to 1st A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) in France on 27th September, 1916.

Sapper James Furr was taken on strength with 6th F.C.E. (Field Company Engineers) in Belgium on 2nd October, 1916.

Sapper James Furr was sent sick to 5th Australian Field Ambulance on 22nd November, 1916. He was transferred & admitted to Casualty Clearing Station on 23rd November, 1916 & transferred again to 3rd Stationary Hospital at Rouen, France on 25th November, 1916 with pharyngitis. Sapper James Furr was transferred to Convalescent Depot on 30th November, 1916 & discharged to Base Details on 2nd December, 1916.

Sapper James Furr was marched in from Hospital to A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 5th December, 1916. He was marched out to 6th F.C.E. (Field Company Engineers) on 11th December, 1916 & rejoined his Unit on 15th December, 1916.

Sapper James Furr was written up for a Crime – “conduct prejudicial to good order & Military Discipline in that he left his work without permission.” He forfeited 2 days pay.

Sapper James Furr was on leave to England from 1st September, 1917 & rejoined from leave on 14th September, 1917.

Sapper James Furr was sent sick to 10th Australian Field Ambulance on 13th December, 1917 in Belgium. He was transferred to 6th Australian Field Ambulance on 15th December, 1917 then transferred to 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station on 16th December, 1917. Sapper James Furr was transferred to Ambulance Train- AT. 30 on 17th December, 1917 & admitted to 55th General Hospital at Boulogne, France on the same day suffering from Pleurisy.

Sapper James Furr was invalided to England on Hospital Ship *St. Denis* from Boulogne on 1st March, 1918 suffering from Pleural Effusion.

Sapper James Furr was admitted to War Hospital at Exeter, Devon, England on 1st March, 1918 with Pleurisy – severe.

Sapper James Henry Benson Furr died at 11.30 am on 28th March, 1918 at Exeter War Hospital, No. 2 Section, Devon from Tubercular Pleurisy.

A death for James Furr, aged 20, was registered in the March quarter, 1918 in the district of Exeter, Devon, England.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Sapper James Henry Benson Furr contains a request by relatives in Australia to find details on the illness of Sapper Furr. The file contains several letters commenting on Sapper Furr's condition. The following letter contains details of his illness & burial – *“Dear Mrs Furr, Your son came into No. 2 Hospital Exeter on March 1st suffering from tubercular pleurisy. He was very ill when he came but in a small ward by himself where he could get plenty of fresh air. He began to improve a little with careful nursing. I used to go in and see him most days and talk to him about Australia, as I lived there for two or three years at one time. He never grumbled and always smiled and tried to be as cheerful as possible. I celebrated the Holy Communion with him a few days before he died and he communicated twice besides that while he was in the hospital. The end came on the 28th of March. I saw him the night before that and said some prayers with him and saw him for the last time on the morning of the 28th an hour or two before he actually died. He is buried in the Higher Cemetery Exeter where a cross is put up with his name upon it to mark the place. After the war you can put up anything you like in the cemetery to his memory. His grave is well looked after and will be so always. Please let me know if I can do anything for you and I will try to do it. I have lost two brothers in this war so I can sympathise with you from the bottom of my heart. Letter from J. S. Gibbs C.E.”*

Sapper James Henry Benson Furr was buried at 3 pm on 30th March, 1918 in Exeter Higher Cemetery, Devon, England – Plot number 156 and has a simple granite marker headstone. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. From the burial report of Pte Furr - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military Funeral. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack flag. The coffin was surmounted by several beautiful wreaths. Gun Carriage was supplied by the R.F.A. stationed at Topsham, Exeter. Six Australian soldiers (patients in No. 2 Section V.A.D. Hospital, Exeter) acted as Pallbearers. Prior to the interment a service was held in the Cemetery Chapel by Chaplain the Rev. S. F. Toogood, C.F. A party of Australian soldiers, patients in No. 2 Section V.A.D. Hospital, Exeter followed the remains to the Cemetery. The grave will be turfed and an oak cross will be erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Sapper James Henry Benson Furr requested in his Will, dated 14th July, 1917, that all his real & personal estate be bequeathed to his mother – Grace Ann Furr.

A War Pension was granted to Grace Ann Furr, widowed mother of the late Sapper James Henry Benson Furr, in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 2nd June, 1918.

Two photographs of the grave of Sapper J. H. B. Furr, 6th Field Company Engineers, was posted to his mother – Mrs G. A. Furr of 170 Pickle Street, South Melbourne, Victoria on 17th February, 1919.

Sapper James Henry Benson Furr was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Sapper Furr's mother - Mrs Grace Furr, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent December, 1921 & Plaque sent October, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Sapper James Henry Benson Furr – service number 6354, aged 20, of Australian Engineers. He was the son of Grace Ann Furr, of 170 Pickle St., South Melbourne, and the late James Henry Benson Furr.

Sapper J. H. B. Furr is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 23.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(53 pages of Sapper James Henry Benson Furr'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

AUSTRALIA'S ROLL OF HONOUR

389th CASUALTY LIST

DIED OF ILLNESS

Furr, J. H. B., S. Melb.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 16 April, 1918)

DEATHS

FURR – James Henry Benson Furr, died March 28th, of pneumonia, France. Killed in action, on April 5, Stanley Phillip Brookes; dearly beloved nephews of Mrs Clark (Leederville), Mrs Mulligan (Coolgardie). Also Lance-Corporal Albert Alexander (Bert) Howard.

They fought for their King and country.

(*Kalgoorlie Miner*, WA – 25 May, 1918 & *Western Argus*, Kalgoorlie, WA – 28 May, 1918)

Exeter Higher Cemetery, Devon

Exeter Higher Cemetery, Devon contains 340 War Graves. Of the 219 First World War burials in Exeter Higher Cemetery, more than 180 form two war graves plots near the entrance. The Second World War plot contains most of the 121 Second World War burials. The rest of the graves are scattered throughout the cemetery. The Second World War plot also contains 62 war graves of other nationalities, most of them Polish and German.

(Information & photos from CWGC).

There are 9 War Graves which belong to the Australian Forces – Army, Air & Navy. Six are from World War 1 & three are from World War 2, from Royal Australian Air Force.

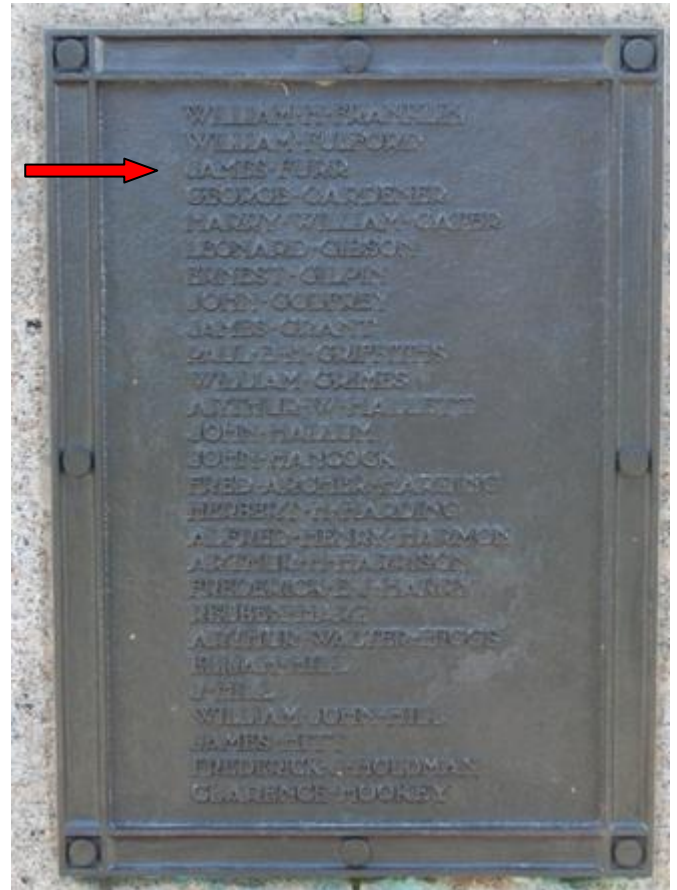
A Memorial, which is located near the two chapels, contains the names of those buried in the circular plot surrounding the Memorial. The plot of land in front of the chapel was set aside by the Council as a commemorative plot early in World War 1. The burials are marked by simple granite slabs listing only the soldier's name.

A letter was sent to Mrs Carter, mother of the late Private R.A.E. Carter, A.I.F., dated 11th October, 1922 which reads: *"With further reference to your letter of the 7th June, enquiry has been made with regard to the grave of Private R.A.E. Carter in Exeter Higher Cemetery with the result that it has been discovered that all the private memorials erected over the graves of soldiers, in the War Plot have been removed by the Exeter City Council, and that a granite block has been placed over each grave and the turf levelled. On these blocks have been engraved the particulars of the deceased, painted black. The private memorials themselves have been placed in the mortuary.*

This treatment has been carried out entirely by the City Council with a view to uniformity so that now all the graves in the War Plot in Exeter High Cemetery are exactly alike, but the burial place of each soldier is carefully distinguished by the granite blocks which have been placed level with the turf.



The Memorial (above) & (below) an example of the plaques with the names of the soldiers buried in the World Ward 1 plot.



(Photos by Toltecia)



The World War 1 plots near the Memorial with plants & flowers between the named granite grave markers



(Photos with permission from Norman Cummings)



Exeter Higher Cemetery showing Cross of Sacrifice & World War 2 War Graves

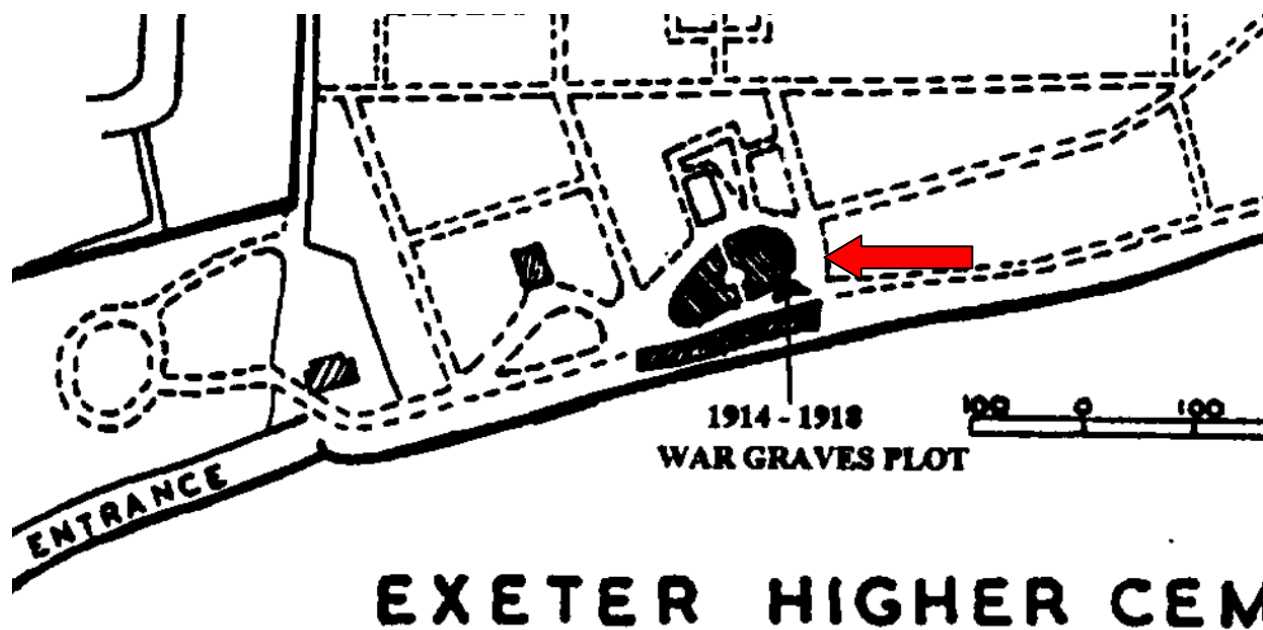
(Photo courtesy of julia&keld)

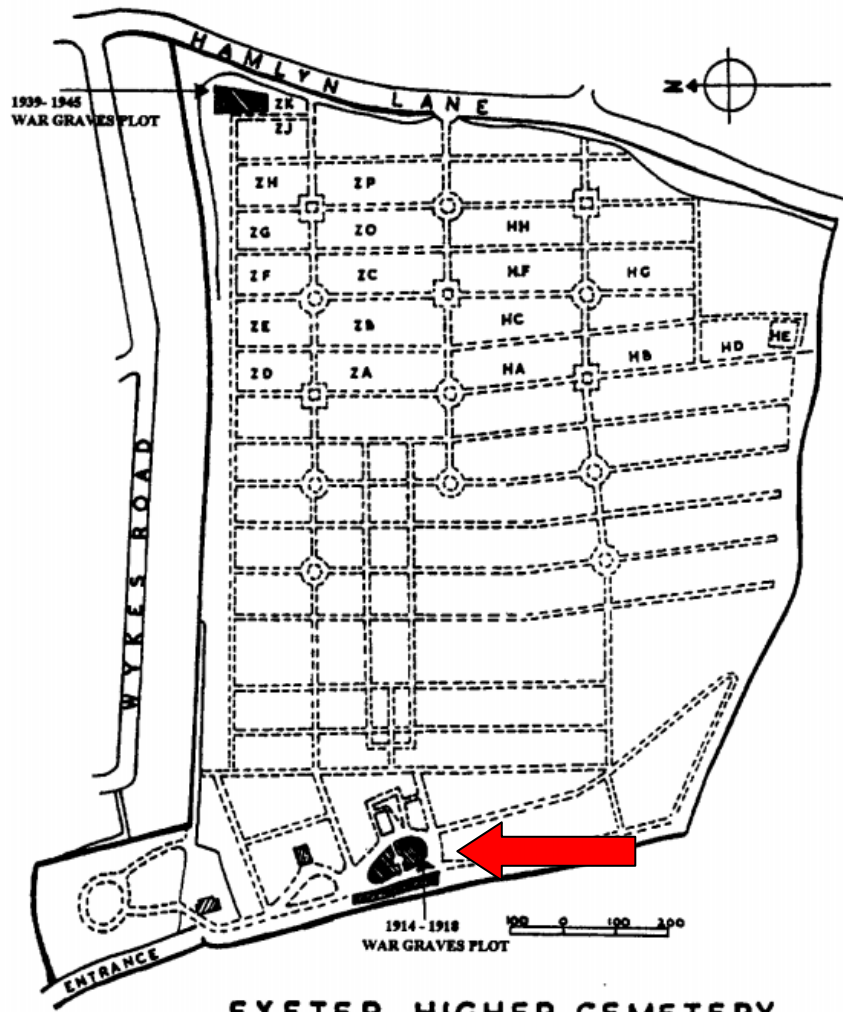
Photo of Sapper J. H. B. Furr's granite Grave marker in Exeter Higher Cemetery, Devon, England.



(Photo courtesy of Toltecia)

Section showing World War 1 War Graves Plot.





EXETER HIGHER CEMETERY