

Durrington War Graves

World War 1



Lest We Forget



19797 GUNNER

E. T. GAY

AUST. FIELD ARTILLERY

2ND JANUARY, 1917 Age 19

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Gunner E. T. Gay is located in Grave Plot # 145
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

Edward Thomas GAY

Edward Thomas Gay was born on 25th April, 1896 at Alberton* to parents Caleb Thomas & Sarah Gay. (*On his Attestation Paper, Edward Thomas Gay stated he was born near Tananlle, Victoria. CWGC lists he was born Alberton, South Australia).

Edward Thomas Gay was a 19 year old, single, Farm Labourer from North Devon, Yarram, Victoria when he enlisted on 31st December, 1915 with the 8th Field Artillery Brigade, 30th Battery of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 19797 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his father – Caleb Thomas Gay of Kyabram, Victoria.

Gunner Edward Thomas Gay embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Medic (A7)* on 20th May, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 18th July, 1916. Gunner Edward Thomas Gay had been admitted to Ship's Hospital for 3 days with Influenza from 9th June – 11th June, 1916.

Gunner Edward Thomas Gay was admitted to General Hospital at Devonport, England on 19th July, 1916 & discharged on 31st July, 1916 with Influenza.

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.

Gunner Edward Thomas Gay was marched in to Camp No. 4 at Parkhouse on 4th August, 1916. He was then marched into Larkhill Camp in Wiltshire on 5th August, 1916.

Gunner Edward Thomas Gay was admitted to Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire on 14th August, 1916.

Gunner Edward Thomas Gay was taken on strength with 3rd Div. Ammunition Col. Australian Field Artillery on 3rd October, 1916.

Communications were sent from Base Records to Mr C. T. Gay on 22nd November, 1916 reporting that his son Gunner Edward T. Gay was dangerously ill with Tubercule Lung & that further progress reports would be sent when received. Further reports were sent on 2nd December, 1916 & 30th December, 1916 reporting that Gunner Edward T. Gay's condition was stationary.

Gunner Edward Thomas Gay died at 2.15 p.m. on 2nd January, 1917 in Fargo Military Hospital of Tubercle of Lung.

A death for (Male) Gay, aged 20, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

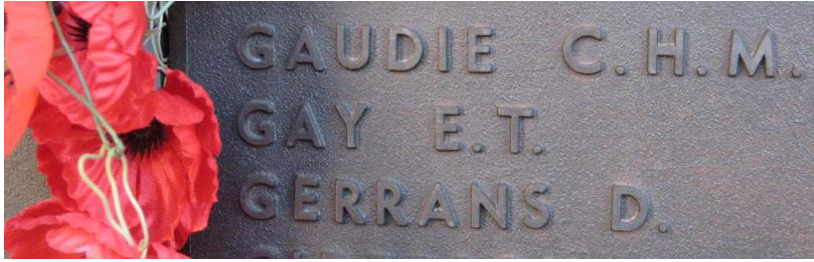
Gunner Edward Thomas Gay was buried in Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire – plot number 145 on 5th January, 1917.

A request by letter, dated 12th November, 1917, was made by the grandmother of Gunner Edward Thomas Gay – Catherine Gibbett for cash left by her grandson. She stated that his mother – Sarah Gay had left him without anyone to care for him, so his father, Caleb Thomas Gay, had bought the child – Edward Thomas Gay to her before he was old enough to go to school to be looked after.

Gunner Edward Thomas Gay was entitled to British War Medal only. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Gay's father – Mr C. T. Gay (March, 1922 & August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Gunner Edward Thomas Gay – service number 19797 as being 19 years old & served with 3rd Div. Ammunition Col. Australian Field Artillery. He was the son of Charles Thomas & Sarah Gay of Sydney. Born at Alberton, South Australia.

Gunner E. T. Gay is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 21.

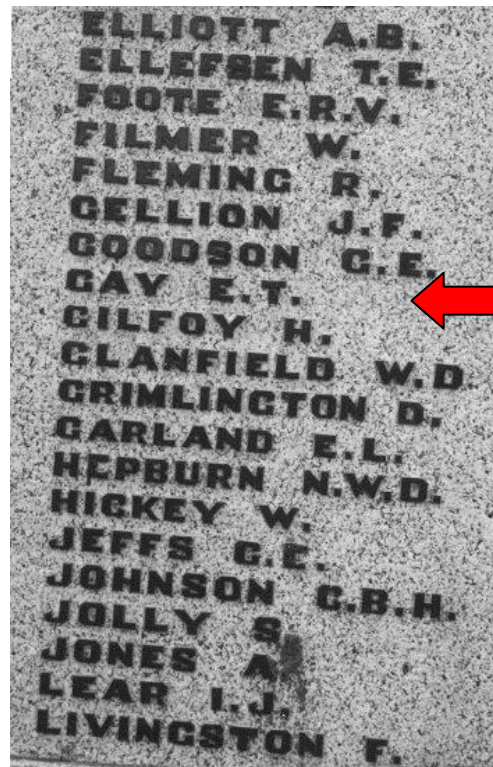


(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

E. T. Gay is also remembered on the Yarram War Memorial located on Commercial Road, Yarram, Victoria.



Yarram War Memorial (Photos from Victorian War Heritage)

(64 pages of Gunner Edward Thomas Gay's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



Portrait of 19797 Gunner Edward Thomas Gay, 30th Battery

Newspaper Reports

264th CASUALTY LIST

DIED FROM ILLNESS

Gnr. E. T. GAY, Kyabram, 2/1/17

(Bendigo Advertiser, Victoria Tuesday 16 January, 1917)

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 at Durrington War Graves Cemetery. 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)

Gunner E. T. Gay does not have a personal inscription on his headstone nor does he have the Christian Cross like so many other A.I.F. soldiers.

Correspondence from Base Records to Gunner Gay's father – Mr C. T. Gay at Kyabram, Victoria had been returned. Contact was made with Mr C. T. Gay, who was in 1924, living at Drouin, Victoria. This could be a reason why Gunner E. T. Gay does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.



Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire (Photo by Dave Healing 2013)

Photo of Gunner E. T. Gay's Headstone at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire.



(Photo © Ian King - with permission)