

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



Lest We Forget

World War 1



4909 PRIVATE

W. N. GRENFELL

53RD BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

15TH AUGUST, 1918

William Noel GRENFELL

William Noel Grenfell was born at St. Ives, Cornwall, England in 1875. His birth was registered as William Noall Grenfell in the registration district of Penzance, Cornwall in June quarter, 1875. (Parents possibly Thomas Grenfell & Mary Susan Grenfell (nee Craze).

[Note: There are no references to William Noel/Noall Grenfell's parents in his Service Record file. The following 2 Census references of a "William N. Grenfell" may be him.]

The 1881 England Census recorded a "Will N. Grenfell", Scholar, aged 6, living with his grandparents at Albert Place, St. Ives, Cornwall, England. His Grandparents were listed as Thomas Grenfell (Retired Master Mariner, aged 60, born St. Ives, Cornwall) & Elizabeth Grenfell (aged 65, born St. Ives, Cornwall). Also listed in the household – Mary A. Grenfell (daughter of Thomas & Elizabeth - aged 32, born St. Ives, Cornwall) & five grandchildren (all born St. Ives, Cornwall) – Thomas Grenfell (Scholar, aged 12), Bessie Grenfell (Scholar, aged 10), John C. Grenfell (*Scholar, aged 8) the Will & Ernest Grenfell (aged 5 months).

The 1901 England Census recorded a "Wm N. Grenfell", Officer Merchant Sea Service, aged 26, living with his grandmother & family at Albert Place, St. Ives, Cornwall, England. His widowed grandmother was listed as Elizabeth Grenfell (aged 86). Also listed in the household – Mary S. Grenfell (widowed daughter of Elizabeth - aged 52), Bessie Chard (granddaughter, aged 29) then William & Bessie G. Chard (Great granddaughter, aged 2).

William Noel Grenfell received his Certificate of Competency as Second Mate of a Foreign-Going Ship on 20th June, 1895.

W. N. Grenfell, Able seaman, aged 30, born St. Ives was listed as Crew on *Buninyong* which departed from port of Brisbane, Queensland for Sydney, New South Wales on 18th May, 1905.

W. N. Grenfell, Able seaman, aged 30, born St. Ives was listed as Crew on *Karori* which departed from port of Strahan, Tasmania for Sydney, New South Wales on 5th June, 1906.

W. N. Grenfell, Able seaman, aged 33, born St. Ives was listed as Crew on *Kakapo* which departed from port of Devonport for Sydney, New South Wales on 4th November, 1907.

William Grenfell, Able seaman, aged 33, born St. Ives was listed as Crew on *Karori* which departed from port of Devonport for Sydney, New South Wales on 10th August, 1908.

William Grenfell, Boatswain, aged 34, born St. Ives was listed as Crew on *Providence A* which departed from port of Levuka for Sydney, New South Wales on 17th June, 1910.

[Note: The records of William Noel Grenfell listed as Crew (above) are just a selection of records available. Not all records have been transcribed.]

William Noel Grenfell was a 40 year old, single, Seaman from 19 Allen Street, Pyrmont, NSW when he enlisted at Warwick Farm, Sydney, NSW on 10th September, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 4909 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his cousin – Hilda V. Leonard, 114 Foveaux Street, Surry Hills, NSW. William Grenfell was medically approved as fit for active service, however the following was written "*Recent Hernia Scar – One month light duty.*"

Private William Noel Grenfell was posted to "C" Company, 8th Battalion on 13th September, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to 13th Reinforcements of 3rd battalion on 16th October, 1915 then transferred to "C" Company of No.1 Battalion on 7th November, 1915. Private Grenfell was transferred to "B" Company of 1st Battalion on 5th January, 1916 then transferred to 15th Reinforcements of 1st Battalion on 18th February, 1916.

Private William Noel Grenfell embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Star of England (A15)* on 8th March, 1916 with the 1st Infantry Battalion, 15th Reinforcements & disembarked at Suez on 11th April, 1916.

1st Battalion

The 1st Battalion was the first infantry unit recruited for the AIF in New South Wales during the First World War.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private William Noel Grenfell was transferred to 53rd Battalion at Ismalia on 20th April, 1916 & was taken on strength of 53rd Battalion on the same day at Tel-el-Kebir from 1st Battalion.

Private William Noel Grenfell embarked from Alexandria on 19th March, 1916 on *Royal George* to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 28th March, 1916.

Private William Noel Grenfell was wounded in action in France on 19th July, 1916. He was admitted to 14th Field Ambulance on 20th July, 1916 then transferred to 8th Australian Casualty Clearing Station on the same day. Private Grenfell was transferred to Ambulance Train on 21st July, 1916 & admitted to 8th Stationary Hospital, Wimereaux, France on 21st July, 1916 with G.S.W. (gunshot) wounds to Chest. (The Statement of Service form recorded he had "Shell 'Shock' Chest"). He embarked from Boulogne, France on 25th July, 1916 for England on Hospital Ship *Jan Breydel*.

53rd Battalion

The 53rd Battalion was raised in Egypt on 14 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 1st Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 1st, the 53rd was predominantly composed of men from the suburbs of Sydney. The battalion became part of the 14th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

The battalion arrived in France on 27 June 1916, entered the front line for the first time on 10 July, and became embroiled in its first major battle on the Western Front, at Fromelles, on 19 July. The battle of Fromelles was a disaster. The 53rd was part of the initial assault and suffered grievously, incurring 625 casualties, including its commanding officer, amounting to over three-quarters of its attacking strength. Casualty rates among the rest of the 5th Division were similarly high, but despite these losses it continued to man the front in the Fromelles sector for a further two months.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 53rd Battalion

19th July, 1916 – Trenches:

11.00 – Heavy bombardment by our guns on Enemys trenches and equally heavy bombardment by enemy on our trenches and communications. Casualties by 15.00 about 50.

16.00 54th Bn took over & join the left 300yds of our trenches and Bn closed in on its original front if 300yds with Right on River LAIES – A & B Coys (Capt Thompson and Murray) in front line. C & D Coys (Major Sampson & Capt Arblaster) in support trenches.

17.43 – Battn moved to attack in four waves ½ Coy of both A and B in first and second wave. ½ Coy of both C & D in third & fourth waves. Bn Hq with fourth wave.

First wave moved out from our trenches at 5.43 pm followed at 100 yds distance by second wave – lay down near German wire till 6 pm then charged followed by third & fourth waves (C & D Coys). Took German first and second line trenches & rushed in parties about 200 yds further on to hold back enemy's bombers who were counter-attacking on front and right flank, while the remainder proceeded to consolidate the position on the German 1st & 2nd line trench. Trench was obtained with the 54th Bn on our left but no-one could be found on our Right.

19 -20th July

The line was held throughout night against violent attacks, until orders were received (about 9 am) from OC 14th Bde to retire from position won, our Right flank being in the air, enemy had already turned it & reestablished themselves in their 1st line trenches in rear of our Right.

About 0930 – Retired though with very heavy loss, covered by fire from our own front line.

Battn went into action with

	<i>Officers 28</i>	<i>Other Ranks 823</i>
<i>Killed</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Wounded</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>343</i>
<i>Missing</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>228</i>

(Note as known on 26th July)

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private William Noel Grenfell was admitted to St Luke's War Hospital, England on 26th July, 1916 with G.S.W. to Chest (slight).

Hilda V. Leonard, 114 Foveaux Street, Surry Hills, Sydney, NSW was advised by Base Records on 8th August, 1916 that Private W. N. Grenfell had been reported wounded. She was advised on 14th August, 1916 that her cousin Private William N. Grenfell had been admitted to 8th Stationary Hospital with gunshot wound chest severe.

Private William Noel Grenfell was taken on strength of 2nd Australian Command Depot at Weymouth, England on 11th September, 1916 from Harefield. He was transferred & marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire, England on 11th October, 1916.

Private William Noel Grenfell proceeded overseas to France on 11th November, 1916 from 14th Training Battalion in England. He was marched in to 5th A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 13th November, 1916 from England. Private Grenfell proceeded from 5th A.D.B.D. on 22nd November, 1916 to join 53rd Battalion & rejoined his Battalion in France on 24th November, 1916.

Private William Noel Grenfell was sent to Divisional Rest Camp at Valerie-Sur-Somme, France on 27th May, 1917. He rejoined his Unit on 12th June, 1917 from Divisional Rest Camp.

Private William Noel Grenfell was on Leave to UK from 10th December, 1917 & rejoined his Unit from Leave on 29th December, 1917.

Private William Noel Grenfell was sent to 5th Divisional Nucleus Camp on 15th June, 1918.

Private William Noel Grenfell was sent then admitted to 20th Casualty Clearing Station on 15th July, 1918 from 5th Divisional Nucleus Camp with VD Heart – Valvular disease of the heart. He was transferred to Ambulance Train on 18th July, 1918 & admitted to 1st Australian General Hospital at Rouen on 19th July, 1918. Private Grenfell was transferred to England on 21st July, 1918 with heart failure.

Private William Noel Grenfell was admitted to Bermondsey Military Hospital, Ladywell Rd, Lewisham, London, England on 22nd July, 1918. The Hospital Admissions form recorded: "*Bullet wound chest July 1916 – R. marfin(?) sternum(?) in 1st space. Admitted with double aortic tract __ ventricle with much mitral reguritation.*"

H. V. Leonard, 114 Foveaux Street, Surry Hills, Sydney, NSW was advised by Base Records on 6th August, 1918 that Private W. N. Grenfell had been admitted to Bermondsey Military Hospital, London suffering from valvular disease of the heart.

Private William Noel Grenfell died at 12.30 am on 15th August, 1918 at Bermondsey Military Hospital, Ladywell Rd, Lewisham, London, England from Aortic V.D.H. The Hospital Admissions form recorded he died of heart failure.

A death for William N. Grenfell, aged 43, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of Lewisham, London, England.

Private William Noel Grenfell was buried at 1.30 pm on 17th August, 1918 in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England – Australian Military Burial Ground – no. 181,399.

From the burial report of Private William Noel Grenfell - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers were in attendance from A.I.F. Headquarters, London. The service was conducted by Chaplain the Rev. Vine of A.I.F. Headquarters, and the "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Names & addresses of relatives at the Funeral – Mr & Mrs Grenfell, 21 Alexandra Road, Wimbledon, London, S.W. & Miss Grenfell, 337 Eglinton Hill, Plumstead, London, S.E.

Notification in the Service Record file shows that the grave of Private William Noel Grenfell was later recorded as Plot 4, Row C, Grave 1. This is now recorded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as Plot number IV.C.1.

An urgent Telegram was sent to Base Records, Melbourne from, Victoria Barracks, Sydney on 28th August, 1918 which reads: "*re william noel grenfell stop unable trace next of kin please delete press pending inquiries.*" Details regarding the death of Private William Noel Grenfell were deleted from the Press for Casualty List No. 427 until his Australian contacts could be located.

Private William Noel Grenfell requested in his Will, dated 9th March, 1917 that in the event of his death the whole of his property & effects be given to Hilda V. Leonard, of 38 Mary St, Surrey Hills, Sydney, NSW – his Allottee.

The 2nd Military District advised Base Records on 22nd March, 1919 that the legatee for the late No. 4909 Private W. N. Grenfell, 53rd Battalion, was his friend – Hilda Victoria Leonard, 189 Goulburn Street, Sydney, NSW.

Base Records wrote to 2nd Military District on 24th June, 1919 stating that their records showed that the present address of legatee and next-of-kin of the late Private W. N. Grenfell was shown as Hilda Victoria Leonard, 189 Goulburn Street, Sydney, NSW but communications addressed to her had been returned unclaimed.

The 2nd Military District advised Base Records on 7th July, 1919 that the matter on 24th June, 1919 was "*referred to the Press on the 30th April, requesting the legatee to communicate direct with you, and you were advised to this effect on 3/4/19. This memo also had reference to Lieut. D. T. W. NEVILLE, M.C., D.C.M., and others. As apparently no response was received to the advertisement the matter has been again referred to the Press.*"

Base Records wrote to Military Adviser, Australia House, Strand, London on 10th February, 1922 stating that "*Endeavours have been made to trace Miss Hilda V. Leonard, who is recorded here as next-of-kin of the late No. 4909 Private W. N. Grenfell, 53rd Battalion, but without success. It is noted on the burial report that Mr & Mrs Grenfell, 21 Alexandra Road, Wimbledon, London, S.W. & Miss Grenfell, 337 Eglinton Hill, Plumstead, London, S.E. were present at the soldier's funeral. In view of this information I shall be obliged for any action you may be able to take that will result in some of deceased's relatives being traced. It is presumed that the necessary action will be taken by your Administration relative to the completion of circular form "A" and the disposal of the attached photographs of grave.*"

A letter advising that a parcel of the personal effects of the late Private William Noel Grenfell were being forwarded to Mrs H. G. Leonard, 189 Goulburn Street, Sydney, NSW on 1st March, 1919. The letter was returned to Base Records.

Private William Noel Grenfell was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Grenfell's mother - Mrs M. Grenfell, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque issued in England November, 1922).

A letter addressed to Mrs Grenfell, Street on Garrow, St. Ives, Cornwall, England from Base Records on 8th May, 1923 was returned to Base Records, Melbourne, Australia as "unknown".

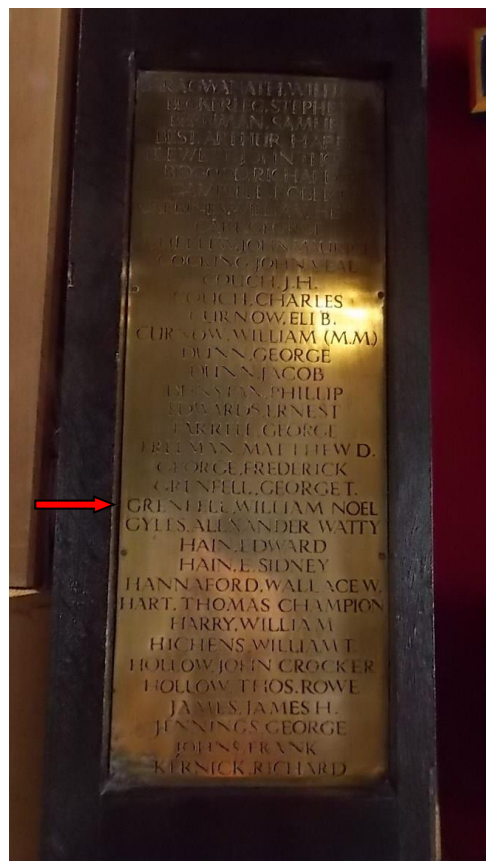
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private W. N. Grenfell – service number 4909, of 53rd Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

W. N. Grenfell is remembered on the St. Ives War Memorial, located next to St. Ives Parish Church, Market Square, St. Ives, Cornwall, England.



St. Ives War Memorial (Photos from War Memorials Online)

W. N. Grenfell is remembered on the St. Ives Roll of Honour, located inside St. Ives Parish Church, Market Square, St. Ives, Cornwall, England.



St. Ives Roll of Honour (Photos from War Memorials Online)

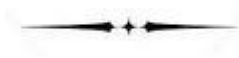
Private W. N. Grenfell is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 157.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(61 pages of Private William Noel Grenfell'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

CASUALTIES

196th LIST

NEW SOUTH WALES

WOUNDED

Pte W. N. GRENFELL, Surry Hills

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 19 August, 1916)

ROLL OF HONOUR

GRENFELL – At Bermondsey Military Hospital, London, August 15, 1918, Pte William Noel Grenfell, died of valvular disease of the heart, through the effects of gas, after 2 ½ years' service in France, 4909, 53rd Batt., late of coastal boats and wharfs, Sydney, and St. Ives, England. English papers please copy.

His heart was good, his spirit brave,

His resting-place a soldier's grave.

Inserted by his sorrowing friend, Hilda Leonard, 189 Goulburn-street; Carrie and Bill Murray, and children.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 7 September, 1918)

UNCLAIMED LETTERS

Communications addressed to the following have been returned unclaimed:- Hilda Victoria Leonard, 189 Goulburn Street, Sydney, Reg. No. 4909, W. N. Grenfell, 53rd Battalion;The addressees are asked to communicate with the Officer-in-charge, Base Records, Melbourne, at the earliest possible moment.

(The Daily Telegraph, Sydney, NSW – 9 July, 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)

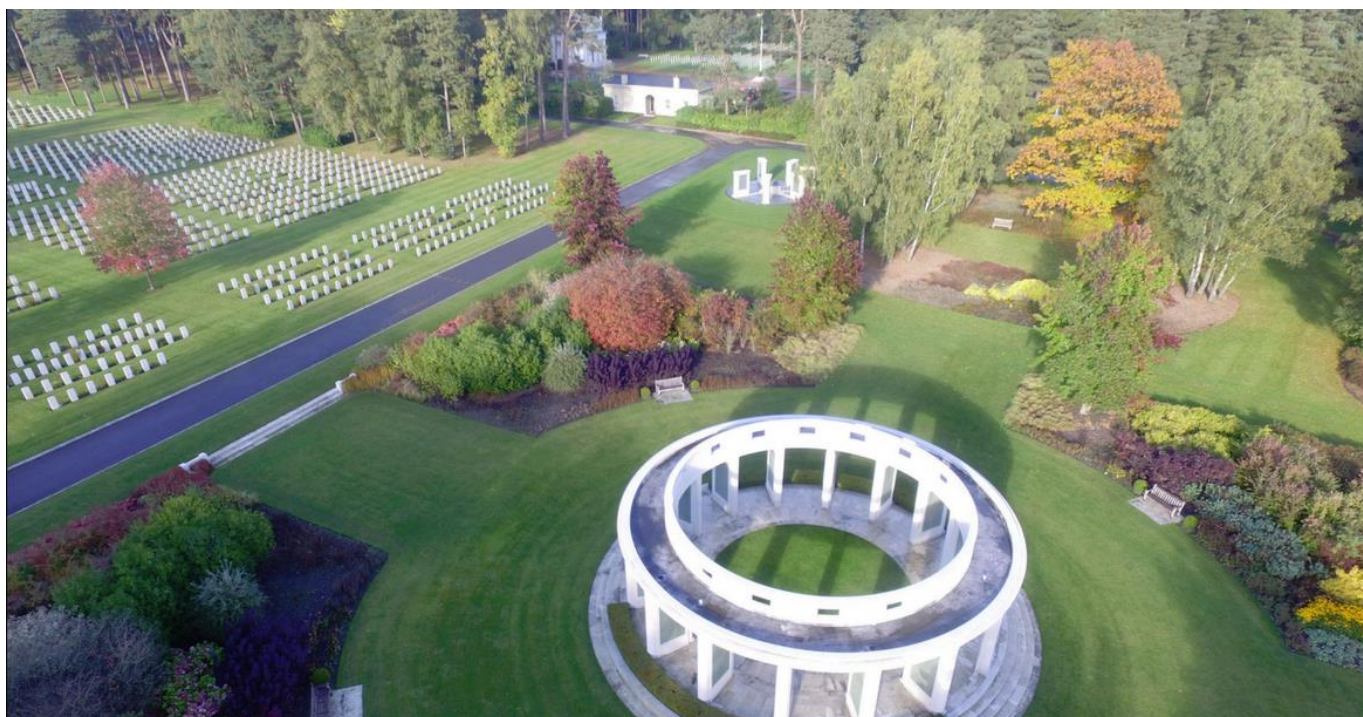
Private W. N. Grenfell does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

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)*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00185

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.



Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photos by Magicfingers)



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 Private W. N. Grenfell's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England.





(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher – Jan 2021)

