

**Melcombe Regis Cemetery,  
Weymouth, Dorset, England**

**War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**1317 SERJEANT**

**A. GRIFFIN**

**AUSTRALIAN FIELD ARTILLERY**

**15TH JULY, 1917 Age 39**

*Loving Husband  
Of Emily Griffin  
Rest In Peace  
From Earthly Strife*

## Alfred GRIFFIN

Alfred Griffin was born at Chorley Wood, Watford, Hertfordshire, England on 21st March, 1879 to parents James & Maria Griffin (nee Beckley). He was baptised on 13th July, 1879 at Chorley Wood, Hertfordshire, England.

The 1881 England Census recorded Alfred Griffin as a 2 year old, living with his family at Chorley Wood Common, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, England. His parents were listed as James Griffin (Gardener, aged 44, born Chorley Wood, Herts) & Maria Griffin (aged 41, born Chorley Wood, Herts). Alfred was the youngest of six children listed on this Census (all born Chorley Wood, Herts) – Ellen Griffin (aged 15), Emma Griffin (Scholar, aged 10), Edith Griffin (Scholar, aged 7), Alice Griffin (Scholar, aged 4), William Griffin (aged 5) & Alfred.

Alfred Griffin attended Public School in England.

The 1891 England Census recorded Alfred Griffin as a 12 year old, living with his family at 29 Langley Rd, Watford, Hertfordshire, England. His parents were listed as James Griffin (Gardener, aged 56) & Maria Griffin (aged 51). Alfred was one of four children listed on this Census – William Griffin (aged 15), Alice Griffin (aged 14), then Alfred & Sarah E. Griffin (aged 9, born Chorley Wood, Herts).

According to Newspaper notice for Estate of Emily Henrietta Griffin (1952) – Emily Henrietta Symons, formerly of 17 Oak Street, Bishop Stortford, Herts, England (born 1874 in England) married Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin at Bombay in 1908.

According to information supplied by his widow Emily Henrietta Griffin for the Roll of Honour – Alfred Griffin served for 18 years with the British Army (15th Kings Hussars) & came to Australia when he was 36 years old.

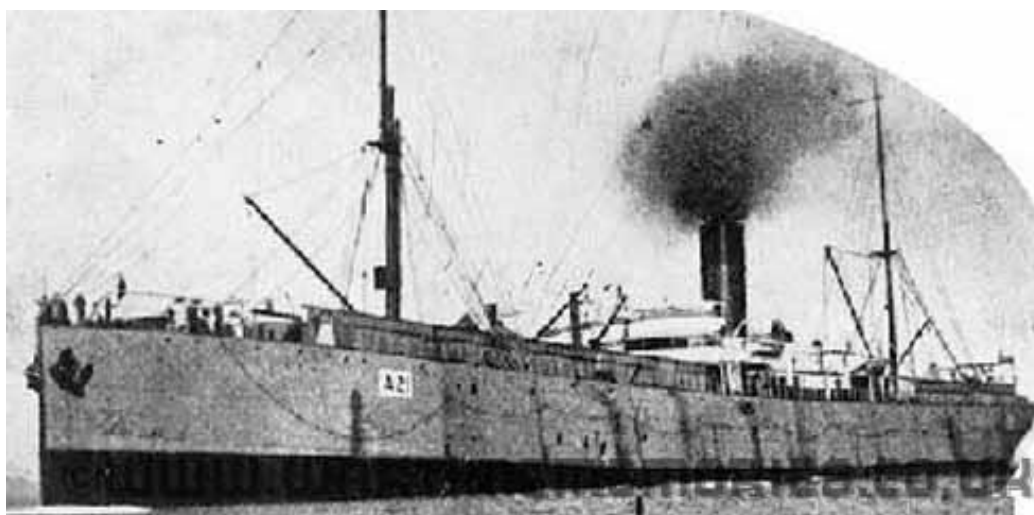
*[Alfred Griffin attested with Hussar Regiment on 15th November, 1894. He was aged 18 years & 3 months & was issued a Service number of 3354.]*

Alfred Griffin was a 37 year old, married, Farmer from Richmond, Victoria when he enlisted on 24th August, 1914 at Broadmeadows, Victoria with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Henneretta Griffin, Richmond, Victoria (name as listed on Embarkation Roll).

Alfred Griffin was posted to 2nd Brigade Ammunition Column as Sergeant Farrier on 8th September, 1914. This was confirmed on 12th October, 1914.

Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin (surname listed as Griffen on Embarkation Roll), Service number 1317, embarked from on HMAT *Marere* (A21) with the 2nd Field Artillery Brigade – Brigade Ammunition Column in October, 1914. (Date of Embarkation not listed on Casualty Form – Active Service. Exact date not listed on Australian War Memorial website).

[Note: HMAT *Marere* (A21) was sunk on 18th January, 1916 by submarine gunfire in the Mediterranean]



**HMAT *Marere* (A21)** (Photo from State Library of NSW a638400)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P11067.001

**An unidentified sergeant encourages a recalcitrant horse up the gangway onto A21 HMAT Marere.**

*(Photo c October, 1914)*

Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin joined M.E.F. (Mediterranean Expeditionary Force) on 8th April, 1915.

E. H. Griffin, 132 Lennox Street, Richmond, Victoria, wife of 1317 Farrier Sergeant Griffin, wrote to Base Records on 2nd May, 1915 to advise *"I am sending my right address in case of any message, also for pay."*

Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin proceeded from Alexandria on 22nd March, 1916 to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 28th March, 1916.

Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin was transferred to 1st Divisional Ammunition Column, Australian Field Artillery on 15th May, 1916. He was taken on strength of D.A.C. & posted to No. 2 Section on the same day.

### **1st Divisional Ammunition Column**

The 1st Division Ammunition Column belonged to the 1st Division Artillery. Its role was the provision of ammunition forward to the gun positions.

In post-19th Century conventional warfare, artillery is a dominant component of military combat power. During WW1, the nature, range and effect of artillery fire dominated the battlefields of the Western Front in particular on a scale that has rarely been rivalled since.

To sustain this effect, the logistics of supply of ammunition are critical.

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Artillery ammunition is the single greatest commodity required by a combat force in terms of weight and footprint.

The weight and volume of artillery ammunition meant that keeping ammunition up to the guns at the rates required was an all-encompassing supply chain issue from manufacture through storage, distribution and provision, to disposal of unexploded ordnance and recovery of re-useable components.

Each Division had an Ammunition Column, which in the Supply Chain is classified as 'Second Line' supply to keep ammunition up to the guns by moving it from "Third Line" Supply Depot storage up to the Front ("First Line"). It was a mammoth task involving motor and horse drawn transport, heavy and light rail and tramways. Ammunition dumps and transport near the Front Line were high priority targets of the enemy's guns, and later, aircraft.

Horse drawn transport laden with ammunition is a doubly risky business. Horses are vulnerable to all forms of small arms and artillery and the cargo is such that a hit is generally catastrophic. It is not for nothing that many drivers received bravery awards. Many were killed in the process of carrying out their assigned tasks.

*(Information from VWMA – Steve Larkins)*

Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin reported sick on 17th January, 1917. He was admitted to "1st A.R.R. Stat." in France on 17th January, 1917 with Varicose Ulcer. Farrier Sergeant Griffin was transferred to 1st Australian Field Ambulance then transferred to 38th Casualty Clearing Station. He was transferred to No. 5 Ambulance Train on 19th January, 1917 & was admitted to No. 9 General Hospital, Rouen, France on 20th January, 1917 with I.C.T. (inflammation of connective tissues) Right Leg. Farrier Sergeant Griffin was transferred on 21st January, 1917 to No. 2 Convalescent Depot at Rouen, France.

Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin joined A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot) at Etaples, France from Hospital on 9th February, 1917.

Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin was written up for a Crime on 7th March, 1917 while posted at A.G.B.D. – On 27th February, 1917 neglecting to Parade for Duty when warned. He was severely reprimanded by Officer Commanding, Australian General Base Depot.

Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin proceeded to England on 8th April, 1917 from A.G.B.D. at Etaples to be P. Base (Permanent Base). He was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot, Weymouth, England on 10th April, 1917 from overseas.

The Medical History form for Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin has the following: "*Boarded Weymouth 10.4.17. Finding:- Permanently unfit for General Service. Fit for Home Service. (signed) Capt. M.O. (Medical Officer) in charge Verne Citadel.*"

Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin was marched out from No. 2 Command Depot (Verne Citadel) on 21st April, 1917 & was marched in to No. 3 Camp, Parkhouse, Wiltshire on the same day.

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 & Dorset. Later Training & Convalescing Units were combined under the one Command Depot.

Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin was detached for temporary duty with Australian Provost Corps at Tidworth, Wiltshire from 8th May, 1917. He was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot, Weymouth on 6th June, 1917 from Tidworth.

Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin was sent sick to Sidney Hall Hospital, Weymouth, Dorset on 14th July, 1917 from No. 2 Command Depot, Weymouth.

Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin died at 7.50 pm on 15th July, 1917 at Sidney Hall Military Hospital, Weymouth, Dorset, England from Pneumonia.



### Sidney Hall Military Hospital, Weymouth

A death for Alfred Griffin, aged 39, was registered in the September quarter, 1917 in the district of Weymouth, Dorset, England.

Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin was buried on 18th July, 1917 in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England – Grave number 3171, Section “C”. This is now recorded by CWGC as Plot number II. C. 3171 and he now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

From the burial report of Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin - Coffin was Elm. Military Funeral. Officiating clergyman – T. H. Justice, Monte Video Camp, No. 2 Australian Command Depot, Weymouth.

Remarks of Interest to Next Of Kin – *“Deceased was unknown to me.”* (signed T. H. Justice, A.I.F. Chaplain C. of E.)

The 3rd Military District replied to Base Records on 24th July, 1917 with the following letter: *“With reference to your 95326 of the 18th instant, reporting 1317 Farrier Sergeant A. GRIFFIN, 1st Divisional Ammunition Column, died 15/7/1917, inquiring cause, at Sydney Hall Military Hospital, please note that the next of kin has been advised, and is now residing at 167 Bank Street, South Melbourne.”*

Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin, 2nd Brigade Ammunition Column, requested in his Will (extracted from his Pay Book) that in the event of his death the whole of his property & effects be given to his wife – Mrs E. H. Griffin, 132 Lennox Street, Richmond, Victoria.

A War Pension was granted to Emily H. Griffin, 167 Bank St., Sth Melbourne, widow of the late Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin, in the sum of 56/- per fortnight from 18th September, 1917.

On 8th March, 1918 Mrs E. H. Griffin, 1 Balmoral Street, South Yarra, made a request at Base Records Enquiry Office for the Death Certificate of Sergeant (Farrier) Alfred Griffin, 1317.

Base Records forwarded to Mrs E. H. Griffin a certificate of report of death of the late No. 1317, Farrier Sergeant A. Griffin, 1st Divisional Ammunition Column, on 9th March, 1918.

Communications sent to Mrs H. Griffin, 1 Balmoral Street, South Yarra, Victoria, from Base Records in 1921 were returned unclaimed. A notice for the Press was prepared on 24th March, 1921 to locate Mrs H. Griffin, next-of-kin of the late Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin. A notice for the Press was prepared on 15th July, 1921.

A change of address for E. H. Griffin, widow of the late Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin, was recorded by Base Records on 25th October, 1922 as 70 Greville St, Prahran.

Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Farrier Sergeant Griffin's widow – Mrs E. H. Griffin, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent June, 1921 – returned & re-despatched August, 1922. Plaque sent August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin - service number 1317, aged 39, of 1st Div. Ammunition Col., Australian Field Artillery. He was the son of James and Maria Griffin; husband of E. H. Griffin, of 9 Kerferd Place, Albert Park, Victoria.

Farrier Sergeant A. Griffin is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 21.



*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

The Richmond War Memorial, located in Barkly Gardens, Mary Street, Richmond, Victoria, does not list individual names.



**Richmond War Memorial** (Photo from Monument Australia – Graeme Saunders)

The Watford War Memorial (also known as Watford Peace Memorial), located outside Town Hall, Watford, Hertfordshire, England does not list individual names.



**Watford War Memorial** (Photo by Matt Brown)

Alfred Griffin is remembered on the Roll of Honour in St. Andrews Church, Park Road, Watford, Hertfordshire, England.

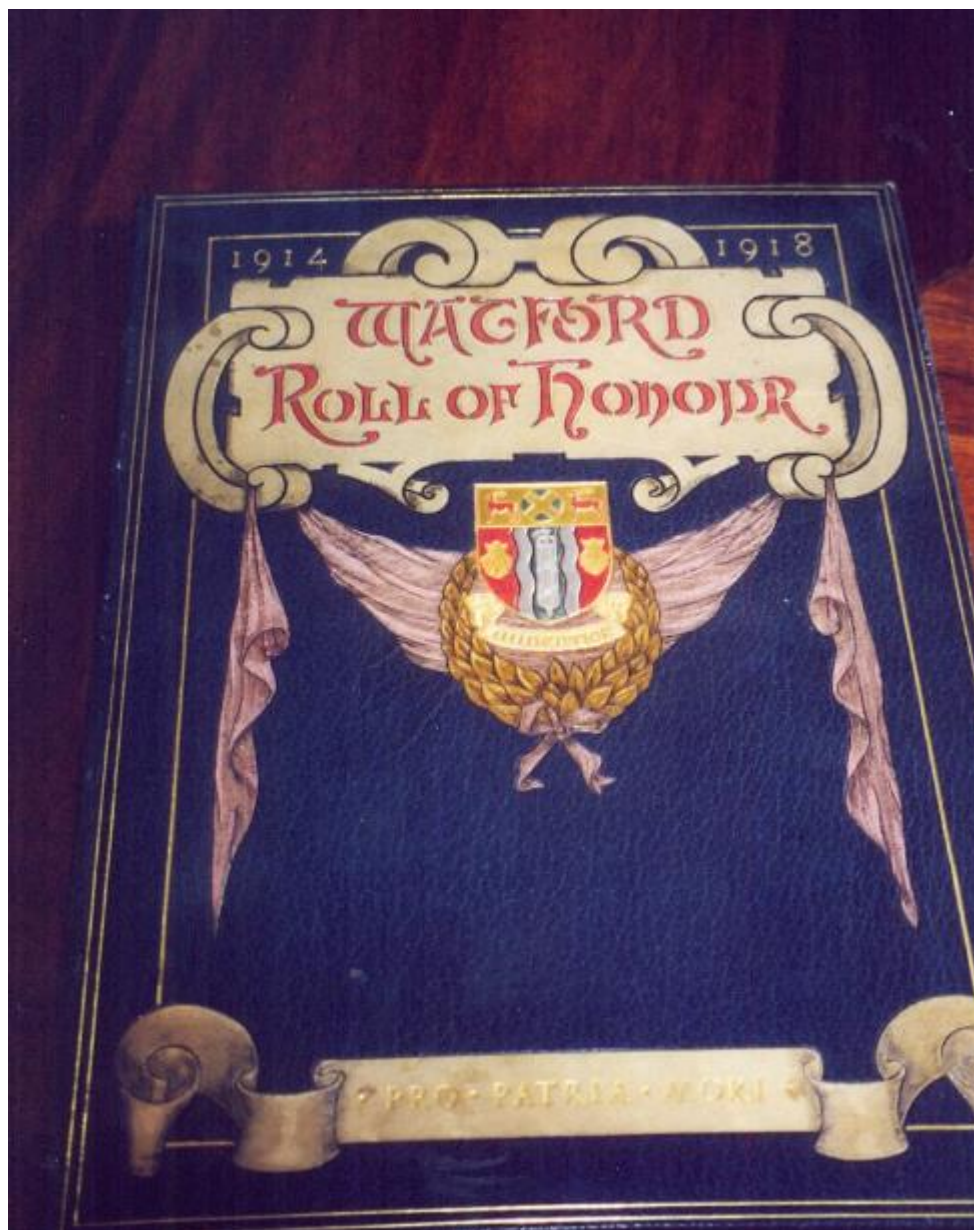


**St. Andrews Church, Watford** (Photo above from Hertfordshire Churches; below from IWM)





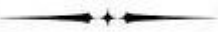
Alfred Griffin is remembered on the Watford Borough Roll of Honour which is a hand written book thought to be designed by the Watford School of Art to remember the 830 service men who fought and died during the First World War. There are over 500 other service men who fought during the First World War who do not feature in the Borough book.



**Watford Borough Roll of Honour** (Photo from IWM)

(80 pages of Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin'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

### ON THE FIELD OF HONOR

#### 329TH OFFICIAL LIST

#### DIED OF ILLNESS

New South Wales – Far-Sergt A. Griffin, Richmond, Vic.

(*The Ballarat Courier*, Victoria – 10 August, 1917)

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### MOTHER LOSES TWO SONS

....

#### NEW OF THE BOYS AT HOME AND ABROAD

Since our last list, three weeks ago, the following Richmond casualties have been reported:-

...

Died of Illness

Farrier-Sergeant A. Griffin

(*Richmond Guardian*, Victoria – 25 August, 1917)

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### BENDIGO SOLDIER'S DEATH

#### COMRADE'S SYMPATHY

Mrs. E. Bolitho, who formerly resided in Bendigo, but is now residing in Richardson-street, Albert Park, Melbourne, has received a letter from **Sergeant A. Griffin**, giving particulars of the death of her son, Private F. L. Bolitho, who died in hospital in England on 26th May from illness. Private Bolitho was the sixth son of the late Mr. W. Bolitho, who was for many years manager of the Great Southern mine. Private F. L. Bolitho embarked for England in July, 1915, and saw service in Egypt and France. **Sergeant Griffin conveyed the sympathy of the Anzac Provost Corps at the death of their comrade.** Mrs. Bolitho has also received a letter of sympathy from the Mayor and councillors of South Melbourne. Four of Mrs. Bolitho's sons have been on active service. Two are still in France. Private Arthur Bolitho, who was at the landing in Gallipoli, was wounded and invalided home.

(*Bendigonian*, Bendigo, Victoria – 27 September, 1917)

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### IN MEMORIAM

#### On Active Service

GRIFFIN – Died of pneumonia, in hospital in England, 15th July, 1917, Farrier Sergt. Griffin, late 15th Hussars, loving husband of Emily H. Griffin, after nearly three years' active service.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 15 July, 1918)

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**IN MEMORIAM**

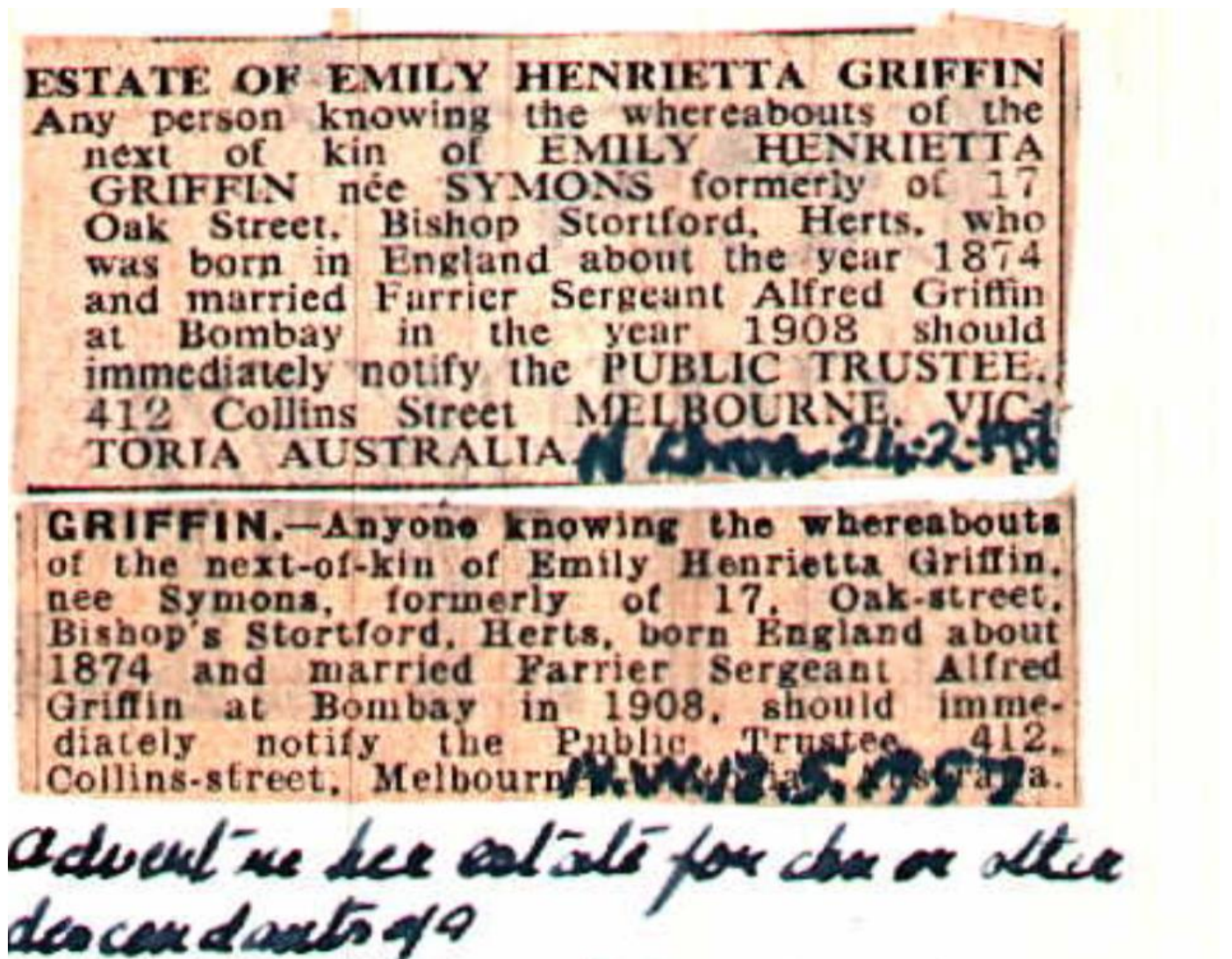
**On Active Service**

GRIFFIN – In loving memory of Sergt. A. Griffin, late 15th Hussars, who died of pneumonia at Weymouth, England, 17th July, 1917, loving husband of E. H. Griffin. Rest in peace.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 17 July, 1920)

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1956 Newspaper notice for Estate of Emily Henrietta Griffin – she died on 1st August, 1954.



### 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)*

A letter from Base Records, dated 7th July, 1921, to Mrs H. Griffin, 1 Balmoral Street, South Yarra, Victoria, advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of her husband, the late No. 1317 Farrier-Sergeant A. Griffin, 1st Divisional Ammunition Column, had not been answered & non-receipt of a reply within 21 days would have to be accepted as indicating that no further action was to be taken.

Another letter was re-addressed to Mrs E. H. Griffin, 9 Kerford Place, Albert Park, Victoria, on 19th July, 1921.

Farrier Sergeant Alfred Griffin does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*Loving Husband Of Emily Griffin*

*Rest In Peace From Earthly Strife*

### **Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England**

Weymouth became a depot for Australian forces in 1916 and 83 of the 147 First World War burials in Melcombe Regis Cemetery are of Australian servicemen; most of these graves are scattered in the old part. The 36 Second World War burials are in the extension. The cemetery also contains seven war graves of other nationalities and one non-war burial.

*(Information from CWGC)*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00333

**Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919**



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00332

**Some of the Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919**



*(Photo courtesy of Steve Stewart)*



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)





(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

**Australians in Weymouth**

**What was life like for the Australians?**

**The Camp**

Within the camp, there were educational facilities as well as medical rooms which helped to recover and re-educate the soldiers. There was help provided for soldiers suffering with physical or emotional impairments, such as massage rooms, psychotherapy training rooms and a remedial gymnasium. This strengthened the men to help them recover from their injuries. The educational aspects were diverse, allowing soldiers to pick a completely different profession for when they went back home. This included architecture, motor engineering, electrical and carpentry classes. Another option allowed the soldiers to be retrained in their previous professions which may have become more difficult, due to loss of limbs or new techniques that may have been created whilst they were at war.

**The Town**

Weymouth benefited hugely from the influx of Australian and New Zealand soldiers. One shop that still exists today is the Acutt's clothing store, which used to sell everything a soldier could possibly need for his uniform, from the whole jacket to just the buttons and epaulettes. As well as Acutt's, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia also opened up their own branch in Weymouth, for the soldiers to use during their time over here, which highlighted the permanence of their stay. There was also a monthly newsletter that circulated amongst the men, which was produced by local company Sherrens, which still operates on the Granby Industrial estate.

**Special Events**

The Australian recovery camps took special occasions very seriously, such as Christmas and Easter, to try and reduce the ache of home sickness and being away from their family and friends. Most camps tried to make their soldiers feel at home, with large celebrations with Christmas dinners and special guest performances at Easter. However, there were also other special events that gained press attention, such as the opening of the YMCA building, which used to be on Abbotshay Road. This provided help and welfare to the Australian soldiers, such as free food and blankets. There were fundraising days for the prisoner-of-war soldiers that had been captured during the fall of the Kut, who were mainly Dorset soldiers. From these fundraising days in Weymouth, Dorchester and Bridport, the towns managed to raise £3,600 to help comfort the prisoners.

**Entertainment**

Entertainment was a highly important aspect of the soldiers' lives whilst they were in Weymouth. It kept the soldiers motivated and in high spirits whilst they were ill or injured, in hopes of helping to speed up their recovery. Throughout the camps in Weymouth, there was always something to watch or listen to, whether it was singing and acting companies who toured round the camps or at the Pavilion Theatre on the Esplanade. Sometimes, the soldiers even made their own entertainment, with marching bands and choirs being set up by the YMCA building in Weymouth. There were also balls and dances at the camps themselves and even a small trip to the Alexandra Garden along the Esplanade. Dating also became a significant part of the soldiers' lives, with many Weymouth women losing husbands and boyfriends at war. Finding comfort with the new soldiers at the camps, this led to many marriages between the two groups, and some migrating back to Australia with their new families, or staying here and leaving their families.

**3**

**#weyforward**

Images courtesy of Australian War Memorial, Newsletter originals published by Sherrens, Ltd. Weymouth



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

## Australians in Weymouth

### From Weymouth to Auswey - A Soldier's Récovery



During the First World War between 1914 and 1918, many injured soldiers who were mostly from Australia and New Zealand, were brought to Weymouth. They were known as ANZACS (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps). They were placed in Repatriation and Rehabilitation camps in Westham, Littlehampton, Chichester and Portland. This was in the hope of sending them back to the line of action in France or back home to Australia due to lack of fitness. Weymouth was picked as the place to set up camp, as it was seen as a relaxing seaside location. This would help to heal the sick and injured Australians who had been fighting in major battles of the war or on the Western Front between France and Belgium.



### Past and Present Westham

As you can see on the map of the Westham camp, many of the street names have an Australian connection, highlighting the history of the area. Residents of the housing estates, which are now built where the camp once stood, are still digging up remains of the camp, such as bullets or cooking equipment.

Although thousands of ANZACS passed through Weymouth during the First World War, there are some soldiers who unfortunately did not make it home. These soldiers are proudly buried in the Melcombe Regis cemetery. This is only 100 metres away from one of the major camps in Westham, with 142 soldiers buried in the cemetery, 83 from Australia and 59 from New Zealand. These graves are similar to some of the war memorials and graves placed around Europe, much like the Somme in France. Unfortunately, there are too many grave names to be displayed on this board, but they can be found on the website link at the bottom of this board.





Modern Day Street Names	Westham Camp - December 1916
Queen Close	Soldiers Huts
Swine Road	Company Officers
Queensland Road	Regimental Institute
Kitchener Road	Minutemen Rifle Range
Corporation Road	Officers' Mess
Shark Road	Shower Block
Longcroft Road	Vehicle Shed, Mob Store
Wessex Road	Home Shelter
Parth Street	Cool Yard
Melcombe Street	Cook House
Adelaide Crescent	YMCA
Abbotsbury Road	Dung Pit
Sydney Street	Fire Hydrant
Shirecroft Road	

**1**

[www.westhamcommunitygroup.co.uk](http://www.westhamcommunitygroup.co.uk)

#weyforward

supported by The National Lottery

Images courtesy of Australian War Memorial



Photo of Serjeant A. Griffin's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England.



*(Photo from Find a Grave – Janice Dennis)*



*(Photo courtesy of Allan Wood)*