

**Reading Cemetery,
Reading, Berkshire
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



4318 PRIVATE

W. R. HEARD

20TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

17TH AUGUST, 1918 Age 28

William Robert HEARD

William Robert Heard was born at Tumbarumba, NSW on 18th October, 1889 to mother Rachel Elizabeth Heard. His father was not listed on the Birth Registration but was named as William Gregson in a letter by Rachel Heard in 1921 to Base Records.

The 1913 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Albury, subdivision of Tumbarumba, NSW recorded William Robert Heard, Labourer of Tumbarumba. His mother – Rachel Elizabeth Heard, domestic duties was also listed at Tumbarumba.

William Robert Heard was a 25 year old, single, Labourer from Tumbarumba, NSW when he enlisted at Cootamundra, NSW on 11th September, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 4318 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother - Mrs R. Heard, of Tumbarumba, NSW.

Private William Robert Heard was posted to Camp at Holsworthy, NSW on 11th September, 1915. He was transferred to "A" Company of 20th Battalion at Casula, NSW on 17th November, 1915 then transferred to "B" Company of 20th Battalion at Casula on 30th November, 1915. Private Heard was transferred to "C" Company of 20th Battalion at Casula on 11th January, 1916.

Private William Robert Heard embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Orsova* (A67) on 11th March, 1916 with the 20th Infantry Battalion, 10th Reinforcements.

Private William Heard embarked from Alexandria on H. T. *Scotian* on 9th May, 1916 to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 18th May, 1916.

Private William Heard was written up for an offence on 3rd June, 1916 while at Marseilles – Breaking Quarantine Camp & not being in possession of an Identity disc - both on 2nd June, 1916. He was awarded 2 days Field Punishment No. 2 by Capt. H. McLennan.

Private William Heard was taken on strength with 2nd Australian Divisional Base Depot on 5th June, 1916 & joined his Battalion in France on 30th July, 1916.

Private William Heard was admitted to 2nd D.R.S. (Divisional Rest Station) on 3rd October, 1916 with Furunculosis. He was sent to Field Ambulance on 4th October, 1916 then transferred & admitted to 3rd Casualty Clearing Station the same day suffering from Furunculosis (Boils). Private Heard was transferred to 25th General Hospital at Camiers on 5th October, 1916. He embarked for England on 10th October, 1916 on Hospital Ship *St. David* & was admitted to 2nd Eastern General Hospital at Brighton, England on 10th October, 1916 suffering from boils.

Private William Heard was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs from Hospital on 7th November, 1916.

Private William Heard was marched out to 5th Training Battalion from Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 8th November, 1916.

Pte Heard was admitted to Military Hospital at Tidworth, Wiltshire on 27th November, 1916 with a deviated Septum. He was operated on the 28th November, 1916. The Hospital notes read "*suffered from headaches & shortness of breath owing to inability to breathe through nose.... 7 days light duty.*" Private Heard was discharged on 5th December, 1916.

Private William Heard was marched in from Hospital to No. 1 Command Depot on 7th December, 1916 & medically classified.

Private William Heard proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone from 2nd Draft Depot on 3rd February, 1917. He was marched into 2nd A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 4th February, 1917. Private Heard was marched out of 2nd A.D.B.D. on 6th March, 1917 to join his Unit. He rejoined his Unit from being in Hospital on 8th March, 1917.

Private William Robert Heard was wounded in action in France on 3rd May, 1917. He was taken to 5th Australian Field Ambulance with gunshot wounds to face then transferred to 3rd Australian Casualty Clearing Station the same day. Private Heard was transferred to Ambulance Train on 4th May, 1917 & admitted to 5th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 4th May, 1917. Private Heard was invalided to England from Havre on Hospital Ship *Panama* on 15th May, 1917.

Private William Heard was admitted to 4th Southern General Hospital at Plymouth on 16th May, 1917 with gunshot wounds to face & a fractured jaw. He was discharged to furlough on 27th June, 1917 & was to report to Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 11th July, 1917.

Private William Heard was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 12th July, 1917. He was medically classified as B1 A4 (Fit for Overseas Training Camp when passed dentally fit). Private Heard was passed as dentally fit on 26th July, 1917.

Private William Heard proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone from Overseas Training Depot on 4th August, 1917. He was marched in to 2nd A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Havre, France on 6th August, 1917. Private Heard was marched out to his Unit on 19th August, 1917 & rejoined his Unit in the field on 22nd August, 1917.

Private William Robert Heard was wounded in action (2nd Occasion) in France on 20th September, 1917. He was taken to 6th Australian Field Ambulance on 21st September, 1917 with gunshot wounds to left arm. He was transferred the same day to 10th Casualty Clearing Station then transferred by Ambulance Train 5. Private Heard was admitted to 7th Convalescent Depot on 21st September, 1917 at Boulogne then transferred to 3rd Rest Camp at Boulogne on 30th September, 1917.

Private William Heard was marched in from Boulogne to 2nd A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Havre on 4th October, 1917. He was marched out to his Unit on 18th October, 1917 & rejoined his Battalion from Hospital in the field on 20th October, 1917.

Private William Heard was on leave to England from Belgium on 4th March, 1918 & rejoined his Battalion from leave on 22nd March, 1918.

Private William Heard was sent sick to 6th Australian Field Ambulance in France on 22nd April, 1918 then transferred the same day to 7th Field Ambulance with Scabies. He was discharged to duty on 27th April, 1918 & rejoined his Battalion from Hospital the same day.

Private William Heard was taken to 9th Australian Field Ambulance on 24th May, 1918 in France – cause “Not yet determined” – Pyrexia (fever). He was transferred to 61st casualty Clearing Station the same day then transferred on 26th May, 1918 to Ambulance Train 20. Private Heard was admitted to 7th Canadian General Hospital at Etaples, France on 27th May, 1918 – cause “Not yet determined”. Private Heard was invalided to England on 3rd June, 1918 on Hospital Ship *Brighton*.

Private William Heard was admitted to Reading War Hospital, Reading, Berkshire, England on 3rd June, 1918 with Trench Fever. Rachel Heard, mother of Private William Robert Heard, was advised on 24th June, 1918 that her son was in Reading War Hospital suffering from Trench Fever. She was advised on 8th July, 1918 that her son was suffering from Trench Fever and Septicaemia & was seriously ill on 27th June, 1918. Rachel Heard was advised on 24th July, 1918 that her son's condition was stationary. She was again advised on 30th July, 1918 that her son was progressing favourably.

22nd Australian Infantry Battalion

It entered the trenches of the Western Front for the first time in April 1916 and in the following month had the dubious honour of being the first Australian battalion to be raided by the Germans. The 20th took part in its first major offensive around Pozieres between late July and the end of August 1916. After a spell in a quieter sector of the front in Belgium, the 2nd Division, which included the 5th Brigade, came south again in October. The 20th Battalion provided reinforcements for the attack near Flers between 14 and 16 November, launched in conditions that Charles Bean described as the worst ever encountered by the AIF.

In 1917, the 20th was involved in the follow-up of German forces after their retreat to the Hindenburg Line, and was one of four battalions to defeat a counter-stroke by a German force, almost five times as strong, at Lagnicourt. The Battalion took part in three major battles before the year was out, second Bullecourt (3-4 May) in France, and Menin Road (20-22 September) and Poelcappelle (9-10 October) in Belgium.

The spring of 1918 brought a major German offensive. The 20th Battalion was one of many Australian battalions rushed to stop it, and it encountered some particularly severe fighting when ordered to attack at Hangard Wood on 7 April. With the German Army's last desperate offensive defeated, the 20th participated in the battles that pushed it ever closer to defeat: Amiens on 8 August, the legendary attack on Mont St Quentin on 31 August, and the forcing of the Beaurevoir Line around Montbrehain on 3 October. Montbrehain was the battalion's last battle of the war.

(From the Australian War Memorial)

Private William Robert Heard died at 4 pm on 17th August, 1918 at No. 1 War Hospital, Reading, Berkshire, England from Septicaemia and Oedema of lungs. According to information supplied by Rachel Heard, mother of Private William Robert Heard, for the Roll of Honour – she stated that he had been gassed at Amiens.

A death for William Heard, aged 28, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of Reading, Berkshire, England.

Private William Robert Heard was buried at 11 am on 21st August, 1918 – Screen Wall. 72. 16469. He does not have a headstone. Those buried in Plot 72 & buried in other parts of the cemetery that do not have headstones marking their graves are named on the Memorial Screen Wall located near the Cross of Sacrifice. Their deaths are still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. From the burial report of Private Heard - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military Funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the "Union Jack" and surmounted by a beautiful wreath sent by "His Comrades "B" Block, Reading War Hospital. A number of A.I.F. patients in Hospital attended the funeral. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file contains a letter from Miss Gray, Red Cross Visitor, Reading who writes: "*Re 4318 Pte W. Heard, 20th Battn. He was admitted into No. 4 War Hpl. Reading on the 3rd June and was there until Aug. 12th, when he was sent to No. 1 War Hpl. Reading, so Miss Gray only saw him for a few days, and during the last day or so he was scarcely able to speak at all. He died at 4 o'clock on Saturday afternoon Aug. 17th, of Septicemia and Admea of lung, following trench fever. He was buried the following Wednesday Aug. 21st, at 11 o'clock in the plot of ground laid aside for soldiers in the Reading Cemetery.*"

Base Records contacted Mrs R. E. Heard, as the registered next-of-kin for the late Private W. R. Heard, on 18th November, 1921 enquiring if there were any nearer blood relatives than herself (for instance was his father still alive) due to the "Deceased Soldiers Estates Act 1918" which stated that the War Medals & Mementoes of a deceased soldier were to be handed in the following order of relationship – Widow, eldest surviving son, eldest surviving daughter, father, mother, eldest surviving brother, eldest surviving sister etc. Rachel E. Heard replied to Base Records on 1st December, 1921 stating "*I am next of kin of Private W. R. Heard, No. 4318, 20th Battalion.*"

Base Records wrote to Rachel Heard again on 20th December, 1921 stating that the "*information you supplied is hardly sufficient to enable me to properly dispose of the war medals, etc., of you late son.... Will you kindly advise me whether the father of the late soldier is still living, and if so, his present address, as his claims must be considered first unless there are good and sufficient reasons for varying the procedure.*" Another letter was sent by Rachel Heard, mother of the late Private W. R. Heard, on 29th December, 1921 stating that she couldn't give any information regarding the father of her late son except that his name was William Gregson & he was the father of her 3 children – 2 daughters & her late son. Rachel Heard stated that William Gregson had left her & her children over 26 years ago & they were not married. She had worked & brought up her family by herself & had no knowledge of the right address for William Gregson. She had been told that he lives in a town called Henty, NSW.

Pte William Robert Heard was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Heard's mother - Mrs R. E. Heard, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent March, 1922 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

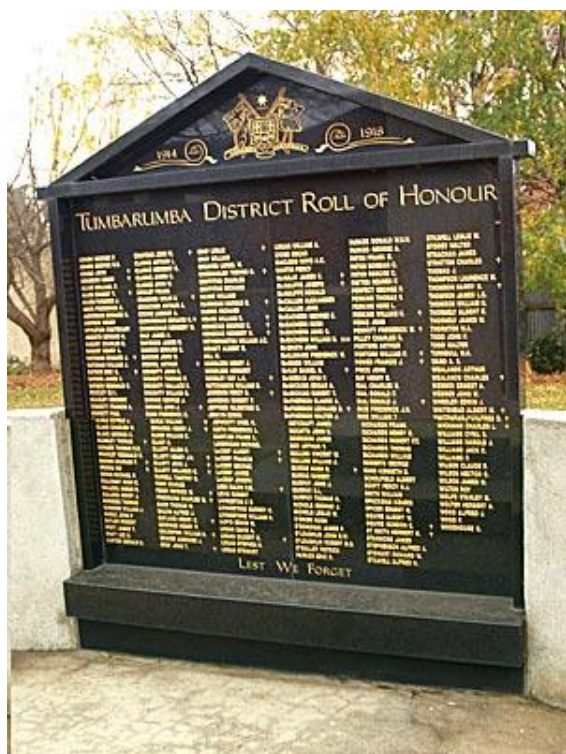
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private William Robert Heard – service number 4318, aged 28, of 20th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Rachael Elizabeth Heard of Tumbarumba, New South Wales.

William R. Heard is remembered on the Tumbarumba District War Memorial for WW1, located in Memorial Park, Bridge & Winton Streets, Tumbarumba, NSW.



Tumbarumba District War Memorial

(Photos from Mattinbgn & Register of War Memorials in NSW – Peter Levarre-Waters)



Private W. R. Heard is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 91.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(75 pages of Private William Robert Heard'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

FOR AUSTRALIA

CASUALTY LIST No. 415

ILL

W. R. HEARD, Tumbarumba (p.r.w., second occasion)

(The Sun, Sydney, NSW – 8 July, 1918)

TUMBARUMBA

(From Our Own Correspondent)

The sad intelligence was conveyed on Friday last, through Rev. H. J. Velvin, to Mrs Heard, Newtown, Tumbarumba, that her son, Private Robert William Heard, 20th Battalion, had died on 18th inst., cause of death being unknown, but was being investigated. Apart from an intimation of illness from the base records office, light is thrown on this point by information received by a sister of the deceased soldier in Melbourne, through the Red Cross Society, that he was suffering from gassing and trench fever, though the last report stated that he was considered out of danger. The late Private Heard enlisted about two years ago, and would have attained his 28th year on the 18th of next month. He was a respectable, worthy young man, and the deepest sympathy of all will be felt for the aged, widowed mother and his two sisters.

(Albury Banner and Wodonga Express, NSW – 6 September, 1918)

CASUALTIES

Died of Illness – W. R. Heard, Tumbarumba

(Albury Banner and Wodonga Express, NSW – 13 September, 1918)

TUMBARUMBA

(From Our Own Correspondent)

A genuine and heartfelt sympathy for brave and devoted men attracted a large congregation at St. Jude's Church on Sunday last at the memorial service for the late Privates W. R. Heard and A. Hetherington. The floral tributes were many and very beautiful. The rector officiated.

(Albury Banner and Wodonga Express, NSW – 27 September, 1918)

Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire, England

Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire contains 248 War Graves, 17 of those being from Australian Forces – World War 1.

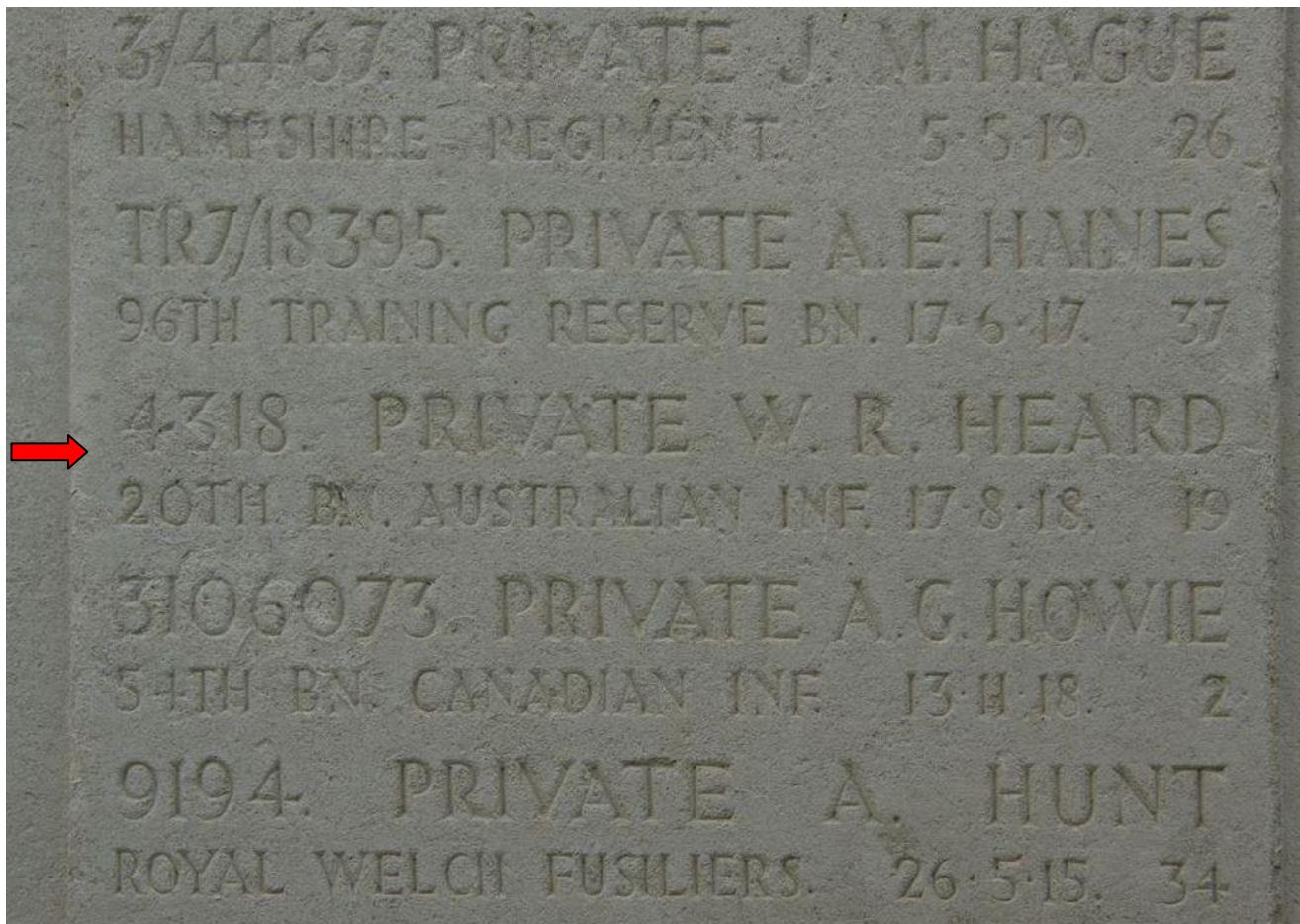
The War Graves Plot is situated at the back of the cemetery, in the right hand corner from the entrance. A Screen Wall Memorial commemorates those buried in Plot 72 and those buried in other parts of the cemetery whose graves are not marked by headstones. There are 207 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war and 41 of the 1939-1945 war. There is also 1 Serbian burial.

(Information & photos from CWGC)



Cross of Sacrifice & Memorial Screen Wall, Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire *(Photo from CWGC)*

Photo of Private W. R. Heard's name on the Screen Wall Memorial in Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of Phil Wood)



(Photo from CWGC)