

**Byker & Heaton Cemetery,  
Newcastle Upon Tyne  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**1451 PRIVATE**

**A. J. HEARN**

**4TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**4TH AUGUST, 1915**

*R.I.P.*

*An Anzac*

## Alexander Joseph HEARN

Alexander Joseph Marks was born at Newcastle-on-Tyne, England to parents Morris and Margaret Hearn. His birth was registered in the March quarter, 1899 in the district of Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland, England.

The 1901 England Census recorded Alexander Marks as a 2 year old, living with his family at 268 Shipley Street, Byker, Northumberland, England. His parents were listed as Morris Marks ("Taylor", aged 31, born Poland Jew) & Margaret Marks (aged 30, born Workington (?), Cumberland). Two sons were listed on this Census – William Marks (aged 5, born Liverpool, Lancashire) & Alexander Marks (aged 2, born Newcastle on Tyne). Also listed was Simon Hern (Brother of Morris, "Taylor Machined", aged 36, born Poland Jew).

The 1911 England Census recorded Alexander Hearn as a 12 year old School Boy, living with his family at 351 South Boulevard, Hull, Yorkshire – East Riding, England. His parents were listed as Morris Hearn (Foreman Tailor, aged 41, born Poland) & Margaret Hearn (Housewife, aged 40, born Workington, England). Morris & Margaret Hearn had been married for 20 years, having had six children, one since having died. Alexander Hearn was one of five children listed on this Census (all born Newcastle on Tyne) – William Hearn (Message boy, aged 15), then Alexander, Lawrence Hearn (School boy, aged 9), Lilian Hearn (School girl, aged 6) & Dora Hearn (aged 4).

According to information supplied by his mother for the Roll of Honour – "Joseph Alexander Hearn" attended school at St. Dominic's Roman Catholic School, Newcastle on Tyne, England.

According to information supplied by his mother for the Roll of Honour – "Joseph Alexander Hearn" came to Australia when he was 15 years & 5 months.

Alexander Joseph Hearn stated he was a 21 year old, single, Tailor's Machinist from Perry Street, Campsie, Sydney, NSW when he enlisted at Liverpool, NSW on 16th November, 1914 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 1451 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs M. Hearn, of Perry Street, Campsie, Sydney, NSW (later address listed as Canterbury Rd, Canterbury, Sydney, NSW).

Private Alexander Joseph Hearn commenced recruit training on 16th November, 1914.

Private Alexander Joseph Hearn embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Seang Bee (A48)* on 11th February, 1915 with the 4th Infantry Battalion, 2nd Reinforcements.

Private Alexander Joseph Hearn was transferred to "C" Company, 4th Battalion on 30th March, 1915.

Private Alexander Joseph Hearn was wounded at the Dardanelles on 10th May, 1915 with a shoulder injury – severe. He was admitted to 17th General Hospital at Alexandria on 13th May, 1915. He was transferred to H.M.S. *Asturias* for England on 17th July, 1915.

### 4th Battalion

The 4th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. Like the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions it was recruited from New South Wales and, together with these other battalions, formed the 1st Brigade.

The battalion was raised within a fortnight of the declaration of war in August 1914 and embarked just two months later. After a brief stop in Albany, Western Australia, the battalion proceeded to Egypt, arriving on 2 December. The battalion took part in the ANZAC landing on 25 April 1915 as part of the second and third waves. The commander of the 4th Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel A. J. O. Thompson, was killed the next day. At ANZAC, the battalion took part in the defence of the beachhead and in August, along with the rest of the 1st Brigade, led the charge at Lone Pine. The battalion served at ANZAC until the evacuation in December.

*(Extract of Battalion information from The Australian War Memorial)*

Private Alexander Joseph Hearn died on 4th August, 1915 at 4th London General Hospital, London, England from wounds received in action at Gallipoli - bullet wounds to chest causing empyema.

A death for Alexander Hearn, aged 16, was registered in the September quarter, 1915 in the district of Lambeth, London, England. According to information supplied by his mother for the Roll of Honour – “Joseph Alexander Hearn” was aged 16 years & 8 months when he died.

Private Alexander Joseph Hearn was buried in Byker & Heaton Cemetery, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Northumberland, England – Plot number XIV. U. 173 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

According to information supplied by his mother for the Roll of Honour – “Joseph Alexander Hearn” “was considered to be the youngest soldier to leave with the NSW Contingents 1914 to 1917.”

Base Records contacted Mrs M. Hearn, of Canterbury Rd, Canterbury, NSW, mother of the late Private Alexander Joseph Hearn in August, 1920 asking if there were any nearer blood relatives than herself, for instance his father, 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.

A reply was sent by Mrs Margaret Hearn, mother of the late Private Alexander Joseph Hearn, on 9th August, 1920 stating that her husband was alive & at the same address as she was. Mr Hearn stated that her son had made her his next-of-kin. She explained that her husband had no education & was unable to write.

Private Alexander Joseph Hearn was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Hearn’s father – Mr Hearn, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Alexander Joseph Hearn – service number 1451, of 4th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Morris and Margaret Hearn, of Canterbury Rd., Canterbury, Sydney, New South Wales. Native of England.

Private A. J. Hearn is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 40.



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

## **Boy Soldiers**

During the First World War, the Australian Army's enlistment age was 21 years or 18 years with the permission of a parent or guardian. Although boys aged 14-17 could enlist as buglers, trumpeters and musicians, many gave false ages in order to join as soldiers. Their numbers are impossible to determine.

*(Information from the Australian War Memorial)*

### **Boy Soldiers on the Roll of Honour for the First World War:**

Private **Alexander Joseph Hearn** (1451, 4th Battalion), from Campsie, NSW, was a tailor's apprentice before the war. He received bullet wounds to the chest at Gallipoli on 10 May 1915. Sent to the 4th London General Hospital, he died on 4 August 1915. He is buried in the Byker and Heaton Cemetery at Newcastle-on-Tyne. Joseph had been born in Newcastle-on-Tyne and come to Australia as a 15 year-old. His mother, writing after the war, said that he was 16 years and 8 months when he died. She thought that he was the youngest soldier to leave with a New South Wales unit.

*(Extract of information from the Australian War Memorial)*

(49 pages of Pte Alexander Joseph Hearn'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 YOUNGEST SOLDIER**

#### **DEATH IN LONDON**

Mr and Mrs Hearn, Campsie, have just received the news of the death in the London General Hospital of their son, Bugler A. J. Hearn. He was the youngest member of the first Australian Expeditionary Force, being only 15 ½ years



**The Late Bugler Hearn**

of age at the time of enlistment. He was born at Newcastle-on-Tyne. He received his wounds in a charge on May 28, being shot by a sniper through both collarbones, and having his right arm broken. The force of the bullet spun him round, and he then received five bullets in the back, the whole of them passing through the left lung. He was removed to the hospital and subsequently contracted typhoid fever, from which he died. He had been in Australia only 15 months when he enlisted.

(*The Sun*, Sydney, NSW, Australia – 13 August, 1915)

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## **YOUNEST MEMBER DIES**

### **SUCCUMBS TO TYPHOID AFTER BEING WOUNDED**

SYDNEY, Saturday

News has been received by Mr and Mrs Hearn, of Campsie, of the death in the London General Hospital of their son, Bugler A. J. Hearn. He was the youngest member of the first Australian Expeditionary Force, being only 15 ½ years of age at the time of enlistment. He was born at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Bugler Hearn received his wounds in a charge on May 28, being shot by a sniper through both collarbones, and having his right arm broken. The force of the bullet spun him round, and he then received five bullets in the back, the whole of them passing through the left lung. He was removed to the hospital and subsequently contracted typhoid fever, from which he died. He had been in Australia only 15 months when he enlisted.

(*The Herald*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia – 14 August, 1915) & (*The Ballarat Courier*, Victoria, Australia – 16 August, 1915)

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## **TOLL OF WAR**

### **SIXTY-FOURTH LIST**

NEW SOUTH WALES

DIED OF WOUNDS

Bglr. A. J. HEARN, 4th Bn., (2nd Rfcts), (previously reported wounded)

(*The Sun*, Sydney, NSW, Australia – 15 August, 1915)

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### **BRAVE BOY BUGLER**

Bugler A. J. Hearn, who has died of wounds in the London General Hospital, was a native of Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, and was only 15 ½ years of age when he enlisted in the N.S. Wales contingent, holding the record as the youngest member of the Australian Expeditionary Force. During the great attack at Gallipoli on May 28, the youthful soldier was shattered by bullet wounds when charging the Turkish trenches with his comrades. He was first hit by a sniper, and had both collar-bones broken and his right arm smashed. The force of the latter bullet spun him completely round, and at the moment he was a target for the enemy's riflemen, for he received five shots in the back, his left- lung being pierced. While in the military hospital lie contracted enteric fever, and was taken to England. His parents, who reside at Campsie, attach a sad interest to the fact that he left London with them to settle in Australia only 15 months ago, and has, after this short space, been carried back to find a grave in London, after falling in the service of England, for which, even at his early age, he had an intense patriotism.

(*Daily Examiner*, Grafton, NSW, Australia – 18 August, 1915) & (*Tweed Daily*, Murwillumbah, NSW – 21 August, 1915)

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## Byker & Heaton Cemetery, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Northumberland, England

Byker & Heaton Cemetery contains 283 Commonwealth War Graves - 159 scattered First World War burials, mostly of local men who had died in Newcastle's military hospitals, including the 1st Northern General and 124 graves from World War 2 mainly scattered throughout the cemetery except for a plot in the centre with 25 graves.



**Byker & Heaton Cemetery** (Photo above by daglish – Find a Grave; below from CWGC)



Photo of Private A. J. Hearn's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Byker & Heaton Cemetery, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Northumberland, England.



*(Photo by Brian54 – Find a Grave)*

### 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 A. J. Hearn does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*R.I.P.*

*An Anzac*