

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



Lest We Forget

World War 1



732 PRIVATE

J. M. HEFFERNAN

37TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

27TH MARCH, 1917

James Michael HEFFERNAN

Michael James Heffernan was born at Collingwood, Melbourne, Victoria in 1884 to parents James & Elizabeth Heffernan (nee Devine).

James Michael Heffernan stated he was a 30 year old, single, Coach Painter from Clifton Hill, Melbourne, Victoria when he enlisted on 9th March, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 732 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Elizabeth Heffernan (father deceased), 56 Ramsden Street, Clifton Hill, Melbourne, Victoria. James Michael Heffernan stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service due to bad teeth.

Private James Michael Heffernan was posted to Depot Battalion on 9th March, 1916 then transferred to "D" Company of 37th Battalion on 13th March, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 14th Reinforcements of 21st Battalion on 6th May, 1916 then transferred to 1st Reinforcements of 37th Battalion on 21st May, 1916. Private Heffernan was transferred to "B" Company of 37th Battalion on 26th May, 1916.

Private James Michael Heffernan embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Persic (A34)* on 3rd June, 1916 with the 10th Infantry Brigade, 37th Infantry Battalion, "B" Company & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 25th July, 1916.

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.

Private James Michael Heffernan was written up on 14th November, 1916 for disrespectful language to a N.C.O. on 12th November, 1916. He was awarded 10 days Field Punishment No. 2 by C. O. of 37th Battalion & forfeited 10 days' pay.

Private James Michael Heffernan proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 22nd November, 1916.

Private James Michael Heffernan was wounded (accidentally) on 25th February, 1917. He was admitted to 9th Field Ambulance on 25th February, 1917 with GSW (gunshot wound/s) to Neck – accidentally. Private Heffernan was transferred & admitted to 2nd Casualty Clearing Station on 25th February, 1917. He was reported to be seriously ill while a patient at 2nd Casualty Clearing Station. Private Heffernan was transferred to 10th Ambulance Train on 20th March, 1917 & admitted to 8th Stationary Hospital at Boulogne, France on 21st March, 1917. He was reported as seriously ill on 21st March, 1917. Private Heffernan was transferred to England on 24th March, 1917 on Hospital Ship *Cambria*.

A Statement of evidence was received on 1st March, 1917 showing that the wounds received by Private James Michael Heffernan were caused by an explosion of a grenade on 25th February, 1917. This was classed as wounded accidentally. No disciplinary action was proposed.

37th Battalion

The 37th Battalion was formed, as part of the 10th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division, in February 1916 at Seymour in Victoria. Its recruits were drawn from Melbourne, north-east Victoria and Gippsland.

After training in both Australia and Britain, the battalion moved to France on 23 November 1916. Within a week it had begun to occupy trenches on the Western Front, just in time for the onset of the terrible winter of 1916-17. During this time the 3rd Division was heavily involved in raiding the German trenches. In February 1917 the 37th Battalion provided 400 troops, with a similar party from the 38th Battalion, to form a special raiding "battalion". After several weeks of training this force staged a single 35-minute raid on the night of 27 February and was then disbanded.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 37th Battalion

Chapelle D'Armentieres

24th February, 1917 – Our artillery active all day. Today X day. A heavy bombardment to commence at 2 pm by Corps and Divisional Artillery.

10.30 pm – Heavy bombardment by Corps and Divi. Artillery at 10.30 pm.

25th February, 1917 – Today Y. day quiet. Specialists from 40th came in to relieve X Battn.

26th February, 1917 – Zero day. Zero hour 12.30 am on 27/2/17. Preparations on night of 26/27. Relief of X by 40th completed. Heavy preliminary bombardment commenced at 9.40 pm lasted until 10 pm. Enemy retaliation severe. We had no casualties.

(War Diary information from The Australian War Memorial)

Base Records wrote to Mrs E. Heffernan, 56 Ramsden Street, Clifton Hill, Victoria, dated 6th March, 1917 that “No. 732 Private J. M. Heffernan, was admitted to the 2nd Casualty Clearing Station 25/2/17, suffering from Gunshot Wound Neck, Dangerous.”

Base Records wrote to Mrs E. Heffernan, dated 12th March, 1917 that “No. 732 Private J. M. Heffernan, 37th Battalion is reported condition slightly improved.” Mrs Heffernan was advised again on 20th March, 1917 that “No. 732 Private J. M. Heffernan, 37th Battalion, is reported condition stationary.”

Base Records wrote to Mrs E. Heffernan, dated 25th March, 1917 to advise that “the condition of No. 732 Private J. M. Heffernan, 37th Battalion, is improving.”

Private James Michael Heffernan died at 11 pm on 27th March, 1917 at General Hospital, Croydon, England from wounds – G.S.W. to Neck. A Telegram was sent on 28th March, 1917 to Officer in charge Records, A.I.F., 130 Horseferry Road, Westminster, London, England from War Hospital, Croydon advising of the death of Private Heffernan.

A death for James M. Heffernan, aged 31, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Croydon, Kent/Surrey, England.

Private James Michael Heffernan was buried on 30th March, 1917 in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England – Australian Military Burial Ground Plot number 179. 024.

From the burial report of Private James Michael Heffernan - *Coffin was good, Polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military Funeral. Firing Party provided by the South African Regiment were in attendance. The “Last Post” was sounded by Buglers of the South African Regiment at the graveside. Prior to the interment of the deceased soldier’s remains a Memorial Service was held by Chaplain King, in the Roman Catholic Chapel, at Brookwood Cemetery. No relatives were present at the Funeral. Memorial to be erected by the Commonwealth Military Authorities.*

Base Records wrote to Mrs E. Heffernan, 56 Ramsden Street, Clifton Hill, Victoria, dated 31st March, 1917 to advise her “that information has been received to the effect that No. 732 Private J. M. Heffernan, 37th Battalion, has been pronounced out of danger.”

Base Records wrote to Mrs E. Heffernan on 29th March, 1923 stating that the site of her son’s grave in Brookwood Military Cemetery had been officially registered as Plot 11 Row F Grave 22. “While the actual place of burial remains unchanged the previous registration allotted thereto has been altered to conform with the uniform layout of this Cemetery.” This is now recorded by CWGC as Memorial reference – XI. F. 22. Private James Michael Heffernan has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

A War Pension was granted to Mrs Elizabeth Heffernan, widow of 56 Ramsden St, Clifton Hill, mother of the late Private James Michael Heffernan, in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 31st May, 1917.

Private James Michael Heffernan was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Heffernan's widowed mother – Mrs E. Heffernan, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent March, 1922 & Plaque sent May, 1923).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private J. M. Heffernan – service number 732, of 37th Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Private J. M. Heffernan is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 128.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(44 pages of Private James Michael Heffernan'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





AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

DA14005

From the Australian War Memorial:

Studio portrait of J Heffernan, possibly 732 Private (Pte) James Michael Heffernan, 37th Battalion. A coach painter from Clifton Hill, Victoria prior to enlistment, Pte Heffernan embarked with B Company from Melbourne on HMAT Persic on 3 June 1916. Later accidentally wounded, he was evacuated to England and on 27 March 1917, he died as a result of his wounds and was buried in the Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England.

This is one of a series of photographs taken by the Darge Photographic Company which had the concession to take photographs at the Broadmeadows and Seymour army camps during the First World War. In the 1930s, the Australian War Memorial purchased the original glass negatives from Algernon Darge, along with the photographers' notebooks. The notebooks contain brief details, usually a surname or unit name, for each negative.



Newspaper Notices

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

Containing the names of 34 officers and 857 men, the 279th casualty list was issued by the Defence Department yesterday.....

Wounded

Pte J. M. Heffernan, Clifton Hill (dang.)

(The Bendigo Independent, Victoria – 16 March, 1917)

THE 286th CASUALTY LIST

The Victorian names are:-

DIED OF WOUNDS

Private J. M. Heffernan, Clifton Hill.

(The Mildura Cultivator, Victoria – 11 April, 1917)

Personal and Social

Mrs Heffernan, of Clifton Hill, one of the most consistent workers in connection with religious and social movements in the parish, received information a few days ago of the death of her son, Pte J. M. Heffernan, at Croydon General Hospital.

(Advocate, Melbourne, Victoria – 14 April, 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. 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 15th July, 1921, to Mrs E. Heffernan, 56 Ramsden Street, Clifton Hill, Victoria advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of her son, the late Private J. M. Heffernan, 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.

Private J. M. Heffernan 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.



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 (Photo from CWGC)



Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photos by Magicfingers)



Australian Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photos by Magicfingers)





Australian War Graves (Photo courtesy of Neil Bright 2020)

Photo of Private J. M. Heffernan's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England.



(Photo by Neil Bright - 2020)

