

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

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



567 PRIVATE

J. J. HELION

42ND BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

19TH APRIL, 1917

James Joseph HELION

James Joseph Helion was born at Warwick, Queensland on 9th November, 1877 to parents James & Ellen Helion (nee Slattery).

James Joseph Helion was a 39 year old, single, Labourer from Mitchell, Queensland when he enlisted on 28th December, 1915 at Toowoomba, Queensland with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Roman Catholic & his next of kin was listed as his brother – Michael Raymond Helion, Stores Branch Railway Department, Townsville, Queensland.

Private James Joseph Helion was posted to No. 10 Depot Battalion on 28th December, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to 36th Battalion on 22nd January, 1916 then on 18th February, 1916 he was transferred to 42nd Battalion.

Private James Joseph Helion, Service number 567, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Borda* (A30) on 5th June, 1916 with the 42nd Infantry Battalion "C" Company & disembarked at Southampton, England on 23rd 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 Joseph Helion was sent sick to Brigade Hospital on 23rd September, 1916. He was admitted with an Inguinal Hernia & was transferred on 28th September, 1916 to Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire. The Hospital Admissions form recorded "refused operation." Private Helion was discharged on 30th September, 1916 & rejoined his Unit from Hospital on 1st October, 1916.

Base Records advised Mr M. R. Helion, Stores Branch, Railway Dept, Townsville, Queensland (listed as next of kin) on 10th October, 1916 that Private J. J. Helion had been admitted to Fargo Military Hospital on 28th September, 1916 suffering from a hernia, mild.

Private James Joseph Helion was marched out to No. 4 Command Depot at Wareham, Dorset on 16th November, 1916 from 42nd Battalion.

Private James Joseph Helion was marched out to Larkhill, Wiltshire on 9th December, 1916 from No. 4 Command Depot.

A Medical Report was completed on Private James Joseph Helion on 27th March, 1917 at Camp 13, Durrington, Wiltshire. His disability was recorded as Senility Hernia. His hernia had originated in Australia since infancy. Private Helion's essential facts relating to the case: "*Had Hernia when a child. Became more prominent in September last. Owing to age and Hernia is unable to carry our A class duties.*" He had been fitted with a Truss & his disability was aggravated by Field Service. The Officer in charge of the medical case recommended that Private Helion be discharged as permanently unfit. The Medical Board agreed finding that Private James Joseph Helion was permanently unfit for Home Service & permanently unfit for General Service.

Private James Joseph Helion was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, Dorset on 11th April, 1917 from 11th Training Battalion at Durrington, Wiltshire.

42nd Battalion

The 42nd Battalion was raised at Enoggera, on the outskirts of Brisbane, in December 1915 and became part of the 11th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division. Due to sharing its numeric title with the famous Scottish regiment the Black Watch, the battalion became known as the "Australian Black Watch". This association was recognised with a bagpipe band.

After training in Australia and Britain, the 42nd deployed to France on 26 November 1916 and entered the frontline for the first time on 23 December.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private James Joseph Helion died at 11.15 am on 19th April, 1917 at Hut 30, Monte Video Camp Hospital, Weymouth, Dorset, England from Senility & Heart Failure.

A death for James J. Helion, aged 41, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Weymouth, Dorset, England.

Private James Joseph Helion was buried on 24th April, 1917 in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England – Grave number 2552 Section "C".

This is now recorded by Commonwealth War Graves Commission as Plot number III. C. 2551 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

From the burial report of Private James Joseph Helion - *Coffin was Elm with brass fittings. Military Funeral by Chaplain P. Lynch. Pte Helion died suddenly whilst in the performance of his Military duties.*

Base Records contacted Mr M. R. Helion, Stores Branch, Railway Dept, Townsville, Queensland on 8th February, 1922 stating that he was registered on the records of the late No. 567 Private J. J. Helion, 42nd Battalion as the next of kin but required to know if there were any nearer blood relatives than himself & was specifically asked if his father and mother were still living or if there were any brothers older as the distribution of 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.

Base Records wrote to Headquarters, 1st District Base on 28th August, 1922 advising that they had sent a communication on the 8th February to Mr M. R. Helion of Stores Branch, Railway Department, Townsville, Queensland requesting to know if the parents of the late Private J. J. Helion were living or if there were any brothers older. Base Records advised that no reply had been received "*...and I shall be glad of any action you may be able to take that will obtain the desired information.*"

Base Records wrote to Headquarters, 1st District Base on 31st October, 1922 requesting to know when a reply might be expected to the communication dated 28th August, 1922 concerning the next of kin of the late Private J. J. Helion.

Mr W. B. Helion, Bell Street, Toowoomba, Officer in charge Stores, Railway Dept, Toowoomba, wrote to Base Records on 23rd November, 1922 regarding Next of Kin wanted: "*Re above, I beg to inform you deceased Private 567 James Joseph Helion 42nd Battalion was my brother whose parents are dead. I will furnish any further particulars you may desire and will probably be in Melbourne in the New Year and will call at your Office if necessary.*"

Base Records replied to Mr W. B. Helion on 7th December, 1922 advising "*...I am now in touch with deceased's eldest surviving brother, who is the actual next-of-kin, and the person entitled to receive the war medals, etc., in keeping with the instructions under the Deceased Soldiers' Estates Act of 1918.*"

Mr T. J. Helion, Railway Station, Clifton, Queensland, wrote to Base Records on 27th November, 1922 with the following: "*I notice an advertisement in the local press asking for next of kin of certain deceased soldiers. Re 567 Private J. J. Helion. I beg to inform you I am the oldest living member of the late James Joseph Helion's family. I am his oldest brother, my father and mother are both dead. The late Private J. J. Helion enlisted at Mitchell Queensland and joined the 42 Batt which left Queensland about May in either 1915 or 1916 for (I think) Melbourne by rail. My brother was born on the 9th November about the year 1876 at Rosenthal near Warwick Queensland. I heard of his death in England but have not heard any more about him until I saw your advert. I shall be glad to have any information you may possess of my late brother.*"

Base Records replied to Mr T. J. Helion on 7th December, 1922 advising "*...am forwarding under separate registered cover, the British War medal on account of the services of your brother, the late No. 567 Private J. J. Helion, 42nd Battalion. The package bears Registered No. 604 G.P.O. Melbourne, and I shall be much obliged if you will kindly let me know whether it comes safely to hand by signing and returning the enclosed receipt form. According*

to the records, your brother died at the Monte Video Camp Hospital, Weymouth, England, and was buried in the Melcombe Regis Cemetery Weymouth, Grave No. 2552.”

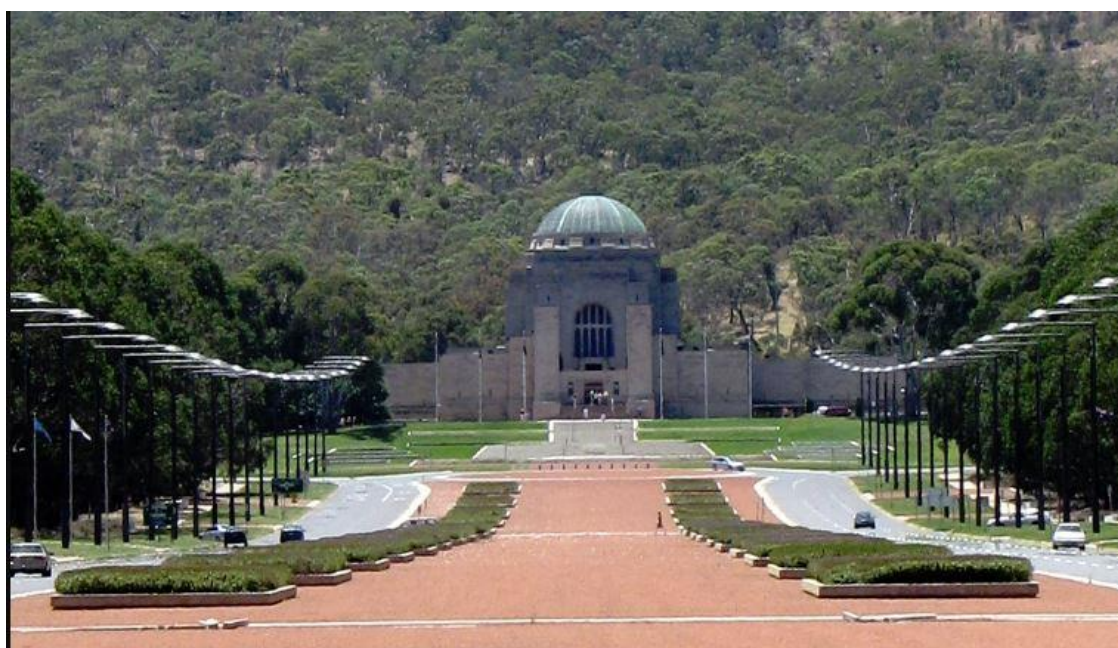
Private James Joseph Helion was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Helion's eldest brother – Mr T. J. Helion, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque sent December, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private James Joseph Helion – service number 567, of 42nd Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Private J. J. Helion is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 135.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia



James Helion is remembered on the Booringa Shire Roll of Honour, located in Great Artesian Spa Complex, 2 Cambridge Street (Warrego Highway), Mitchell, Queensland.



Booringa Shire Roll of Honour (Photo from AWM Places of Pride – Arthur Garland)

J. J. Helion is remembered on the 42nd Battalion Roll of Honour, located at Shrine of Remembrance Crypt, ANZAC Square, Ann Street, Brisbane, Queensland.



42nd Battalion Roll of Honour (Photo from VWMA)

(63 pages of Private James Joseph Helion'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





Private James Joseph Helion (*The Queenslander, Brisbane, Queensland – 10 June, 1916*)



Newspaper Notices

THE CALL

DOWNS' RESPONSE

A BIG ENROLMENT

.....

OTHER CENTRES

JAMES JOSEPH HELION, Mitchell

(*Darling Downs Gazette, Queensland – 29 December, 1915*)



(The Queenslander, Brisbane, Queensland – 10 June, 1916)

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

236TH AUSTRALIAN CASUALTY LIST

QUEENSLAND

ILL

J. J. Helion, Townsville

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 19 October, 1916)

Roll of Honour

Total Casualties, 878

183 Queenslanders Included

The 290th Australian casualty list was released by the censor at 9 o'clock last evening....

QUEENSLAND

DIED – CAUSE NOT STATED

Pte J. J. Helion, Townsville, 19/4/17, p.r. ill

(The Telegraph, Brisbane, Queensland – 1 May, 1917)

CLIFTON

Private J. J. Helion, whose death is recorded in the 290th casualty list, is a younger brother of Mr T. J. Helion, the local stationmaster. Private Helion enlisted at Mitchell.

(Toowoomba Chronicle, Queensland – 5 May, 1917)

PERSONAL

Mr T. J. Helion, Railway Department, has received word that his brother, Private J. J. Helion, died in action in France.

(Toowoomba Chronicle, Queensland – 16 May, 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 Mr M. R. Helion, Stores Branch, Railway Dept, Townsville, Queensland, advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of his brother, the late No. 567 Private J. J. Helion, 42nd Battalion 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. J. Helion does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

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

D00332

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



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00333

Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919

Identified, front row, left to right: unidentified; Butler; 5917 Private Edgar Allan Thornell, 22nd Battalion (Bn), died 9 August 1918; 1207 Corporal Jesse Adams Davis, 12th Bn, died 15 November 1918.

Back row: 5329 Private Frederick Albert Archer, Anzac Provost Company, died 6 November 1918; 5990 Private Albert Robert Blackmore, 12th Bn, died 2 November 1918; 11099 Driver Matthew Charles Percival Nettle, 6th Australian Field Artillery Brigade, died 22 October 1918; 3942 Private Walter Alick Weckman, 51st Bn, died 9 November 1918.



(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 Biddport, 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 camp, 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.

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THESE BOYS BEARING ACUTT BROTHERS

#weyforward

The National Lottery

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 Recuperation camps in Westham, Littleton, Chickerell 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.




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.




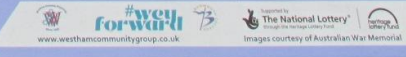
Past and Present Westham

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.



Modern Day Street Names	Westham Camp - December 1916
Cheset Close	Soldiers Huts
Sussex Road	Company Officers
Queensland Road	Regimental Institute
Kitchener Road	Minutemen Rifle Range
Corporation Road	Officers' Mess
Shorn 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	





www.westhamcommunitygroup.co.uk

Images courtesy of Australian War Memorial

Photo of Private J. J. Helion's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England.





(Photo courtesy of Allan Wood)