

**Brookwood Military Cemetery,
Brookwood, Surrey**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



1849 PRIVATE

W. R. HUNTER

39TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

25TH JUNE, 1917

*In Memory Of
The Dearly Loved Son Of
Mr & Mrs Hunter
Of Ballarat*

William Robert HUNTER

William Robert Hunter was born at Ballarat East, Victoria in 1898 to parents Robert and Mary Hunter (nee Pratt).

William Robert Hunter attended Mount Pleasant State School.

William Robert Hunter was an 18 year old, single, Labourer (Woollen Mill Operator listed on the Roll of Honour) from 147 Humffray Street, Ballarat, Victoria when he enlisted on 27th March, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 1849 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr Robert Hunter, 147 Humffray Street, Ballarat, Victoria. William Hunter stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served with Cadets for 3 years.

Private William Robert Hunter was posted to 14th Depot Battalion "B" Company at Ballarat on 15th March, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 39th Battalion at Ballarat on 4th April, 1916 then transferred to 2nd Reinforcements of 39th Battalion on 1st June, 1916.

Private William Robert Hunter embarked from Port Melbourne, Victoria on RMS *Orontes* on 16th August, 1916 with the 39th Infantry Battalion, 2nd Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 2nd October, 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 William Robert Hunter was marched in to 10th Training Battalion at Codford, Wiltshire, England on 2nd October, 1916.

Private William Robert Hunter was taken on strength of 39th Battalion from 10th Training Battalion on 27th October, 1916.

Private William Robert Hunter was absent from Tattoo Roll Call on 2nd November, 1916. He was awarded 3 days defaulters by Captain C. L. Giles on 3rd November, 1916.

Private William Robert Hunter proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 23rd November, 1916.

Private William Robert Hunter was written up for a Crime on 14th March, 1917 – A.W.L. (Absent without leave) from 6 pm to 9.30 pm – 3 ½ hours. He was awarded 7 days Field Punishment No. 2.

Private William Robert Hunter was written up for a Crime on 5th April, 1917 – When on active service 1. Drunkenness 2. Absent in town at 9.50 pm. He was awarded 2 days Field Punishment No. 2.

Private William Robert Hunter was written up for a Crime on 28th May, 1917 – A.W.L. (Absent without leave) from 8.45 pm on 28th May, 1917 to 6.30 am on 29th May, 1917. He was awarded 7 days Field Punishment No. 2 & a total forfeiture of 8 days' pay.

Private William Robert Hunter was wounded in action on 7th June, 1917. He was admitted to 9th Australian Field Ambulance on 7th June, 1917 then transferred the same day to Casualty Clearing Station. Private Hunter was admitted to St. John's Ambulance at Etaples, France on 8th June, 1917 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to right arm. He was marked for transfer to England on 9th June, 1917 & embarked from Boulogne, France on 10th June, 1917 on Hospital Ship *Grantully Castle*.

39th Battalion

The 39th Battalion was formed on 21 February 1916 at the Ballarat Showgrounds in Victoria and drew most of its recruits from the state's Western District. It became part of the 10th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division. Sailing from Melbourne on 27 May, the battalion arrived in Britain on 18 July and commenced four months of training. It crossed to France in late November and moved into the trenches of the Western Front for the first time on 9 December, just in time for the onset of the terrible winter of 1916-17.

The 39th fought in its first major battle at Messines, in Belgium, between 7-9 June 1917. During its march to the

start-line for this operation the battalion suffered heavily from a German gas bombardment and less than a third of the troops earmarked to attack actually did so. The battalion, however, captured all of its objectives.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 39th Battalion

7th June, 1917 - Sheet Ref. Ploegsteert

MAGNUM. OPUS. ZERO HOUR 3.10 am Attacked Enemy & gained all objectives although badly gassed.

8th June, 1917 – Bn consolidating, casualties heavy in wounded (killed light)

14 Officers wounded, 285 OR 24 Killed OR 145 missing

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private William Robert Hunter was admitted to Fulham Military Hospital, London, England on 11th June, 1917 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to right arm. The Hospital Admissions form recorded “Admitted from B.E.F. France with Gun shot wound right Arm. A.T.S. 7.6.17. 12.6.17 ATS 500 Units. 21.6.17 Lumbar puncture 20 c.c. fluid clear. 15cc Listers serum given. No evidence of Cerebro Spinal Fever. Generalised convulsion 23.6.17 at 6.30 pm. 20 cc fluid withdrawn intra spinal.”

Mr R. Hunter, 147 Humffray Street, Ballarat East, Victoria, was advised on 26th June, 1917 that Private W. R. Hunter had been admitted to Fulham, Military Hospital, London on 20th June, 1917 suffering from Gun Shot wound to right arm – mild.

Private William Robert Hunter died at 8.15 pm on 25th June, 1917 at Military Hospital, Fulham, England from wounds received in action in France – Shrapnel / Gunshot wound to right arm & Septic Meningitis.

A death for William R. Hunter, aged 19, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Fulham, London, England.

Private William Robert Hunter was buried at 1.15 pm on 29th June, 1917 in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England – Grave No. 179463 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private William Robert Hunter - *Coffin was polished Elm, Brass Plate 8 Brass Handles. Very Good. The deceased was accorded a full Military Funeral, the coffin being draped with the Australian Flag. No relatives or friends were present. Two Non-Commissioned Officers, and fourteen men of the Administrative Headquarters Guard formed the firing party and at the conclusion of the Burial Service three Volleys were fired and an Australian Bugler sounded the “Last Post”.*

Mr R. Hunter, 147 Humffray Street, Ballarat East, Victoria, was advised on 5th April, 1923 that the site of the grave of the late No. 1849, Private W. R. Hunter, 39th Battalion, in the Brookwood Military Cemetery was now officially registered as Plot 11, row c Grave 18. (The CWGC have the grave listed as Plot number XI. C. 18)

Private William Robert Hunter was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Hunter’s father – Mr R. Hunter, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent January, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private William Robert Hunter – service number 1849, of 39th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Robert and Mary Hunter, of 147 Humffray St., Ballarat.

Private W. R. Hunter is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 131.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

W. R. Hunter is remembered on the Ballarat Memorial Wall & Rotunda located at Sturt Street and Learmonth Avenue, Ballarat, Victoria.



Ballarat Memorial Wall & Rotunda (Photo from Carol's Headstone Photos)

W. R. Hunter is also remembered on the Ballarat Avenue of Honour (1917-1919) where almost 4,000 trees were planted to represent the number of men and women from the Ballarat district who served in World War 1. The trees were planted at intervals of 12 metres along 22 kms of the Ballarat-Burrembeet Road. The Ballarat Avenue of Honour is famous for being the first avenue of its kind in Australia. Tree number 1115 – *Tilia Cordata* species planted by Mrs Hunter.



The Arch of Victory was built as an entrance to the Avenue of Honour (*Photo from Monument Australia*)



Ballarat Avenue of Honour (*Photo from Victorian War Heritage Inventory*)

(53 pages of Private William Robert Hunter's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

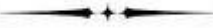
Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll) & National Archives



Private William Robert Hunter *(Photo courtesy of Tim Fitzgerald)*



Private Hunter & his family (Photo from *Ballarat & District in the Great War*)



Newspaper Notices

PRIVATE W. R. HUNTER

Mr R. Hunter, of 147 Humffray street, has been advised by the Defence Department that his son Pte William Robert, has been wounded and taken to Fulham Hospital, London. He left with the 39th Battalion last year.

(*The Ballarat Courier*, Victoria – 29 June, 1917)

PRIVATE W. R. HUNTER

Mr R. Hunter, of 117 Humffray street, Ballarat East, and of the staff of the Ballarat Woollen Mills, was officially notified on Thursday that his son, Pte W. R. Hunter, of the 39th Battalion, had been slightly wounded in the arm, and had been admitted to the Fulham Hospital on 20th June. Yesterday a further communication conveyed the sad intelligence that Pte Hunter had succumbed to his wounds on 25th inst.

(*The Ballarat Courier*, Victoria – 30 June, 1917) & (*The Evening Echo*, Ballarat, Victoria – 30 June, 1917)

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCES

321ST CASUALTY LIST

DIED OF WOUNDS

Pte W. R. HUNTER, Ballarat East, 25/6/17.

(*Bendigo Advertiser*, Victoria – 12 July, 1917)

DEATHS

HUNTER – At Fulham Hospital, London, 25th June, died of wounds received in France, William Robert, beloved eldest son of Robert and Mary Hunter, loved brother of Lily, Maggie, Myrtle, Rae, Tenny and Docy, aged 19 years 4 months.

Far away from all who loved him

Strangers gently laid him to rest,

In a far away grave he is sleeping,

One of God's brightest and best.

Our hero at rest.

(The Ballarat Courier, Victoria 14 July, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM

HUNTER – To the memory of my loving cousin Willie, who died of wounds received in action 25th June, 1917.

Although I could not go myself

You bravely took my place

And nobly did you fill it

You did you very best.

Inserted by his loving cousin Charles Pratt, New Zealand

(The Ballarat Courier, Victoria – 25 June, 1918)

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 W. R. Hunter does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

In Memory Of The Dearly Loved Son Of Mr & Mrs Hunter Of Ballarat

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 W. R. Hunter's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England.



(Photo courtesy of Neil Bright - 2020)

