

**Grantham Cemetery,
Grantham, Lincolnshire**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



515 PRIVATE

W. B. JOHNSON

AUST. MACHINE GUN CORPS

16TH MARCH, 1917

The Lord Gave

The Lord Hath Taken Away

Willie Banon JOHNSON

Willie Banon Johnson was born at Albury, NSW in 1889 to parents Harry Barton Johnson and Fanny Johnson (nee Banon).

Willie Banon Johnson attended School at Bethanga, Victoria.

The 1912 & 1913 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Echuca, subdivision of Nagambie, Victoria listed William Banon Johnson, Farmer, of Molka. His parents were listed as Harry Barton Johnson, Farmer, & Fanny Johnson, Home Duties, both of Molka.

The 1915 & 1916 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Echuca, subdivision of Tatura, Victoria listed Willie Banon Johnson, Labourer, of Harston

The 1917 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Maribyrnong, subdivision of Newmarket, Victoria listed Willie Banon Johnson, Labourer, of 27 Pridham Street, Kensington. His mother – Fanny Johnson was listed at 17 Pridham Street, Kensington.

Willie Banon Johnson was a 27 year old, single, Farmer from 17 Pridham Street, Kensington, Victoria when he enlisted at Ascot Vale, Victoria on 30th September, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 515 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr Harry Barton Johnson, of 17 Pridham Street, Kensington, Victoria.

Pte Willie Banon Johnson was posted to Machine Gun Depot at Seymour on 14th October, 1916 for recruit training & was later transferred to 8th Reinforcements of 6th Machine Gun Company.

Private Willie Banon Johnson embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Medic (A7)* on 16th December, 1916 with the 6th Machine Gun Company, 8th Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 18th February, 1917.

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 Willie Banon Johnson was marched out from Australian Details at Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 23rd February, 1917 & in to Australian Machine Gun Depot at Belton Park, Lincolnshire, England on 24th February, 1917.

Private Willie Banon Johnson was sent sick to Belton Hospital, Grantham from Australian Machine Gun Depot on 8th March, 1917.

Private Willie Banon Johnson died at 8 am on 16th March, 1917 at Belton Hospital, Grantham, Lincolnshire, England from Influenza & Broncho Pneumonia.

A death for Willie B. Johnson, aged 38, (should be 27), was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Grantham, Lincolnshire, England.

Private Willie Banon Johnson was buried on 17th March, 1917 in Grantham Cemetery, Grantham, Lincolnshire, England – Plot number Grave No. 19M, Section 7 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Pte W. B. Johnson - *Coffin was light polished Elm. Military Funeral. Pte Johnson's brother of the Mercantile Marine Service was with the deceased during his last hours, and was also present at the funeral.*

Base Records contacted Mr H. B. Johnson, registered as the next-of-kin of the late Private W. B. Johnson, in April, 1920 to advise that Pte Johnson's remains had been exhumed from Grave No. 19M, Section 7, Grantham Cemetery & had been re-interred in Grave number 11B, Section 15 of the same Cemetery. Mr Johnson was advised that "This work is carried out with every measure of care and reverence in the presence of a Chaplain."

Private Willie Banon Johnson 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 Pte Willie Banon Johnson's father - Mr H. B. Johnson, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent July, 1922 & Plaque sent May, 1923).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Willie Banon Johnson – service number 515, of 6th Battalion, Australian Machine Gun Corps. He was the son of Harry Barton Johnson and Fanny Johnson of 17 Pridham Street, Kensington, Victoria.

Private W. B. Johnson is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 178.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

W. Johnson is remembered on the Holy Trinity Honour Roll, located in Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Church Street, Bethanga, Victoria.



Holy Trinity Honour Roll (Photo from Monument Australia – Chris McLaughlin)

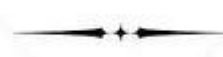
W. Johnson is remembered on the Bethanga Roll of Honour, located in Soldiers Memorial Hall, Bridge & Jobling Streets, Bethanga, Victoria.



Bethanga Roll of Honour (Photos from Monument Australia – Chris McLaughlin)

(46 pages of Private Willie Banon Johnson’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



Newspaper Notices

DIED ON ACTIVE SERVICE

JOHNSON – Died on 17th March, 1917, at Belton Hospital, Grantham, England, Private Willie B. Johnson, Machine Gun Section, 6th Company, dearly beloved second son of Harry B. and Fanny Johnson, late of Bethanga, also brother of Harry B., Arthur F. (on active service), and Dora M.; aged 27 years.

His duty nobly done.

(*Wodonga and Towong Sentinel*, Victoria – 30 March, 1917)

DIED ON SERVICE

JOHNSON – Died on 17th March, 1917, at Belton Hospital, Grantham (England), Private Willie B. Johnson, Machine Gun Section, 6th Company, dearly beloved second son of H. B. and Fanny Johnson (late of Bethanga), also brother of Harry B., Arthur F. (on active service), and Dora M.; aged 27 years.

He did his best.

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 31 March, 1917)

NEWS OF SOLDIERS

Ex-Councillor H. B. Johnson, of Shepparton (formerly of Bethanga), whose three sons enlisted and went to the front, has received news that his second son, Private W. B. Johnson, has died as the result of wounds. Mr Johnson's eldest son, Harry, was on a P. and O. boat which was torpedoed, and he narrowly escaped drowning.

(Upper Murray and Mitta Herald, Victoria – 5 April, 1917)

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCES

285th CASUALTY LIST

DIED FROM ILLNESS

Pte W. B. JOHNSON, Kensington, 17/3/17

(Bendigo Advertiser, Victoria – 7 April, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

JOHNSON – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Willie, who died in hospital, England, on the 16th March, 1917.

Thy will be done.

-(Inserted by his sorrowing father, mother and sister Dora, also Harry and Arthur (on active service)).

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 16 March, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

JOHNSON – In loving memory of our dear son, Willie Banon, who died at Belton Hospital, Grantham, England, 16th March, 1917, loving brother of Harry, Arthur and Dora.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 15 March, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

JOHNSON – In loving memory of Pte Willie Banon, who died at Grantham, England, March 16, 1917, second son of Mr and Mrs H. B. Johnson, loved brother of Harry, Arthur (A.I.F.), and Dora.

Not dead to those who loved him;

Not lost, but gone before.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 16 March, 1920)

DEATHS

On Active Service

JOHNSON – On the 16th March, 1917, at Grantham Hospital, England, Willie Banon, dearly beloved second son of Mr and Mrs H. B. Johnson, also brother of Harry, Arthur, and Dora.

Thy will be done.

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 16 March, 1921)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

JOHNSON – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Willie Baron, who died at Grantham, England, 16th March, 1917. (Inserted by his loving parents, Harry, Arthur and Dora.)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 16 March, 1923)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

JOHNSON – In loving memory of our dear son, Willie Banon, who died 16th March, 1917, second son of Mr and Mrs Harry Johnson, Bethanga, loved brother of Harry, Arthur and Dora.

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 15 March, 1924)

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. B. Johnson does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

The Lord Gave

The Lord Hath Taken Away

Grantham Cemetery, Grantham, Lincolnshire, England

During the First World War there were machine gun camps and depots at Belton Park, on the Lincoln Road, and at Grantham a 620 bed military hospital. Most of the First World War burials are scattered throughout the cemetery but a number of Australian and New Zealand machine gunners are buried together in Section 15. During the Second World War there was a Royal Air Force station at Grantham and there is a small group of RAF graves in Section 17. Other Second World War graves are in a small war graves plot in Section 19, opposite the town's memorial to the civilian war dead, and the remainder are in various other parts of the cemetery. The Cross of Sacrifice is near the eastern side of the cemetery, between sections 2 and 3 and serves as a central memorial to the service men of both wars buried here. Grantham Cemetery contains 55 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and 58 from the Second. There is also one Dutch war grave. There are 5 Australian Graves in this Cemetery.

(Information from CWGC)



Grantham Cemetery *(Photos by Roger Sayer)*



Grantham Cemetery – Australian Plot *(Photo courtesy of Stephen Stapleton)*



(Photo by Roger Sayer)

Photo of Private W. B. Johnson's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Grantham Cemetery, Grantham, Lincolnshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of Adam Gadd 2021)

GRANTHAM CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM

WARRAWBY ROAD NG31 9DT

