

**Netley Military Cemetery,
Hampshire, England
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2840A LANCE CPL.

W. J. KANIERS

1ST AUSTRALIAN PIONEERS

30TH AUGUST, 1918 Age 27

William John KANIERS

William John Kaniers was born at Back Creek, Bendigo, Victoria in 1890 to parents William Henry and Elizabeth Ann Kaniers (nee Bostock).

William John Kaniers attended State School at Bendigo, Victoria.

William Henry Kaniers, father of William John Kaniers, died on 5th January, 1910 at 100 Moray Street, South Melbourne, Victoria.

The 1914 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Melbourne, subdivision of Lonsdale, Victoria listed William John Kaniers, Labourer, of 324 Flinders Street.

The 1917 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Melbourne Ports, subdivision of Clarendon, Victoria listed William John Kaniers, Labourer, c/o Meadows, 51 Haig Street.

William John Kaniers was a 24 year old, single, Labourer from 51 Haig Street, South Melbourne, Victoria when he enlisted on 29th June, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2840 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs E. A. Kaniers, of 51 Haig Street, South Melbourne, Victoria.

Private William John Kaniers was posted to Depot on 7th July, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to 9th Reinforcements of 7th Battalion on 19th July, 1915.

Private William John Kaniers embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Star of Victoria (A16)* on 10th September, 1915 with the 7th Infantry Battalion, 9th Reinforcements.

Private William John Kaniers was admitted to Hospital at Mudros on 4th December, 1915 & was discharged on 6th December, 1915. He rejoined his Battalion at Anzac on 7th December, 1915.

Private William John Kaniers embarked on *Empress of Britain* & disembarked at Alexandria on 7th January, 1916.

7th Battalion

The 7th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. Like the 5th, 6th and 8th Battalions, it was recruited from Victoria and, together with these battalions, formed the 2nd Brigade.

The battalion served at ANZAC from 25th April, 1915 until the evacuation in December.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli in December 1915, the battalion returned to Egypt. In March 1916, it sailed for France and the Western Front and entered the front line trenches for the first time on 3 May.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private William John Kaniers was transferred to 1st Pioneers on 13th March, 1916 from 7th Battalion. He was taken on strength of 1st Pioneer Battalion at Serapeum on 13th March, 1916.

Private William John Kaniers embarked from Alexandria on 26th March, 1916 to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) & disembarked at Marseilles, France on 2nd April, 1916.

Private William John Kaniers was awarded 7 days F. P. (Field Punishment) No. 2 on 27th May, 1916 for absenting himself from duty from 22.00 on 25th May, 1916 to 12.15 am on 26th May, 1916.

Private William John Kaniers was reported to be with his Unit on 6th January, 1917.

Private William John Kaniers was sent to Hospital in France on 31st January, 1917 with Bronchitis. He was admitted to 4th Australian Field Ambulance on 31st January, 1917 then transferred & admitted to 36th Casualty Clearing Station the same day with Bronchitis. Pte Kaniers was transferred to No. 9 Ambulance Train on 10th February, 1917

& admitted to 38th Stationary Hospital at Wimereux, France on 11th February, 1917 with Bronchitis (slight). Pte Kaniers was transferred to England on 15th February, 1917 on Hospital Ship *St. Denis* with Bronchitis.

Private William John Kaniers was admitted to Horton County of London Hospital in England on 16th February, 1917. He was discharged to furlough from 16th April, 1917 & was then to report to Perham Downs on 1st May, 1917.

Private William John Kaniers was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 2nd May, 1917 from furlough & medically classified as B 1 A1 (Unfit for Service for about 4 weeks).

Private William John Kaniers was marched out from No. 1 Command Depot on 3rd May, 1917 & marched in to Pioneer Training Battalion at Dinton on the same day.

Private William John Kaniers was written up for an Offence at Southampton on 24th August, 1917 – “Conduct to the prejudice of good order & military discipline:- neglect to fill in Military registration form.” He was awarded 7 days F.P. 2 (Field Punishment).

Private William John Kaniers was marched in to Pioneer Training Battalion at Fovant, Wiltshire from Pioneer Detachment on 3rd September, 1917.

Private William John Kaniers proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 9th October, 1917 from Pioneer Training Battalion. He was marched in to 1st A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Havre, France on 10th October, 1917 & proceeded to join his Unit on 13th October, 1917. Pte Kaniers rejoined his Battalion in the Field on 16th October, 1917.

Private William John Kaniers was appointed Lance Corporal on 15th January, 1918.

Lance Corporal William John Kaniers was re-allotted a Regimental number - the letter “A” was added to his Regimental Number due to duplication (no date recorded).

Lance Corporal William John Kaniers was sent sick to Hospital on 28th April, 1918. He was admitted to 3rd Australian Field Ambulance on 28th April, 1918 then transferred the same day to the 2nd Casualty Clearing Station with a “*sprained ankle? Frac, Fibula.*” Lance Corporal Kaniers was transferred to Ambulance Train No. 35 on 2nd May, 1918 & admitted the same day to the 13th U.S.A. General Hospital in France with a sprained ankle.

Lance Corporal William John Kaniers’ casualty was classified as “injured accidentally” by DAG 3rd Echelon GHQ – dated 23rd April, 1918. A Court of Enquiry had been held & Lance Corporal Kaniers was “not to blame”.

Lance Corporal William John Kaniers was transferred from 13th U.S.A. General Hospital to Rest Camp on 21st May, 1918 with sprained ankle. He was marched in to A.I.B.D. (Australian Infantry Base Depot) at Havre, France on 23rd May, 1918.

Lance Corporal William John Kaniers was on Special Leave to England from 16th June, 1918 & rejoined from Special Leave on 8th July, 1918. He was marched out to his Unit on 10th July, 1918 & rejoined his Battalion in France on 16th July, 1918.

Lance Corporal William John Kaniers was wounded in France on 23rd August, 1918. He was admitted to 1st Australian Field Ambulance on 23rd August, 1918 with shrapnel wounds to left elbow. L/Cpl. Kaniers was transferred & admitted to 37th Casualty Clearing Station the same day then transferred to Ambulance Train No. 34 on 24th August, 1918. He was admitted to General Hospital at Rouen, France on 24th August, 1918. L/Cpl. Kaniers was invalided to England on Hospital Ship *Guildford Castle* on 27th August, 1918 with gunshot wounds to left elbow.

1st Australian Pioneers

The 1st Pioneers were raised in Egypt, on 10 March 1916, from volunteers drawn from New South Wales who were subsequently assigned to the 1st Division. The battalion was formed in the aftermath of the failed Gallipoli campaign when the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) was expanded as part of plans to transfer it from the Middle East to Europe for service in the trenches along the Western Front. This expansion saw several new infantry divisions raised in Egypt and Australia, as well as specialist support units such as machine gun companies, engineer

companies, artillery batteries and pioneer battalions. Trained as infantrymen, the pioneers were tasked with light combat engineer functions in the field, with a large number of personnel possessing trades from civilian life. The concept had existed within the British Indian Army before the war, but was adopted by the Australian Army in early 1916 to meet a need for troops with construction and engineering skills to assist with digging trenches, labouring, constructing strong points and undertaking battlefield clearance. At the same time, they could be pressed into the line to fight alongside regular infantry where required.

After a short period of training at Serapeum, in Egypt, in late March 1916 the 1st Pioneer Battalion embarked on a troopship from the port of Alexandria, bound for Marseilles. After landing in France, they boarded a train and were subsequently transported to the Somme. From there, the 1st Pioneers moved to Armentieres where they established a camp, in an area which was dubbed a "nursery" sector by the Allies, where newly arrived units could gain their first experience of fighting on the Western Front. They subsequently entered the front line around Fleurbaix.

At Fleurbaix, the 1st Pioneers received new equipment and in late May were tasked with assisting the 2nd Australian Tunnelling Company in digging a mine towards German lines around the Cordonnerie Salient, where they were positioned opposite the 6th Bavarian Reserve Division. On the night of 30/31 May, the sector of the line the pioneers were digging under was subjected to a heavy artillery bombardment, followed by a trench raid. In the confusion that followed several of the battalion's personnel were killed or taken prisoner.

The battalion subsequently served on the Western Front until the end of the war in late 1918. After the battalion's introduction to trench warfare around Fleurbaix it was committed to the Battle of Pozieres in July 1916 where, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Edmund Nicholson – an artillery officer who had served at Gallipoli – they laid the form-up trench for the attack, before being committed to the capture of the village itself. The battalion's losses in its first battle amounted to 180 killed or wounded. During the next two-and-a-half years, the battalion fought in most of the main battles that the Australians fought in along the Western Front. They took part in the Battle of Mouquet Farm later in 1916, and in early 1917, they were tasked with extending a light railway system towards Fremicourt as part of preparations for the Battle of Bullecourt. Later in the year, they took part in the Third Battle of Ypres, taking part in actions around the Menin Road, Polygon Wood, Broodseinde Ridge and Passchendaele. Later, around Ypres in October, the battalion worked to clear the Ypres–Zonnebeke road, which had virtually disappeared under a layer of thick mud and debris due to a prolonged artillery bombardment.

In early 1918, the Germans launched their Spring Offensive during which the 1st Pioneer Battalion, which had spent the winter around Messines, supported the 1st Division's operations around Hazebrouck in April, establishing the division's trench systems. From April 1918 until the end of the war, the battalion was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Murdoch. After the defeat of the German offensive, a lull period followed during which the Allied armies sought to regain the initiative through a series of small scale actions dubbed peaceful penetrations, which were carried out throughout June and July 1918. During the Allied Hundred Days Offensive that was launched in August, which finally brought about an end to the war in late 1918, the pioneers took part in the Allied offensive around Amiens, supporting the capture of Lihons and then the exploitation beyond Proyart, losing around 80 casualties during the month. The following month they followed up the drive through the Somme until the 1st Division was withdrawn from the line in late September 1918.

(Wikipedia)

War Diary – 1st Australian Pioneer Battalion

23rd August, 1918

1st Australian Division launch an attack from present front line. Zero hour fixed for 4.45 am.

CASUALTIES 10 OR Killed, 1 Off 35 OR Wounded

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Lance Corporal William John Kaniers was admitted to the Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, Hampshire, England on 29th August, 1918 with gunshot wounds to left elbow & "full blown case of Tetanus".



Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley

Lance Corporal William John Kaniers died at 2.40 am on 30th August, 1918 at Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, Hampshire, England from wounds received in action – gunshot wounds to left elbow – Tetanus.

A death for W. J. Kamers, aged 27, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of South Stoneham, Hampshire, England.

Lance Corporal William John Kaniers was buried at 2 pm on 2nd September, 1918 in Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire, England – Plot number C.E. 1964 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Lance Corporal William John Kaniers - *Coffin was good and brass mountings. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military funeral, Bugler and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack. Chaplain the Rev. C. Caine, British Red Cross Society, officiated at the graveside. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside. An oak cross has been erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Lance Corporal William John Kaniers was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to L/Cpl. Kaniers' mother – Mrs E. A. Kaniers, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent September, 1922 & Plaque sent March, 1923).

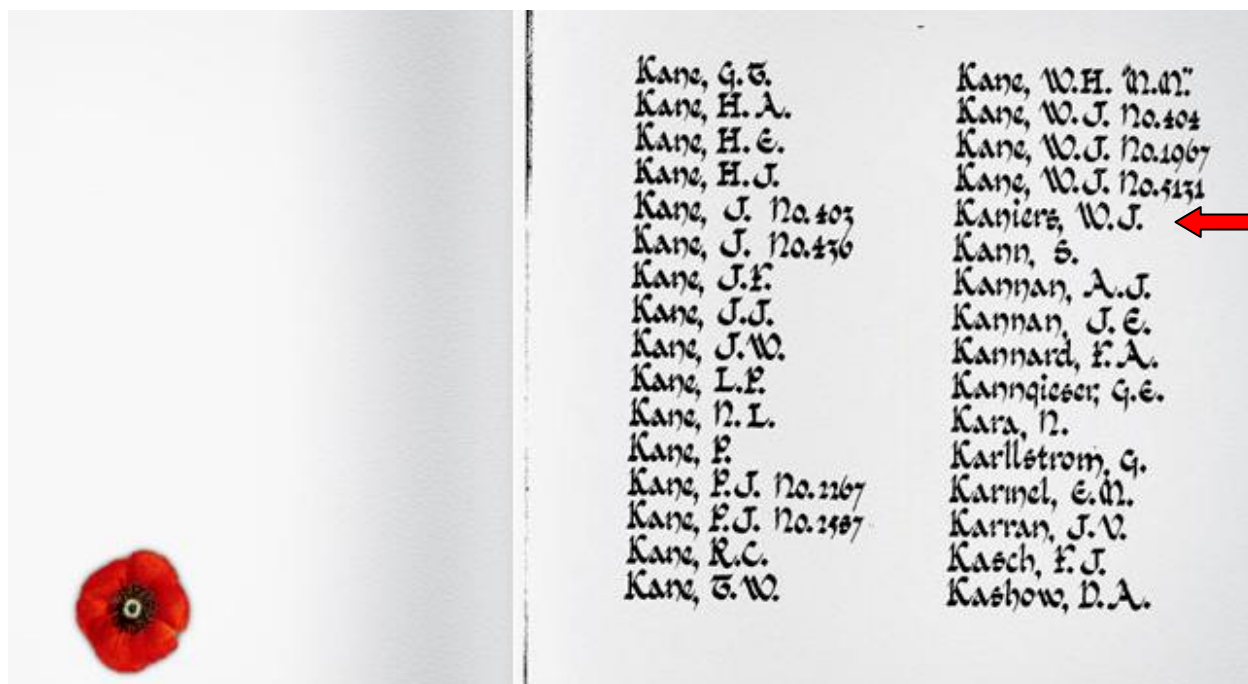
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Lance Corporal William John Kaniers – service number 2840A, aged 27, of 1st Australian Pioneers. He was the son of William H. and Elizabeth Ann Kaniers, of 51 Haig St., South Melbourne.

Lance Corporal W. J. Kaniers is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 171.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

W. J. Kaniers is remembered in the Book of Remembrance at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, Victoria.



(55 pages of Lance Corporal William John Kaniers' 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

DIED FROM ILLNESS

LANCE CORPORAL KANIERS

Mrs E. Kaniers, of 51 Haig-street, South Melbourne, has been officially advised that her son, Lance-Corporal W. J. Kaniers, better known as Billy Criss, late of Bendigo, died of tetanus at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley on 30.8.18. Deceased was a miner before leaving on active service three years ago, and worked at the Carlisle and the Catherine mines. He also played football with the Church of Christ team when they won the premiership. Lance-Corporal Kaniers was the only brother of Mrs J. Turner, late of Cross-street, Long Gully; Mrs T. Smith, William-street, Long Gully; and Mrs Challis, Mount Morgan, North Queensland.

(Bendigo Advertiser, Victoria – 13 September, 1918) & (Bendigonian, Victoria – 19 September, 1918)

VICTORIA'S ROLL OF HONOUR

433rd CASUALTY LIST

DIED OTHER CAUSES

Kaniers, Lance-Corp. W. J., Richmond

(The Age, Melbourne, Victoria – 14 October, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

KAINERS – In loving memory of our dear only son and brother, Lance-Corporal W. J. Kainers, died of wounds at Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, England, on 30th August, 1918.

Somewhere in England our darling lies;
 Would we could be there too,
With our head at rest on his quiet breast,
 Sleeping beneath God's blue.
Somewhere in England our darling Will lies,
 Somewhere beneath the sod;
But his soul so brave, beyond the grave,
 Somewhere, somewhere with God.
For when my heart is sore for you
 I seem to hear you say,
Do not fret, mother dear,
 We'll meet again some day.

-Inserted by his ever loving mother and sister, Bessie.

KAINERS – In proud and loving memory of my dear only brother, Lance-Corporal W. J. Kainers, died of wounds 30th August, 1918.

My thoughts they often wander
 To a spot so far away,
Where they laid my darling brother
 Just a year ago to-day.

Friends may think I have forgotten him
When at times they see me smile,
But they little know my aching heart
Those smiles hide all the while
A better brother no girl had.

-Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, May and Bert Geary (returned Anzac), Wallan.

KAINERS – In loving memory of my dear and only brother, Lance-Corporal W. J. Kainers, died of wounds 30th August, 1918.

I miss you, for I loved you,
As memories I recall;
The parting with you, dear Will,
Was the saddest day of all.
I think of you, my dear brother,
And think of how you died;
It's sad to think you passed away
With no loved one by your side.

-Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Nellie and Tom Smith, South Melbourne.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 30 August, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

KANIERS – Lance-Corporal W. J. Kaniers, killed in action 30th August, 1918.

Could I, his mother, have clasped his hand,
The son I loved so well,
Or kissed his brow when death was near,
And whispered, My dear Will, farewell.
I seem to see his dear sweet face
Through a mist of anxious tears,
But a mother's part is a broken heart
And a burden of lonely years.

-Inserted by his loving mother and sister, Bessie, South Melbourne.

KANIERS – In loving memory of Lance-Corporal W. J. Kaniers, killed in action 30th August, 1918.

It is sweet to be remembered,
And this my wish will show;
I hold you still in memory
As the years may come and go.

-Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Nellie and Tom Smith, South Melbourne.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 30 August, 1920)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

KANIERS – In loving memory of our darling, Lance-Corporal W. J. Kaniers, killed in action, England, 30th August, 1918.

You are always in our thoughts, Bill,
It's sweet to speak your name;
In life we loved you dearly,
And in death we do the same.

-Inserted by his loving mother, sister, Nellie, brother-in-law, Tom Smith, South Melbourne.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 30 August, 1922)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

KANIERS – In loving remembrance of our only son and brother, Lance-Corporal W. J. Kaniers.

Everybody loved him,
He was always good and true,
Always laughing at his troubles.
He'd a smile for all he knew.
I think of you in silence,
No eyes can see me weep
For many silent tears are shed,
While others are asleep.

Inserted by his loving mother, and sisters, May and Bessie.

KANIERS – In loving remembrance of my dear brother, Lance-Corporal W. J. Kaniers, died of wounds on the 30th August, 1918.

As we loved you, so we miss you,
To our memory you are dear,
Loved, remembered, longed for always
Through the long and lonely years.

-Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Helen and Tom Smith.

KANIERS – In loving remembrance of our dear nephew, Lance-Corporal W. J. Kaniers, died of wounds on the 30th August, 1918.

To-day brings back sad memories
Of a loved one gone to rest
And those who think of him to-day
Are those who loved him best.

-Inserted by his loving aunt and uncle, Helen and James Durward.

KANIERS – In loving remembrance of our dear cousin, Lance-Corporal W. J. Kaniers, died of wounds on the 30th August, 1918.

Three little words, Forget me not.

They don't look like much, but mean a lot.

Still missed, still mourned.

-Inserted by his loving cousins, Kathleen and Alex Durward.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 30 August, 1923)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

KANIERS – In loving memory of my dear son and brother, William John, killed on active service 31st August, 1918.

God called our dear one from our midst,
But never from our hearts;
He lives with us in memory still,
And will while memory lasts.

-Inserted by her loving mother and sister, Nellie Smith, South Melbourne.

KANIERS – In loving memory of our dear uncle, William John, killed on active service 31st August, 1918.

Just a memory fond and true
To show, dear uncle Willie, we still think of you.

-Inserted by his loving nieces and nephews, Smith children

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 1 September, 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*)

Lance Corporal W. J. Kaniers does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire, England

Netley Military Cemetery is a permanent military cemetery, the property of the Ministry of Defence. The cemetery was at the back of the Royal Victoria Military Hospital and was used during both wars for burials from the hospital. The cemetery contains 637 First World War burials but only 35 from the Second World War. In addition to the Commonwealth graves, there are a number of war graves of other nationalities including 69 German graves dating from the First World War.

(Information & photos from CWGC)



Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire





Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire (Photo above - Andrea Charlesworth; below - darealjolo)



Photo of Lance Corporal W. J. Kaniers' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire, England.





Original Cross markers – Netley Military Cemetery