# Brookwood Military Cemetery,

# Brookwood, Surrey

# War Graves

*Lest We Forget*

## World War 1

**332    PRIVATE**

# J. MACKERRELL

**37TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**5TH  MARCH, 1917**

# John MACKERRELL

John McKerrell was born at Port Ellen, Islay, Scotland around 1890 to parents William & Lily Mackerrell (nee McMillan).

The 1891 Scotland Census recorded John Mckerrell as a 10 month old, (born at Kildalton) living with his family at Quay Rd, Kildalton, Argyll, Scotland.  His parents were recorded as William McKerrell (Cooper, aged 30, born Kildalton) & Lily McKerrell (aged 22, born Kildalton).

John Mackerrell  attended school at Ardbeg, Islay, Scotland.

The 1901 Scotland Census recorded John McKerrell as a 10 year old Scholar, living with his family at Kilmeny, Argyll, Scotland. His parents were recorded as William McKerrell (Distillery Cooper, aged 39) & Lily McKerrell (aged 32). John was the eldest of 3 children listed on this census (all born at Kildalton) - John then Duncan (Scholar, aged 8) & Flora (aged 6 months). Also listed was Catherine McBean (a boarder, aged 23).

According to information provided by his wife for the Roll of Honour – John Mackerrell came to Australia when he was 22 years old. His wife also stated that he was also trained as a Gadiner & had served as a volunteer with 8th Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders Brigade in Scotland.

A "J. McKerrell", Gardener, aged 21, was listed as a passenger on *Norseman* which had departed from London on 10th February, 1912 bound for Sydney, Australia. All the passengers on the page with J. McKerrell had contracted to land at Melbourne, Victoria.


The 1914, 1915 & 1917 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Indi, subdivision of Corryong, Victoria recorded John MacKerrell, Labourer, & his wife Agnes MacKerrell, Home Duties living at Nariel.

John Mackerrell was a 25 year old, married, Farmer from Narill Creek, Cudgewa, Victoria when he enlisted at Tallangatta, Victoria on 3rd February, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 332 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Agnes Mackerrell, Corryong, Victoria.

Private John Mackerrell was posted to "A" Company, 37th Battalion on 2nd March, 1916 for recruit training.

Private  John Mackerrell  embarked from  Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Persic (A34)* on 3rd June, 1916 with the 10th Infantry Brigade, 37th Infantry Battalion "A" Company & disembarked at Plymouth, 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 John Mackerrell was admitted to 10th Brigade Field Hospital at Larkhill, Wiltshire on 30th September, 1916 with Eustachian Catarrh. He was transferred to Fargo Hospital, Wiltshire on the same day.

Private John Mackerrell  proceeded to join Convalescent Depot on 13th November, 1916. He was marched in to Durrington, Wiltshire on 8th December, 1916 & joined 10th Training Battalion.

Private John Mackerrell  proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 20th December, 1916 on *Princess Victoria* from 10th Training Battalion. He was marched in to 3rd A.D.B.D (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 21st December, 1916. Private Mackerrell was marched out from 3rd A.D.B.D. on 14th January, 1917 & joined 37th Battalion in the Field on 15th January, 1917.


Private John Mackerrell was wounded in action on 27th February, 1917. He was admitted to 10th Australian Field Ambulance with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to left thigh then transferred & admitted to 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station the same day. Private Mackerrell was transferred to Ambulance Train 26 on 27th February, 1917 then admitted to 3rd Canadian General Hospital at Boulogne, France on 28th February, 1917. He was marked for transfer to England on 3rd March, 917 & embarked for England on Hospital Ship *Cambria* on 4th March, 1917.

**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

*26th February, 1917:*

*Xero day. Zero hour 12.30 am on 27/2/17. Preparation son night of 26/27. Relief of X by 40th completed. Heavy preliminary bombardment commenced at 9.40pm last until 10 pm. Enemy retaliation severe. We had no casualties.*

*27th February, 1917 - Rue Allee Billets:*

*Some details of raid available, We secured 17 prisoners 1 Machine Gun 1 Search-light & Medical officer equipment. Two minewerfer emplacements were destroyed and any of enemy killed. Our casualties were slight.*

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)


Private John Mackerrell was admitted to King George Hospital, Stamford Street, London, England on 3rd March, 1917. The Hospital Admissions form mentions "Gas Gangrene" & "multiple incisions & drainage". (The rest of remarks recorded are illegible)


Private John Mackerrell died on 5th March, 1917 at King George Hospital, Stamford Street, London, England from wounds received in action in France – G.S.W. Thigh. A Telegram from King George Hospital to Commandant, Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F., London stated that Private Mackerrell had died at 8 am on 5th March, however the "Morning State of Sick" (Army Form A. 27) recorded that he died at 6.15 am.

A death for John McKerrell, aged 26, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Lambeth, Great London, England.


Private John Mackerrell was buried on 8th March, 1917 in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England – Australian Military Burial Ground - Plot number 178886.

From the burial report of Private John Mackerrell - *Coffin was good, Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military Funeral. Firing party comprising members attached to the Administrative Headquarters Staff, A.I.F., London, were present. The "Last Post" was sounded at the grave side by an Australian Bugler. Prior to the interment of the deceased soldier's remains a Memorial Service was held in the Chapel at the Brookwood Cemetery. Brother of the deceased soldier was present at the Funeral; and he decided to leave the erection of a Memorial entirely in the hands of the Commonwealth Military Authorities.*

Details of Next-of- listed on the back of Burial Report:

Wife – Mrs Agnes MacKerrell, Corryong, Victoria.

Father – Mr MacKerrell, Ardbeg, Isle of Islay

Brother – Duncan MacKerrell, 449 St Vincent Street, Glasgow.


Agnes MacKerrell, Corryong, Victoria, wrote to Base Records on 14th March, 1918 to thank them for the photograph of the grave of her late husband "…*it is nice to have a photo, it shows how well kept the graves are.*"

A War Pension was granted to Agnes McKerrell, widow of the late John MacKerrell, in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 8th May, 1917. War Pensions were also granted to the following children of Agnes & the late Private John MacKerrell from 8th May, 1917 – Jeanie McKerrell, granted 20/- per fortnight; William James McKerrell, 15/- per fortnight & George McKerrell granted 10/- per fortnight.

Communications from Base Records addressed to Mrs A. MacKerrell, Corryong, Victoria in May, 1921 were returned.

Base Records wrote to District Finance Officer, Melbourne on 6th October, 1921 to ask for a later address than the one recorded for the widow of the late Private J. MacKerrell – Mrs A. MacKerrell, Post Office, Lanark, Scotland.

The District Finance Officer replied to Base Records on 13th October, 1921 stating "…*I have to advise that up to the present no claim for the War Gratuity has been received in respect of the service of the above-named late soldier."*

Private John Mackerrell was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also to be sent to Private MacKerrell's widow - Mrs A. MacKerrell, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll information shows that the Scroll was returned to London in November, 1921. The Plaque information is marked *"See letter to London 26/7/22 in file.").*

A handwritten note in the Service Record file of the late Private John MacKerrell states "*Re spelling of Surname – Plaque & Scroll read McKerrell – Records – MacKerrell. Letter to London."*

Base Records wrote to The Military Adviser, Commonwealth Offices, London on 29th November, 1921 stating *"I am returning herewith the Memorial Scroll issued in respect of the late No. 332 Private J. MacKERRELL, 37th Battalion, for transmission to next-of-kin (widow – Mrs A. MacKerrell) who it is understood is now residing in Scotland. A previous communication addressed c/- Post Office, Lanark, Scotland, was returned "Not called for", and I should therefore be obliged if your administration were to ascertain her present whereabouts and advise this office accordingly. The Memorial Plaque will be returned at a later date."*

Base Records wrote to The Official Secretary, (Military), London on 26th July, 1922 regarding the *"…Memorial Plaque and Scroll issued in respect of the late No. 332 Private J. MacKERRELL, 37th Battalion, I have now to inform you that the former memento has been examined and found to be incorrectly inscribed in the name of "John McKerell." This should, of course, read John MacKERRELL to conform with deceased's records, and in the circumstances it is not proposed to return the memorial as at first suggested. The Plaque will accordingly be scrapped and presumably your administration will arrange for the issue of a fresh memento embossed with the latter name for transmission to the late soldier's widow who is understood to be residing in Scotland."*

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John Mackerrell – service number 332, of 37th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of William and Lily Mackerrell, of Corryong, Victoria, Australia.

Private J. Mackerrell 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*

J. Mackerrell is remembered on the Corryong War Memorial, located in Memorial Gardens, Hanson & Donaldson Streets, Corryong, Victoria.



**Corryong War Memorial** *(Photos from AWM Places of Pride – Henry Moulds)*

J. Mackerrell is remembered on the Centenary of ANZAC Roll of Honour located in Memorial Gardens, Hanson & Donaldson Streets, Corryong, Victoria.



**Memorial Gardens, Corryong**

**Centenary of ANZAC Roll of Honour** *(Photos from Monument Australia)*

J. McKerrell is remembered on the Port Ellen War Memorial, located at Pier, Port Ellen, Isle of Islay, Scotland.



**Port Ellen War Memorial** *(Photos from War Memorials Online)*

John Mackerrell is remembered in the Roll of Honour books held in the Hall of Honour inside The Scottish National War Memorial. The north side of the Hall of Honour is divided by columns into bays, each dedicated to a different regiment and enhanced with battle honours and consecrated colours. On the broad shelf in front of each of the bays, the names of the dead are listed in leather-bound books.



**The Scottish National War Memorial & the Hall of Honour & the Roll of Honour books.**

*(Photos from The Scottish National War Memorial)*





(56 pages of Private John Mackerrell'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

**The 280th CASUALTY LIST**

**DIED OF WOUNDS**

Private J. Mackerrell, Corryong

(*The Mildura Cultivator*, Victoria – 21 March, 1917)

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**The Roll of Honour**

**AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES**

**279th LIST**

VICTORIA

DIED OF WOUNDS

J. MacKerrell, Corryong, 5/3/17

(*The Queenslander*, Brisbane, Queensland – 24 March, 1917)

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**Honor Roll Upper Murray Rifle Club**

ENLISTED MEMBERS

ACCEPTED - …. J. Mackerrell,…..

(*Corryong Courier*, Victoria – 14 June, 1917)

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**Towong Shire Honor Roll**

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Mackerrell, J.

(*Upper Murray and Mitta Herald*, Victoria – 11 July, 1918)

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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.
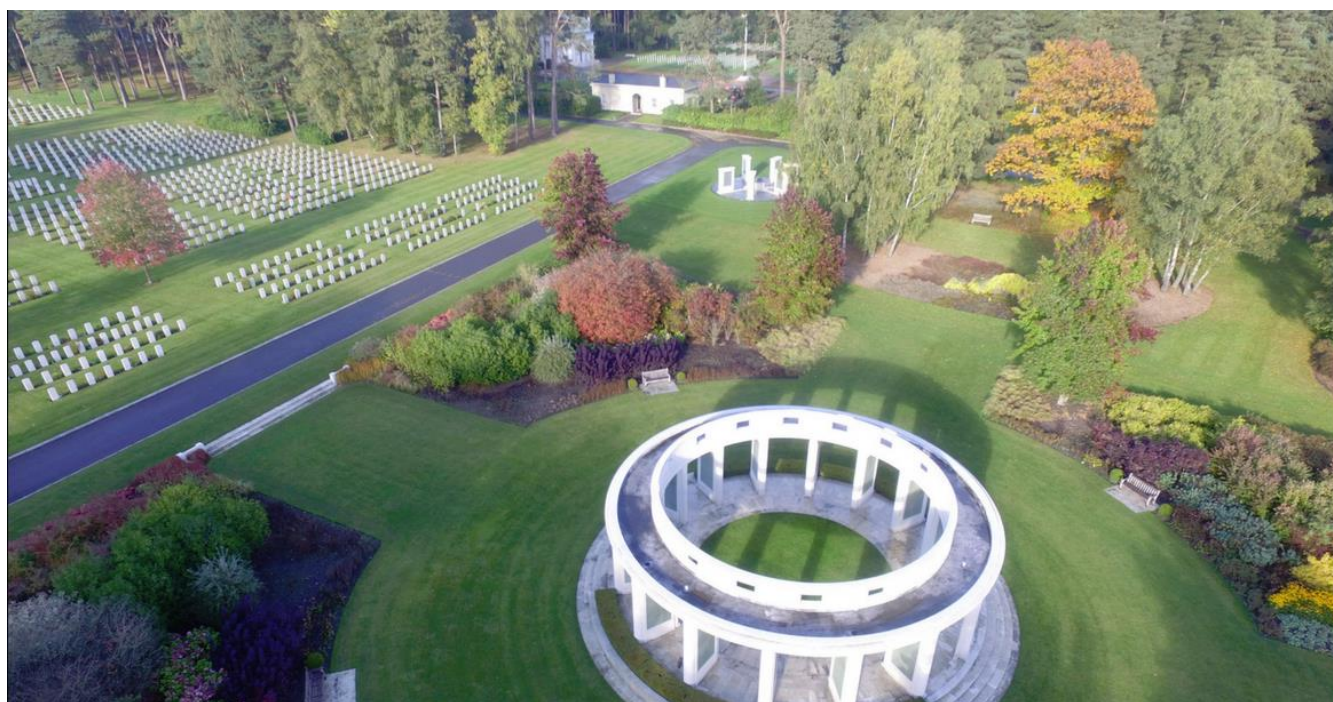*(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)*

Private  J. Mackerrell 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.



**Brookwood Military Cemetery** *(Photo from CWGC)*

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** *(Photos by Magicfingers)*

**Australian Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery** *(Photos by Magicfingers)*

*(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher)*



**Australian War Graves** *(Photo courtesy of Neil Bright 2020)*

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



*(Photo from courtesy of Ian Fletcher 2021)*

*(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher – Jan 2021)*