

Wandsworth Cemetery, London, England War Graves

(also known as Earlsfield Cemetery, Magdalen Road Cemetery, Wandsworth Earlsfield Cemetery)



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2742 PRIVATE

W. B. MARTIN

53RD BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

13TH OCTOBER, 1916 Age 22

In Memory Of The Loved

Son Of Mr & Mrs W. Martin

Of Bowra

Walter Basil MARTIN

Walter Basil Martin was born at Longreach, near Marulan, in the Goulburn district of New South Wales in 1894 to parents William Caleb Martin & Catherine Anne Martin (nee Armstrong). His birth was registered in the district of Taralga, New South Wales. (Note: The Attestation Papers listed he was born near the town of Goulburn)

Walter Basil Martin was a 21 year old, single, Farmer from Buccrabendinni (as listed on Embakation Roll) Creek, Nambucca River, NSW when he enlisted on 2nd July, 1915 at Liverpool, Sydney, NSW with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his father – Mr W. C. Martin, of Buccrabendinni Creek, Bowraville, Nambucca River, NSW. Walter Martin stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served 2 years with Citizen Forces. (Information provided by his father for the Roll of Honour recorded that he had served with Cadets & 6th Light Horse Regiment, Scone. An Application for enrolment for Active Service form recorded he had served for 12 months with Cadets & 12 months with Light Horse).

Private Walter Basil Martin was transferred from 4th Reinforcements of 19th Battalion to 6th Reinforcements of 18th Battalion to date from 6th September, 1915, while posted at Camp at Liverpool, NSW.

Private Walter Basil Martin, Service number 2742, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Euripides* (A14) on 2nd November, 1915 with the 18th Infantry Battalion, 6th Reinforcements. His older brother – Private Kenneth Bertram Martin, Service number 2715, embarked the same day with 18th Infantry Battalion, 6th Reinforcements.

18th Battalion

The 18th Battalion was raised at Liverpool in New South Wales in March 1915 as part of the 5th Brigade. It left Australia in early May.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Walter Basil Martin joined Base Depot on 1st April, 1916. He was taken on strength of 5th Training Battalion on 18th April, 1916.

Private Walter Basil Martin was taken on strength of 53rd Battalion on 20th April, 1916 at Tel-el-Kebir from 18th Battalion.

Private Walter Basil Martin embarked from Alexandria on 19th June, 1916 on *Royal George* to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 28th June, 1916.

Private Walter Basil Martin was wounded in action in France on 19th July, 1916. He was admitted to 14th Field Ambulance & transferred on 21st July, 1916 to 1st Australian Casualty Clearing Station with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to Legs (severe). Private Martin was transferred to Ambulance Train on 22nd July, 1916 & admitted to 8th Stationary Hospital at Wimereaux on the same day seriously ill (another line on Casualty Form – Active Service recorded that Private Martin was dangerously ill on 22nd July, 1916). On 24th July, 1916 there was no change to Private Martin's condition. Another progress report was noted on 12th August, 1916 – "*still in hospital - no change*" & again on 21st August, 1916. Private Martin was transferred to Boulogne, France on 31st August, 1916 & embarked for England the same day on Hospital Ship *St. David*.

53rd Battalion

The 53rd Battalion was raised in Egypt on 14 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 1st Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 1st, the 53rd was predominantly composed of men from the suburbs of Sydney. The battalion became part of the 14th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

The battalion arrived in France on 27 June 1916, entered the front line for the first time on 10 July, and became embroiled in its first major battle on the Western Front, at Fromelles, on 19 July. The battle of Fromelles was a disaster. The 53rd was part of the initial assault and suffered grievously, incurring 625 casualties, including its

commanding officer, amounting to over three-quarters of its attacking strength. Casualty rates among the rest of the 5th Division were similarly high, but despite these losses it continued to man the front in the Fromelles sector for a further two months.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 19th Battalion

Trenches – 19th July, 1916 – Attack on German Trenches:

1100 – Heavy bombardment by our guns on Enemy's trenches and equally heavy bombardment by enemy on our trenches and communications. Casualties by 1500 about 50.

1600 – 54th Bn took over & join the left 300 yds of our trenches and Bn closed in on its original front of 300 yds with Right on River LAIES. A & B Coys (Capt Thompson and Murray) in front line. C & D Coys (Maj Sampson & Capt Arblaster) in support trenches.

1743 – Battn moved to attack in four waves ½ Coy of both A and B in first and second wave. ½ Coy of both C & D in third & fourth waves. Bn H.Q. with fourth wave.

First wave moved out from our trenches at 5.43 pm followed at 100 yds distance by second wave – lay down new German wire till 6pm then charged followed by third & fourth waves (C & D Coys). Took German first and second line trenches & pushed in parties about 200 yds further on to hold back enemy's bombers who were counter attacking on front and right flank, while the remainders proceeded to consolidate the position on the German 1st & 2nd line trench. Trench was obtained with the 54th Bn on our left but no one could be found on our Right.

19 – 20 July -The line was held throughout night against violent attacks, until orders were received (about 9 am) from OC 14 BDE to retire from position won. Our Right flank being in the air, enemy had already turned it & established themselves in their 1st line trenches in rear of our Right.

About 0930 – Retired though with very heavy loss – covered by fire from own front line.

Battn went into action with

Officers 28 other Ranks 822

	<i>Offrs</i>	<i>O.R.</i>
<i>Killed</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Wounded</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>343</i>
<i>Missing</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>228</i>

(Note As known on 26th July)

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Mr W. C. Martin, Buccrabinia (as listed on communication), Bowraville, NSW was advised by Base Records on 31st July, 1916 that his son Private Walter B. Martin was seriously ill with gunshot wound to Thigh.

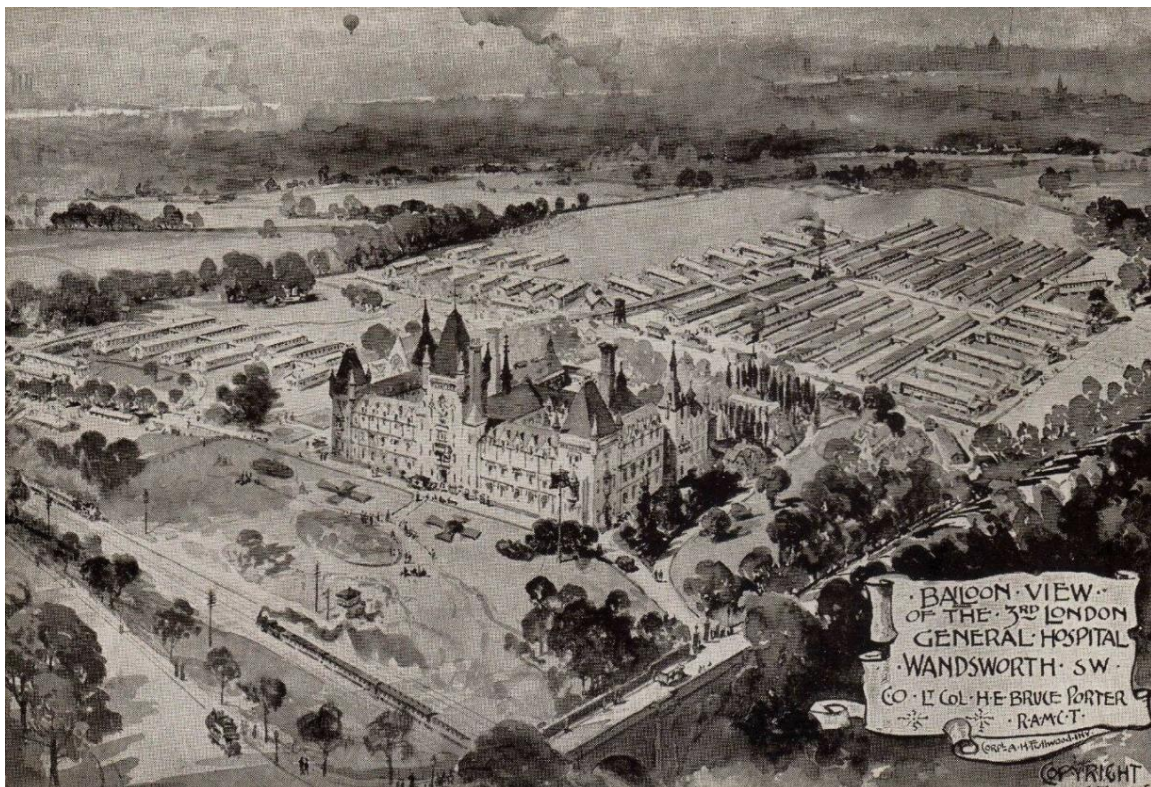
Private Walter Basil Martin was admitted to 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth, England on 31st August, 1916 with G.S.W. to right Leg.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

A01040

3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth



Mr W. C. Martin, Buccrabinia, Bowraville, NSW was advised by Base Records on 19th September, 1916 that Private W. B. Martin had been admitted wounded to 8th Stationary Hospital on 22nd July, 1916. Mr W. C. Martin was advised on 27th September, 1916 this his son Private Walter B. Martin was convalescent. On 13th October, 1916 Base Records advised Mr W. C. Martin that his son Private Walter B. Martin was again seriously ill.

Private Walter Basil Martin died on 13th October, 1916 at 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth, England from wounds received in action in France – G.S.W. (gunshot wounds) to right Thigh & left Leg.

A death for Walter B. Martin, aged 22, was registered in the December quarter, 1916 in the district of Wandsworth, London, England.

Private Walter Basil Martin was buried on 17th October, 1916 in Wandsworth (Earlsfield) Cemetery, London, England – Grave site “L19” Grave No. P28.

Base Records wrote to Mr W. C. Martin, Buccrabincia Creek, Bowraville, Nambucca River, NSW on 17th April, 1920: *With reference to my communication of 6th March, 1917, regarding the regrettable loss of your son, the late No.2742 Private W. B. Martin, 53rd Battalion, I am now in receipt of further advice which shows that his remains have been exhumed from former site, and re-interred in Grave No. 21, Australian Section, Wandsworth Cemetery, Wandsworth, London. This work is carried out with every measure of care and reverence in the presence of a Chaplain. The utmost care and attention is being devoted to the graves of our fallen soldiers, and photographs are being taken as soon as possible for transmission to next-of-kin.*

Private Walter Basil Martin's burial place is now recorded by CWGC as Plot number Aust. 21 and he now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Private Walter Basil Martin was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Martin's father – Mr W. C. Martin, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent October, 1921 & Plaque sent July, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Walter Basil Martin – service number 2742, aged 22, of 53rd Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of William Caleb Martin & Catherine Anne Martin of Bowraville, New South Wales.

Private W. B. Martin is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 157.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

W. B. Martin is remembered on the Bowraville War Memorial, located on median strip opposite Frank Partridge VC Museum, High Street, Bowraville, NSW.



Bowraville War Memorial (Photos from Monument Australia – Heather Stevens)



W. B. Martin is remembered on the Bowraville and District Honour Roll, located in Bowraville & District Ex-Services Club, High & Bowra Streets, Bowraville, NSW.



Bowraville and District Honour Roll (Photo from Monument Australia – Heather Stevens)

(35 pages of Private Walter Basil Martin'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, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives

Connected to Private Walter Basil Martin:

Older brother – Kenneth Bertram Martin – Enlisted on 26th July, 1915 as a 25 year old, single, Farmer from Buccrabendinni Creek, Bowraville, Nambucca River, NSW. He embarked on 2nd November, 1915 from Sydney, NSW on HMAT Euripides (A14) with 18th Infantry Battalion, 6th Reinforcements as Private 2715.

Private Kenneth Bertram Martin was wounded in action in France on 4th August, 1916. He was invalided to England for recovery & returned to France in November, 1916. Private Martin was attached to Permanent Cadre of 5th Training Battalion at Fovant, Wiltshire from 21st November, 1917. He returned to France in May, 1918 & rejoined 18th Battalion in France on 24th May, 1918.

He returned to Australia on Nestor & disembarked on 4th July, 1919. Private Kenneth Bertram Martin was discharged from the Australia Imperial Force (A.I.F.) on 27th August, 1919. He was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal.



William Caleb Martin and five sons around 1914

(Photo courtesy of Deborah Martin)

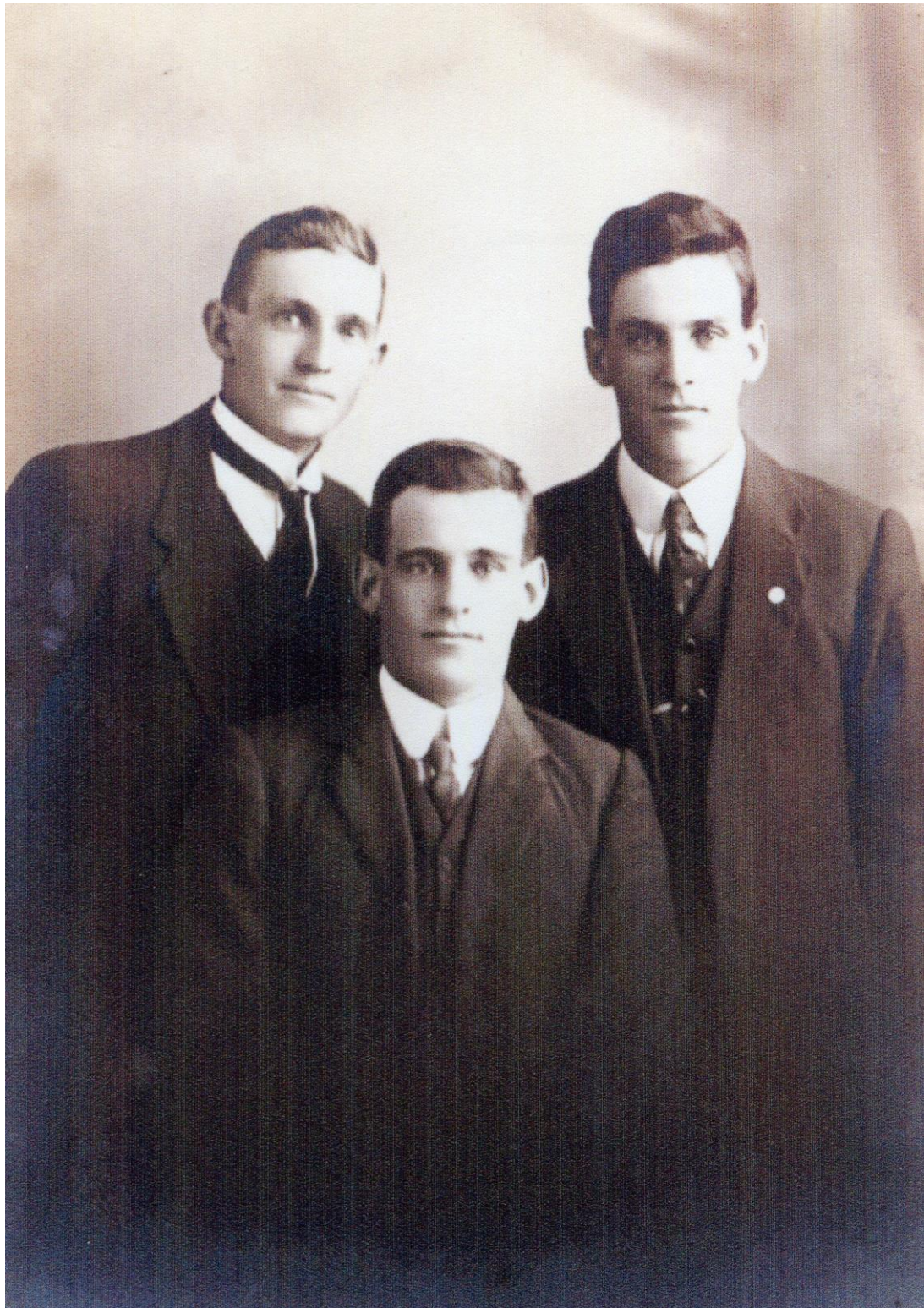
Back row, left to right: Eric Claude Martin, William Caleb Martin (father), Walter Basil Martin, Kenneth Bertram Martin

Front row: Neville Roy Martin, William Howard Martin.



Ken and Walter Martin around 1917 – in group – Walter is back row, last one on the right

(Photo courtesy of Deborah Martin)



Ralph Usher (*left*), **Walter Martin** (*centre*) & **Ken Martin** (*right*) (*Photo courtesy of Deborah Martin*)

Photo was taken at Sidney Riley Studios, Sydney.

Back of photograph reads:

To Enid T Martin

With best wishes from K B and W B Martin

July 1915

(Enid was their oldest sister)



Private Walter Basil Martin – 1915 *(Photo courtesy of Deborah Martin)*



Newspaper Notices

Enlisting

From Bowraville the following additional enlistments have been made for active service in the front: Kenneth Martin and Walter Martin, Buccrabendinni;....

(Nambucca and Bellinger News, NSW – 25 June, 1915)

Australian Casualties

Lists Nos. 191 and 192

NEW SOUTH WALES

Seriously Ill

Pte W. B. MARTIN (Bowraville), also wounded

(Australian Town and Country Journal, Sydney, NSW – 16 August, 1916)

Australian Casualties

Lists Nos. 238 and 239

NEW SOUTH WALES

Died of Wounds

Pte W. B. MARTIN (Bowraville), 13/10/16

(Australian Town and Country Journal, Sydney, NSW – 1 November, 1916)

PERSONAL

Amongst the list of casualties published on Tuesday appears the name of Private W. B. Martin, died of wounds. Deceased was the son of Mr W. C. Martin, of Buccrabendinni, and was wounded in action some months ago. His brother Ken, who accompanied him to the front, was also wounded, but has recovered. By a strange coincidence, the name of Private Walter Martin is mentioned in a letter from Private Ralph Usher also of Buccrabendinni, received yesterday by a member of the "News" staff, and which appears in this issue.

(Nambucca and Bellinger News, NSW – 3 November, 1916)

In the Trenches

Private Ralph H. Usher, who prior to enlisting, lived with his parents at Buccrabendinni, writes to a friend in Macksville, and by the tone of his letter he - and those with him — are in the thick of the fight. He writes : Just a line to let you know I am getting on alright, and feeling O. K. We've had all the latest train and trench warfare practice, and I think we are pretty well fitted for emergencies. Have had a fairly, good look round England, — -that is, as far as

the leave we get will permit. Had a trip down to Bristol last week end to see a friend in Beaufort Hospital — Ken. Martin— who was wounded in Somme in July last. Had a good time all round. His brother is in a London hospital, and about two days ago I heard his condition was serious. He was suffering from a fractured thigh. Ken is quite alright now, and is to get his discharge from hospital this week. Great progress, has been made lately in the Allies' favour. Most of the fighting is done now by the howitzers and machine guns, and armoured motors —200 horse power. According to men from the front the Germans give themselves up on the slightest chance, and show no fight much at all. A lot here think they are about wound up, but it is not possible to estimate things with any certainty. Have been getting the 'Nambucca News' from home regularly up to the present, and it is very welcome over here. I am enclosing some snapshots I got with a small camera in the trenches here. We're going into the real stuff in about three weeks. We were expecting to go last week, but were put off. All the Nambucca boys with us in the camp are well, and getting on good. Doug. Cumming, who was so well known at Bowraville, is with us now.

(Nambucca and Bellinger News, NSW – 3 November, 1916)

ROLL OF HONOR

MARTIN – October 13th, 1916, in London Hospital, of wounds received in France, Private Walter Basil Marton, aged 22 years, third son of Mr and Mrs William C. Marton, of Bowraville, Nambucca River, and nephew of the Misses Marton, Eltham, Booth Street, Balmain.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 31 October, 1916) & (The Daily Telegraph, Sydney, NSW – 9 November, 1916)

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 21st July, 1921, to Mr W. C. Martin, Buccrabincia Creek, Bowraville, Nambucca River, NSW, advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of his son, the late No, 2742 Private W. B. Martin, 53rd 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 W. B. Martin does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*In Memory Of The Loved
Son Of Mr & Mrs W. Martin
Of Bowra*

Wandsworth (Earlsfield) Cemetery, London

This is to the North-East of Earlsfield Station and is bounded by the Magdalen Road on the East and the main railway line on the West.

It contains five 1914-1918 War Plots, (the general Military Plot, the Australian, the Newfoundland, the New Zealand and the South African plots). These are on the main path leading West from Magdalen Road and there are also over 200 burials in other parts of the cemetery. The Military Plot contains a Screen Wall bearing the names of those buried in it and those in unmarked graves in other parts of the cemetery. The majority of the 1939-1945 burials are scattered throughout the cemetery but there is one group of six burials together in a War Plot near the main entrance. Again, those whose graves are unmarked are also named upon the Screen Wall, Panel 1.

Many of the 1914-1918 burials are from the 3rd London General Hospital which was at Wandsworth. There are 477 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war and 115 of the 1939-1945 war here. There are also 5 non-war service burials here.

There are 34 Australian World War 1 Soldiers buried here & 1 Australian Soldier from 1925.

(Information from CWGC)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H16917

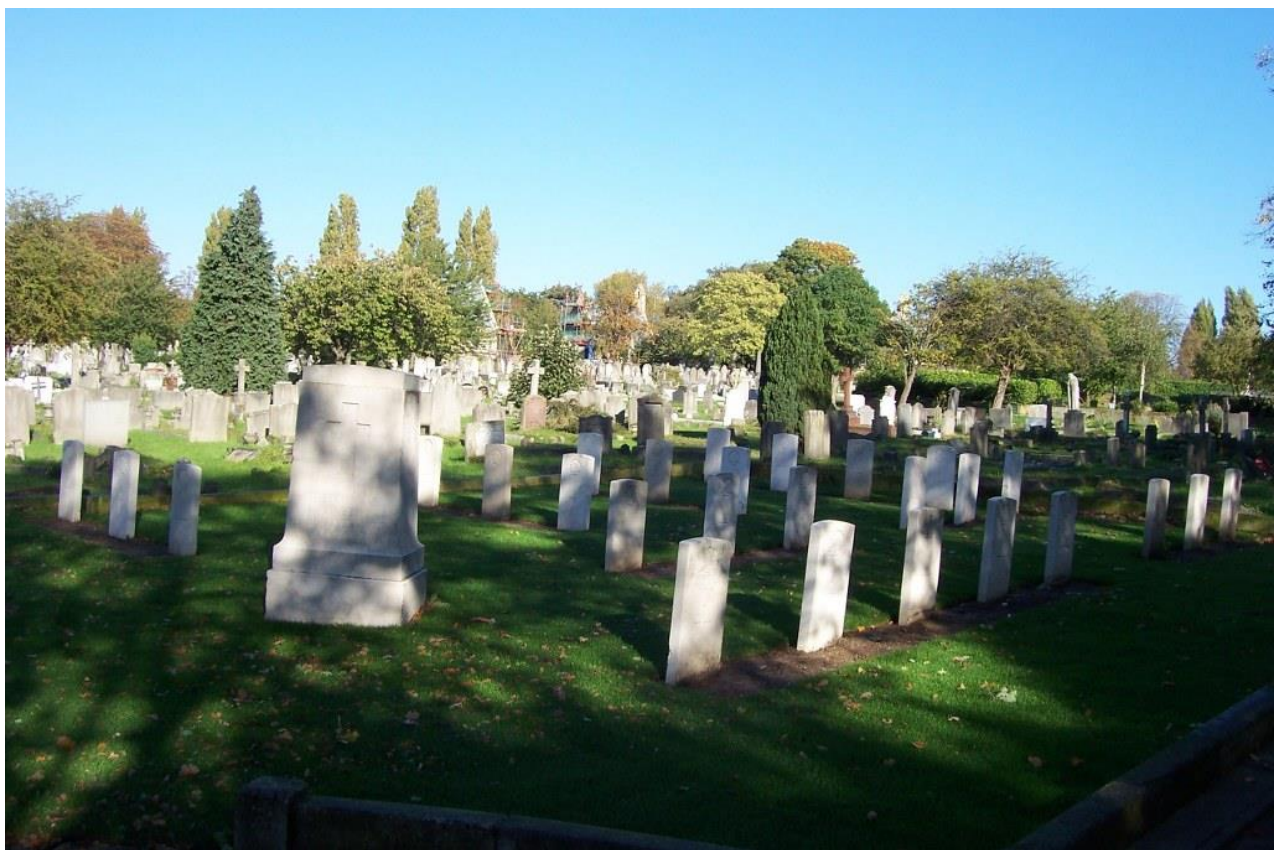
A group of Soldiers' graves in the Australian Section of Wandsworth Cemetery, London *(taken 15 April, 1931)*



(Photo by Scotch Mist 2013)



The Australian Plot in Wandsworth Cemetery, London *(Photos from CWGC)*





Cross of Sacrifice (Photos from CWGC)

Photo of Private W. B. Martin's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Wandsworth (Earlsfield) Cemetery, London, England.



(Photo courtesy of Neil Bright)