

**Melcombe Regis Cemetery,
Weymouth, Dorset, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



3203 PRIVATE

J. McGOWN

56TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

20TH FEBRUARY, 1919 Age 34

Granted

His Last Long Furlough

Loving Husband of Eva

Daddy of Jean

James (Jim) McGOWN

James McGown was born at Maidstone, near Footscray, Victoria in 1885 to parents John and Amelia McGown (nee Patterson).

James McGown attended Nott Street State School, Port Melbourne, Victoria.

James McGown married Evelyn Jane Brookes in 1907. A birth was registered in 1911 for Evelyn McGown.

The 1914 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Melbourne Ports, subdivision of Emerald Hill, Victoria recorded James McGown, Driver & Eva Jane McGown, living at 140 Thistlethwaite Street, South Melbourne.

The 1914, 1915 & 1916 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Melbourne Ports, subdivision of Port Melbourne, Victoria recorded James McGown, Driver & Eva Jane McGown, living at 106 Clarke St, Port Melbourne.

James McGown was a 29 year old, married, Labourer from Port Melbourne, Victoria when he enlisted on 6th July, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 3203 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs E. J. McGown, 126 Albert Road, Albert Park, Melbourne, Victoria.

Private James McGown was posted to Depot Battalion on 6th July, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to 7th Reinforcements of 21st Battalion on 29th October, 1915.

Private James McGown embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Wiltshire (A18)* on 18th November, 1915 with the 6th Infantry Brigade, 21st Infantry Battalion, 7th Reinforcements.

21st Battalion

The 21st Battalion was raised, as part of the 6th Brigade, at Broadmeadows in Victoria in February 1915. Its recruits hailed from all over the state. The later enlistment of these men, and their average age of 29, would seem to indicate a more considered decision to enlist that set them apart from those who did so amidst the heady enthusiasm of late 1914.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private James McGown was transferred to 60th Battalion on 26th February, 1916 from 21st Battalion. He was taken on strength of 60th Battalion at Tel-el-Kebir on 26th February, 1916.

Private James McGown was admitted to 15th Australian Field Ambulance on 5th March, 1916 then transferred to 2nd Australian Stationary Hospital at Ismalia on the same day with Chronic Rhinitis. He was transferred & admitted to 3rd Australian General Hospital at Abbassia on 15th March, 1916 & discharged to Overseas Base at Gezireh on the same day. Private McGown was discharged to his Unit at Tel-el-Kebir on 16th March, 1916.

Mrs E. J. McGown, 126 Albert Road, Albert Park, Victoria, was advised by Base Records on 14th March, 1916 that No. 3203 Private J. McGown, 21st Battalion has been admitted to 3rd General Hospital, Mudros West on 6th March, 1916 with Rhenitis mild.

Private James McGown was sent sick to 8th Field Ambulance at Ferry Post on 27th April, 1916 with Gastritis then transferred to Hospital at Duntroon Plateau on 28th April, 1916. He was discharged to his Unit on 4th May, 1916 & rejoined his Unit from Hospital the same day. (Note: no Hospital name was recorded).

Private James McGown embarked from Alexandria on 18th June, 1916 on Troopship *Kinfauns Castle* to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 29th June, 1916.

Private James McGown was wounded in action in France on 19th July, 1916. He was admitted to 32nd Stationary Hospital in France on 21st July, 1916 with wounds to legs. Private McGown embarked for England on Hospital Ship *St. Denis* on 23rd July, 1916 from Boulogne, France with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to Thigh.

60th Battalion

The 60th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 24 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 8th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. The majority of both groups were Victorians. The new battalion formed part of the 15th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division. Having only arrived in France on 28 June, the 60th became embroiled in its first major battle on the Western Front on 19 July, without the benefit of an introduction to the trenches in a "quiet" sector. The battle of Fromelles was a disaster for the battalion. In a single day, it was virtually wiped out, suffering 757 casualties. These losses meant the battalion saw little further offensive action in 1916.

Early in 1917, the battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, but it was spared having to assault it. It did, however, defend gains made during the second battle of Bullecourt. Later in the year, the AIF's focus of operations switched to the Ypres sector in Belgium. The 60th's major battle here was at Polygon Wood on 26 September. This assault was a success - a product of the systematic way in which the early actions during the third battle of Ypres were fought.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 60th Battalion

Trenches on Fromelles Front:

19th July, 1916

Coy. Cmdrs and all other available officers received final instructions re assault at Batn. Hdqtrs at 10 am.

Zero time 11 am. Head of battalion moved past Brigade hqtrs at 1.30 and marched via V.C. Sap to front line trenches under heavy enemy artillery bombardment. Friendly artillery very heavily bombarding enemy trenches. Battalion established in front line trench by 4.20, Lewis guns excepted, a few casualties having occurred, some serious.

Battalion scaled parapet and advanced in four waves, the first wave leaving at 6.45, the last at 7. Each wave advanced under very heavy artillery, machine gun and rifle fire, suffering very heavy casualties. Advance continued to within 90 yards of enemy trenches. The attack was held up, although it is believed some few of the battalion entered enemy trenches. During the night 19/20 a few stragglers, wounded an unwounded, returned to our trenches.

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private James McGown was admitted to Queen's Canadian Military Hospital, Beachborough Park, Shorncliffe, England on 24th July, 1916 with Grenade to both legs. The Hospital Admissions form recorded "Several small pieces of shrapnel removed. Wounds clean now...." He was transferred to Shorncliffe Military Hospital on 3rd October, 1916 & discharged on 9th October, 1916. (Some forms have recorded that he was admitted to Military Hospital Shorncliffe on 31st July, 1916 with grenade to both legs). Private McGown was discharged to 3rd Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford on 9th October, 1916.

Mrs E. J. McGowan, c/o Mrs Heenan, 338 Montague Street, Albert Park, Victoria, was advised by Base Records on 7th August, 1916 that No. 3203 Private J. McGowan, 60th late 21st Batt. Had been reported wounded.

Private James McGown was granted furlough from 16th October, 1916 to 31st October, 1916 & was then to report to Perham Downs.

In October, 1916, E. J. McGowan, wife of Private James McGown, wrote to Base Records to advise of a change of address from 338 Montague St, Albert Park, Victoria to her new address at c/o 45 Dundas Place, Albert Park, Victoria.

Private James McGown was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 2nd November, 1916. He was medically classified as B1 a (fit for Overseas Training Camp in a few weeks).

Private James McGown was marched out to "A. Prov. C" at Tidworth, Wiltshire on 5th February, 1917.

On 11th March, 1917, E. J. McGown advised Base Records of her change of address from c/o 45 Dundas Place, Albert Park, Victoria to 127 Napier St, South Melbourne, Victoria.

Private James McGown was marched out to Infantry Draft Depot, Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 31st May, 1917*. He proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 27th May, 1917*. (*Dates as per Casualty Form – Active Service)

Private James McGown was marched in to 5th A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Havre, France on 28th May, 1917. He was marched out from 5th A.B.D.B. on 18th June, 1917 & rejoined 60th Battalion on 28th June, 1917.

On 2nd September, 1918, E. J. McGown, wife of Private James McGown, wrote to Base Records to advise of a change of address from c/o 127 Napier St, South Melbourne, Victoria to 186 Raleigh Street, Thornbury, Victoria.

Private James McGown reported sick on 19th November, 1917. He was admitted to 15th Australian Field Ambulance on 19th November, 1917 – P.U.O. (Pyrexia (fever) of unknown origin). Private McGown was discharged to duty on 5th December, 1917 & rejoined 60th Battalion on the same day.

Private James McGown was transferred to 54th Battalion on 1st May, 1918 from 60th Battalion. He was taken on strength of 54th Battalion on 1st May, 1918.

Private James McGown was detached for duty with 5th Mobile Veterinary Section from 22nd May, 1918.

Private James McGown was transferred to 56th Battalion on 1st August, 1918.**

Private James McGown was on Leave to UK from 7th August, 1918 & rejoined 56th Battalion from Leave on 26th August, 1918.

56th Battalion

....The 56th fought its last major battle of the war, St Quentin Canal, between 29 September and 2 October 1918. It was resting out of the line when the Armistice was declared on 11 November.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

[**The Casualty form – Active Service has an entry for 11th October, 1918 - Private James McGown was transferred to 56th Battalion & taken on strength of 56th Battalion from 54th Battalion on the same day.]

Private James McGown was attached for duty with 14th Brigade Headquarters on 21st October, 1918. He returned to his Unit on 8th November, 1918.

54th Battalion

.....Heavy casualties throughout 1918 and declining enlistments in Australia resulted in a decision in mid-September 1918 to disband several Australian battalions to reinforce others; in the 14th Brigade this battalion was to be the 54th. The men mutinied in response, which resulted in a temporary postponement of the order. The 54th fought its last major battle of the war, St Quentin Canal, between 29 September and 2 October 1918. On 11 October it ceased to exist as a separate entity when it was merged with the 56th Battalion to form the 54/56th Battalion.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private James McGown was marched out from the Field to A.I.B.D. (Australian Infantry Base Depot) on 3rd February, 1919 – ready for Return to Australia. He was marched out to England from Havre, France on 14th February, 1919.

Private James McGown was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, Dorset, England on 15th February, 1919.

Private James McGown was sent sick to Hospital on 15th February, 1919.

Private James McGown died at 4. 5 pm on 20th February, 1919 at Monte Video Hospital, Dorset, England from Pneumonia.

A death for James McGown, aged 33, was registered in the March quarter, 1919 in the district of Weymouth, Dorset, England.

Private James McGown was buried on 24th February, 1919 in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England – Plot number II. C. 3043 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

From the burial report of Private James McGown - Coffin was Elm. Brass Mounts. Deceased was buried with full military honors the coffin draped with the Australian flag being borne to the graveside on a Gun-carriage preceded by a Firing Party and Band from No. 2 Australian Command Depot, Weymouth. Six of deceased's late Unit comrades supported the Pall and a number of Officers N.C.O.'s and Men of the Depot followed the remains and were present at the graveside ceremony. Headquarters A.I.F. Depots in United Kingdom were represented at the funeral.

Private James McGown was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private McGown's widow – Mrs E. J. McGown, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent November, 1921 & Plaque sent May, 1923).

E. McGown, 6 McCracken Avenue, Northcote, wrote to Base Records on 1st June, 1923 asking: *"I understand that a British War Medal should be issued to me, but so far I have not received same. I think (but am not sure) that I sent a form to the Base Records asking for medal to be sent to me. Would you kindly see of one is to be issued to me."*

E. J. McGown signed for receipt of the British War Medal, issued on account of the late Private J. McGown, on 28th June, 1923. (The 1914/15 Star had been signed for by Evelyn J. McGown on November, 1920 & Victory Medal had been signed for in February, 1923).

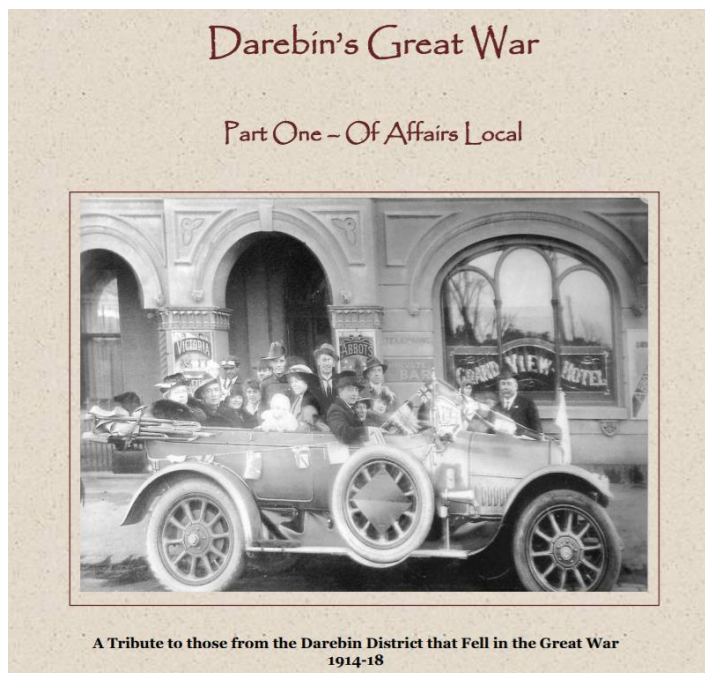
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private James McGown – service number 3203, aged 34, of 56th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of John and Amelia McGown; husband of E. J. McGown, of 119 Mansfield St., Northcote, Victoria.

Private J. McGown is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 162.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

James McGown is remembered by *Darebin's Great War – Part One – Of Affairs Local* compiled by Brian Membrey. (131 page PDF) & *Darebin's Great War – In Memoriam* (371 page PDF)



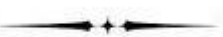
The Nott Street School Honour Roll, located in Port Melbourne, Town Hall, 333 Bay Street, Port Melbourne, Victoria does not list individual names.



Nott Street School Honour Roll (Photo from Monument Australia – Kent Watson)

(77 pages of Private James McGown'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

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

155th LIST

Illness

Pte J. McGown, Albert Park

(The Bendigo Independent, Victoria – 21 March, 1916)

THE 194th and 195th CASUALTY LISTS

WOUNDED

Private J. McGown, Albert Park

(The Mildura Cultivator, Victoria – 19 August, 1916)

DEATH

On Active Service

MCGOWN – On 20th February at Camp Hospital, Monte Villei, of pneumonia, after 3 years and 3 months' active service, James, beloved eldest son of John and Amelia McGown, 136 Graham-street, Port Melbourne, beloved brother of Nellie, Mrs Street, John and William (returned), Norman (on active Service) and Robert. Aged 33 years.

Duty nobly done.

(Port Melbourne Standard, Victoria – 8 March, 1919) & (The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 8 March, 1919)

& (The Australasian, Melbourne, Victoria - 15 March, 1919)

A.I.F. CASUALTIES

List No. 462

DIED – OTHER CAUSES

McGOWN, J, Thornbury, 20/2/19

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 1 April, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

M'GOWN – In loving memory of our dearly beloved eldest son, James, who died on 20th February, 1919 at Monte Video Camp Hospital, Weymouth, England of pneumonia, beloved brother of Nell (Mrs Street), Jack (returned), Willie (returned), Norman (returned) and Bob, beloved husband of Eva and daddy of Jean, after three years and three months' active service.

O for the touch of the vanished hand.

And the sound of a voice that is still.

-Inserted by his loving father and mother, 136 Graham-street, Port Melbourne.

M'GOWN – In loving memory of my dear brother, Jim, who passed away on 20th February, 1919, at Monte Video Camp Hospital, England.

Not gone from memory, not gone from love,

But gone to our Father's home above.

With an aching heart I shook his hand,

Tears glistening in my eyes;

I wished him luck, but never thought

It was our last good-bye.

Could I have stood beside his grave,

And seen him laid to rest,

The parting would not have been so hard

For those who loved him best.

-Inserted by his loving brother and sister-in-law, Jack (returned) and Isa.

M'GOWN – In loving memory of our dearly beloved brother, Jim, who died on the 20th February, 1919, of pneumonia, at Monte Video Camp Hospital, Weymouth, England, after 3 years and 4 months' active service.

He is softly sleeping, and will never more awake

Till the sound of God's great trumpet shall upon his slumbers break;

Then he'll leap to that reveilee, ever faithful, brave and true,

And we'll see him marching bravely in God's final great review.

-Inserted by his loving brother, Will (returned), Norman (returned) and Bob.

M'GOWN – In loving memory of our my beloved brother, Jim, who died on the 20th February, 1919, of pneumonia, at Monte Video Camp Hospital, Weymouth, England, after 3 years 4 months' active service.

Rest, dear brother, thy journey is o'er,

Rest, sweetly rest, on that beautiful shore;

Danger and troubles shall harm thee no more,

Rest, my dear brother, on that beautiful shore.

-Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Nell and Will (returned, A.I.F.).

M'GOWN – In fond remembrance of our dear friend, Jim, died 20th February, 1919.

Ever remembered.

-Inserted by his sincere friends, Mr and Mrs Tanner (?) and family.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 21 February, 1920)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

McGOWN – In loving memory of our dearly beloved son and brother, Jim, who died at Monte Video Camp Hospital, England, on 20th February, 1919.

Oh, for the touch of the vanished hand,
And the sound of the voice that is still.

--Inserted by his father and mother, brothers, Jack, Will, Normand and Bob (all returned), 136 Graham-street, Port Melbourne.

McGOWN – In loving memory of our dearly beloved brother, Jim, who died at Monte Video Camp Hospital, England, on 20th February, 1919.

What would I not give to clasp his hand,
his dear face to see;
Just to hear his loving voice,
Which means so much to me.

-Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Nell and Bill Street.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 19 February, 1921)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

M'GOWN – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, who died on the 20th February, 1919 at Monte Video camp hospital, England, after 3 years and 6 months service, aged 33 years.

There are days of pain and sorrow
When my heart grows strangely sad
With a silent hopeless longing
For the one who returned no more.

-Inserted by father, mother, sisters and brothers.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 20 February, 1922)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

McGOWN – In fond memory of our dear friend, Jim, who died on 20th February, 1919.

Sunshine and shadows pass,
But fond memories for ever last.

-Inserted by Mr and Mrs Tanner and family.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 20 February, 1923)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

McGOWN – In loving memory of my dear brother, Jim, who died on 20th February, 1919 at Weymouth, England, of pneumonia.

He's sleeping away in his lonely grave;
His march of life is ended.
But he played the man across the waves,
Where the path of duty wended.

-Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Nell and Bill Street.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 20 February, 1924)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

IN loving memory of our dear son and brother, Jim, who died at Monte Video Camp Hospital, England on 20th February, 1919.

Years may wipe out many things,
But this they wipe out never,
The memory of those happy days
When we were all together.

-Inserted by his father, mother, sister and brothers, Nell, Jack, Willie, Norman and Bob.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 20 February, 1926)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

McGOWN – In loving memory of our beloved brother, Jim, who died 20th February, 1919 at Weymouth, England, after three years' service.

Oh, for the touch of a vanished hand.
And the sound of a voice that is stilled.

-Nell and Will (late A.I.F.)

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 19 February, 1927)

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. McGown does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Granted His Last Long Furlough

Loving Husband of Eva

Daddy of Jean

Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England

Weymouth became a depot for Australian forces in 1916 and 83 of the 147 First World War burials in Melcombe Regis Cemetery are of Australian servicemen; most of these graves are scattered in the old part. The 36 Second World War burials are in the extension. The cemetery also contains seven war graves of other nationalities and one non-war burial.

(Information from CWGC)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00332

Some of the Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919

Identified, left to right: Captain Francis Arthur Deravin, Australian Army Medical Corps, died 8 July 1917 aged 41 years (large headstone); 138 Private Louis Nelson Matthews, 27th Battalion, 4 July 1917; 5082 Private Victor George Smith, 21st Battalion, died 13 November 1918.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00333

Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919

Identified, front row, left to right: unidentified; Butler; 5917 Private Edgar Allan Thornell, 22nd Battalion (Bn), died 9 August 1918; 1207 Corporal Jesse Adams Davis, 12th Bn, died 15 November 1918.

Back row: 5329 Private Frederick Albert Archer, Anzac Provost Company, died 6 November 1918; 5990 Private Albert Robert Blackmore, 12th Bn, died 2 November 1918; 11099 Driver Matthew Charles Percival Nettle, 6th Australian Field Artillery Brigade, died 22 October 1918; 3942 Private Walter Alick Weckman, 51st Bn, died 9 November 1918.



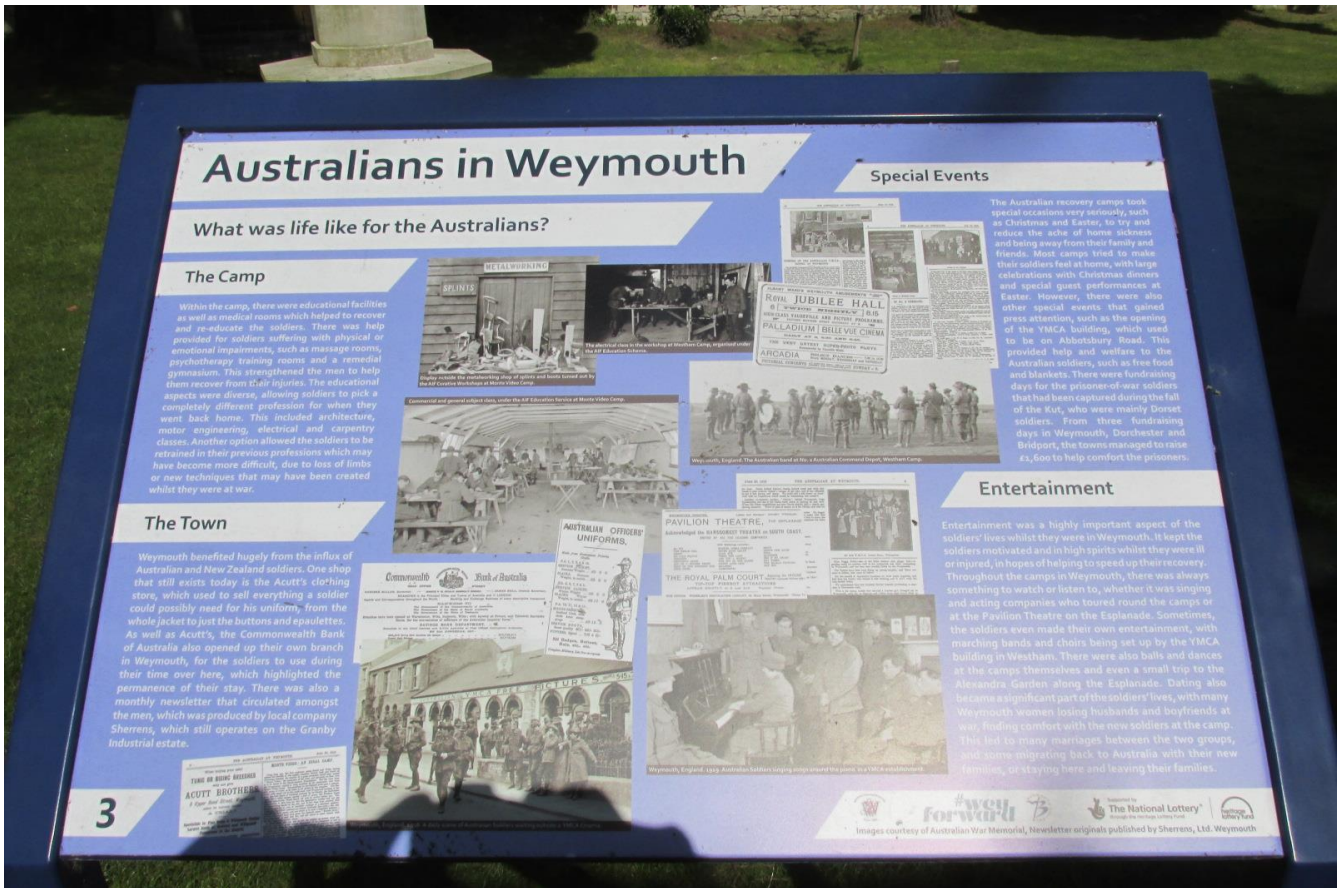
(Photo courtesy of Steve Stewart)



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

Photo of Private J. McGown's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England.



(Photos courtesy of Allan Wood)

