

**All Saints Cemetery,  
Nunhead, Greater London, England**

**War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**2189 PRIVATE**

**WALTER BEECHAM MILLER**

**14TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**14TH SEPTEMBER, 1915 Age 26**

*Our Beloved Son*

## Walter Beecham / Beecher MILLER

Walt Beecher Miller (name as listed on Victorian Births, Deaths & Marriages website & recorded at Murchison, Victoria) was born at Arcadia, Shepparton, Victoria in 1889 to parents John James & Jane Miller (nee Rainbow).

Walter Beecham Miller attended Arcadia State School, Victoria.

John James Miller, father of Walter Beecham Miller, died on 1st February, 1906 at Hawthorn, Victoria.

The 1912 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Kooyong, Surrey Hills, Victoria recorded Walter Beecher Miller, Farm Labourer, from Whitehorse Rd, Hilltop.

The 1914 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Kooyong, Camberwell, Victoria recorded Walter Beecher Miller, Blacksmith, c/o Burrell, Burwood.

Walter Beecham Miller was a 26 year old, single, Blacksmith from Violet Town, Victoria when he enlisted in Melbourne, Victoria on 3rd March, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2189 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Jane Burnett, Violet Town, Victoria.

*[Note: The Roll of Honour & the Nominal Roll on the Australian War Memorial website both have the name as Walter Beecher Miller; whereas the Embarkation Roll has the name as Walter Beecham Miller. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission did have the full name engraved on the headstone as Walter Beecher Miller but has since changed it to read Walter Beecham Miller. The Attestation Papers have been completed in the name of Walter Beecham Miller.]*

Private Walter Beecham Miller was posted to A.I.F. Depot on 5th March, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to 6th Reinforcements of 14th Battalion on 20th April, 1915.

Private Walter Beecham Miller embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Wandilla* (A62) on 17th June, 1915 with the 4th Infantry Brigade, 14th Infantry Battalion, 6th Reinforcements.

Private Walter Beecham Miller was reported wounded at Dardanelles on 27th August, 1915. He was transferred to Hospital Ship *Devanha* on 29th August, 1915 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to Head.

### 14th Battalion

The Headquarters of the 14th Battalion opened at an office at 178 Collins Street, Melbourne in the last week of September 1914. On 1 October it relocated to Broadmeadows Camp where the battalion's recruits, principally from Melbourne and its suburbs, were taken on strength and trained. With the 13th, 15th and 16th Battalions, the 14th formed the 4th Brigade commanded by Colonel John Monash. It embarked for overseas on 22 December and, after a brief stop in Albany, Western Australia, arrived in Egypt on 31 January 1915. In Egypt, the 4th Brigade became part of the New Zealand and Australian Division with which it would serve at Gallipoli.

The 4th Brigade landed at ANZAC Cove on the afternoon of 25 April 1915. On 19 May the Turks launched a massive counter-attack. During this fighting Lance Corporal Albert Jacka of the 14th was awarded the AIF's first Victoria Cross. Jacka's leadership and courage became legendary within the AIF and he was eventually commissioned in the 14th Battalion, which came to be widely known as "Jacka's Mob". From May to August 1915 the battalion was heavily involved in establishing and defending the ANZAC front line. In August, the 4th Brigade attacked Hill 971. The hill was taken at great cost, although Turkish reinforcements forced the Australians to withdraw. At the end of the month, the 14th Battalion suffered further heavy casualties when it was committed to the unsuccessful attack on Hill 60. The battalion served at ANZAC until the evacuation in December.....

*(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

## War Diary – 14th Battalion

27th August, 1915:

Major J. Adams assumed command of 14th Bn and No 2 Post C.O. attended conference at B.H. 2 in morning

15.30 hrs – Major C. M. M. Dare took over command of No 2 Post in absence of Major Adams on special duty. 4 Officers 100 others marched out under Major J. Adams as part of attacking force on KAIAJIK AGHALA.

16.00 hrs – Artillery bombardment opened and fire was opened from our first on enemy trenches in our front to prevent movement. Our Machine Guns firing on enemy trenches on Kaiajik Aghala.

17.00 hrs – Artillery lengthened range and the assaulting party under Major Adams advanced on Hill 60. Our Machine Guns giving covering fire.

Strength:-

12 Officers 279 others

Sick to Hos 17 others

Rejoined nil

Wounded 58 others

Killed:-

1 Off 8 others

Capt C. E. CONNELLY

Wounded

Capt G. COOPER

Capt R. W. GRAHAM

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Walter Beecham Miller was admitted to King George's Hospital, Stamford Street, London on 12th September, 1915. His condition was reported as dangerous. (Note: Some forms have that Private Miller was admitted to Military Hospital Hamstead, England or died there. Some of the forms have been altered to show the correct Hospital as King George Hospital, Stamford Street, London).

Private Walter Beecham Miller died at midnight on 14th September, 1915 at King George Hospital, Stamford Street, London, England from wounds received in action – gunshot wounds to Head.

A death for Walter B. Miller, aged 26, was registered in the September quarter, 1915 in the district of Lambeth, London, England. A death was also listed for "Walter Beecher-Miller", aged 26, was registered in the September quarter, 1915 in the district of Lambeth, London, England.

Private Walter Beecham Miller was buried at 3 pm on 17th September, 1915 in All Saints Cemetery, Nunhead, Great London, England –

Mrs J. Burnett, Violet Town, Victoria, was advised by Secretary Defence on 19th September, 1915 that her son Private W. B. Miller had been wounded on 27th August "not reported seriously no other particulars available will immediately advise anything further received."

Mrs J. Burnett, 51 Nimmo Street, Middle Park, Victoria was sent four photographs of the grave of her son on 16th June, 1920 by Base Records. The letter included "It would appear evident the remains of your son, have been exhumed from Grave No. 32032, Square 89, Nunhead Cemetery, Nunhead, London, and re-interred in Grave No. 4,

*Square 89, in the same cemetery. This work is carried out with every measure of care and reverence in the presence of a Chaplain."*

Private Walter Beecham Miller's grave is now listed by Commonwealth War Graves Commission as Plot number 16. 33431 T. and he has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private Miller - *The deceased was buried at Nunhead Cemetery, where the interment took place on the 17th September at 3 pm the cortege leaving the King George Hospital, Stamford Street, London, S.E. at 1.30 pm. Lieutenant Colonel G. B. Appleton was present at the funeral as representing the High Commissioner. The funeral, as reported by this officer, was very impressive, and many civilians were looking on. The Chaplain of His Majesty's Brigade of Guards officiated at the grave, and a firing party and escort were provided by the Honourable Artillery Company. After the ceremony Lieutenant Colonel Appleton spoke a few words to the H.A.C. and told them how much their presence at the graveside of an Australian soldier was appreciated by the High Commissioner who desires this placed on record."*

A Notice for the Press was prepared by Base Records on 17th April, 1918 with the following information: *"The Defence Department would be glad if Mrs Jane Burnett, formerly of Violet Town, Victoria, next-of-kin to the late No. 2189 Private W. B. Miller, 14th Battalion, will communicate with the Officer in Charge, Base Records, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, with as little delay as possible."*

Base Records contacted Mrs J. Burnett, 51 Nimmo Street, Middle Park, Victoria, remarried mother of the late Private Walter Beecham Miller, on 31st May, 1920 stating she was noted as the registered next-of-kin on the records for the late No. 2189 Private W. B. Miller, 14th Battalion, but desired to know if there were any nearer blood relatives than herself & specifically asked if his father was still alive.

Mrs Burnett replied to Base Records stating that his father had died on 4th February, 1906.

Private Walter Beecham Miller was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Miller's remarried mother – Mrs J. Burnett, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent August, 1921 & Plaque sent May, 1923).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Walter Beecham Miller – service number 2189, aged 26, of 14th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Jane Burnett (formerly Miller), of 51 Numno St., Middle Park, Victoria, Australia and the late John James Miller.

Private W. B. Miller is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 73.

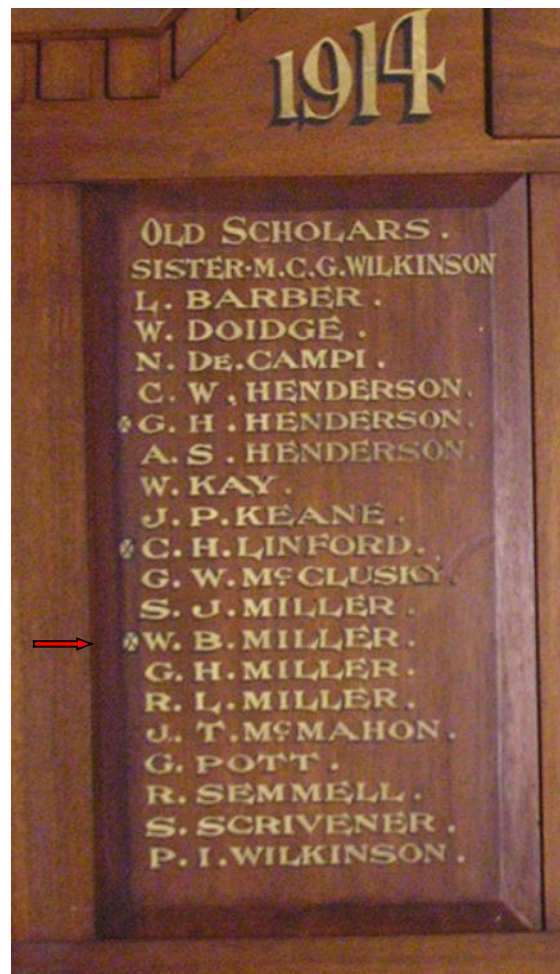


*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

W. B. Miller, along with his 3 brothers – S. J. Miller, G. H. Miller & R. L. Miller – are all remembered on the Arcadia Old Scholars Honour Board which was previously located in Arcadia State School but is now located in Arcadia Community Centre, Victoria.



Arcadia Old Scholars WW1 Honour Board (Photos from Arcadia Our Story)





(45 pages of Private Walter Beecham Miller'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*



### Connected to Private Walter Beecham Miller:

Older brother – Samuel John Miller (b. 1887) – Enlisted 24th August, 1914 as a 27 year old Baker. Embarked on 20th October, 1914 from Melbourne, Victoria with 2nd Field Artillery Brigade as Gunner 1450.

Gunner Samuel John Miller returned to Australia 8th October, 1918.

Younger Brother – George Hedley Miller (b. 1894) – Enlisted 17th August, 1914 as a 20 year old Clerk. Embarked on 20th October, 1914 from Melbourne, Victoria with 2nd Field Artillery Brigade – No. 5 Battery as Corporal No. 999.

Captain George Hedley Miller returned to Australia 8th July, 1919.

Awarded Military Cross, Belgian Croix de Guerre & Mentioned in Despatches.

Younger Brother – Robert Lindsay Miller (b. 1896) – Enlisted 12th May, 1917 as a 20 year old Mechanic. Embarked on 16th November, 1917 from Sydney, NSW with 1st to 4th Signal Troops as Sapper 20360.

Driver Robert Lindsay Miller returned to Australia 26th July, 1919.



### Newspaper Notices

#### **KILLED IN ACTION**

MILLER – Died of wounds received in action at Dardanelles, on August 27, Walter B. Miller, 14th Battalion, fourth son of Jane and the late John James Miller, of Middle Park, late of Arcadia, aged 26 years.

In a lonely grave he's sleeping,  
of earth's dearest and best;  
In our hearts we will miss him,  
Though we know he is only at rest.

-(Inserted by his loving mother, sisters, and brothers.)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 22 September, 1915)

## **DEATHS**

### **On Active Service**

MILLER - Died of wounds received in action at Dardanelles on the 27th August, Walter B. Miller, 14th Battalion, fourth son of Jane and the late John James Miller, of Middle Park, late of Arcadia, aged 26 years.

His duty done, a noble end.

-Inserted by his loving mother, sisters and brothers.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 22 September, 1915)

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## **AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCES**

### **84th CASUALTY LIST**

VICTORIA

WOUNDED

Pte W. B. MILLER, Violet Town

(*Bendigo Advertiser*, Victoria – 1 October, 1915)

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### **Our Boys**

A sorry list of killed and wounded issued yesterday contains the name of Pte Miller, Violet Town (wounded).....

(*The Independent*, Benalla, Victoria – 1 October, 1915)

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## **AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES**

### **Eighty-Seventh List**

VICTORIANS

DIED OF WOUNDS

Private W. B. Miller, Violet Town

(*The Colac Herald*, Victoria – 8 October, 1915)

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## Inside the little French factory engraving headstones for Commonwealth soldiers killed in world wars

By Europe correspondent James Glenday



The Beaurains factory churns out about 50 graves per day.

The two world wars have long since passed, but for those employed to honour the dead, the task is never-ending.

At a factory in the northern French city of Beaurains, machines operate 70 hours a week to produce a constant, global supply of gravestones for the 1.7 million Commonwealth soldiers killed in the two horrific conflicts.

Although age may not weary them, the years continue to condemn their gravestones and they need to be replaced.

"Some of these headstones are 100 years old," the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Peter Francis said.

"For us an illegible headstone is a brave man forgotten, and it's unacceptable."



'Virgin' headstones waiting to be engraved at the factory in Beaurains, France.



The factory produces 6,000 gravestones a year.

They are shipped to 23,000 places in 154 countries, including Australia.

"It's always emotional when you come here," Camille Joly, the manager of headstone production, said.

"You have to remember, each one of these people fell and fought for freedom."



This headstone for Australian soldier Walter Beecham Miller is bound for a cemetery in the UK.

About 30 headstones are allocated annually to soldiers whose bodies have been newly discovered on the Western Front.

A stone was recently made for an unknown Australian soldier killed in World War I, who was finally laid to rest in an official ceremony in Belgium on Wednesday.

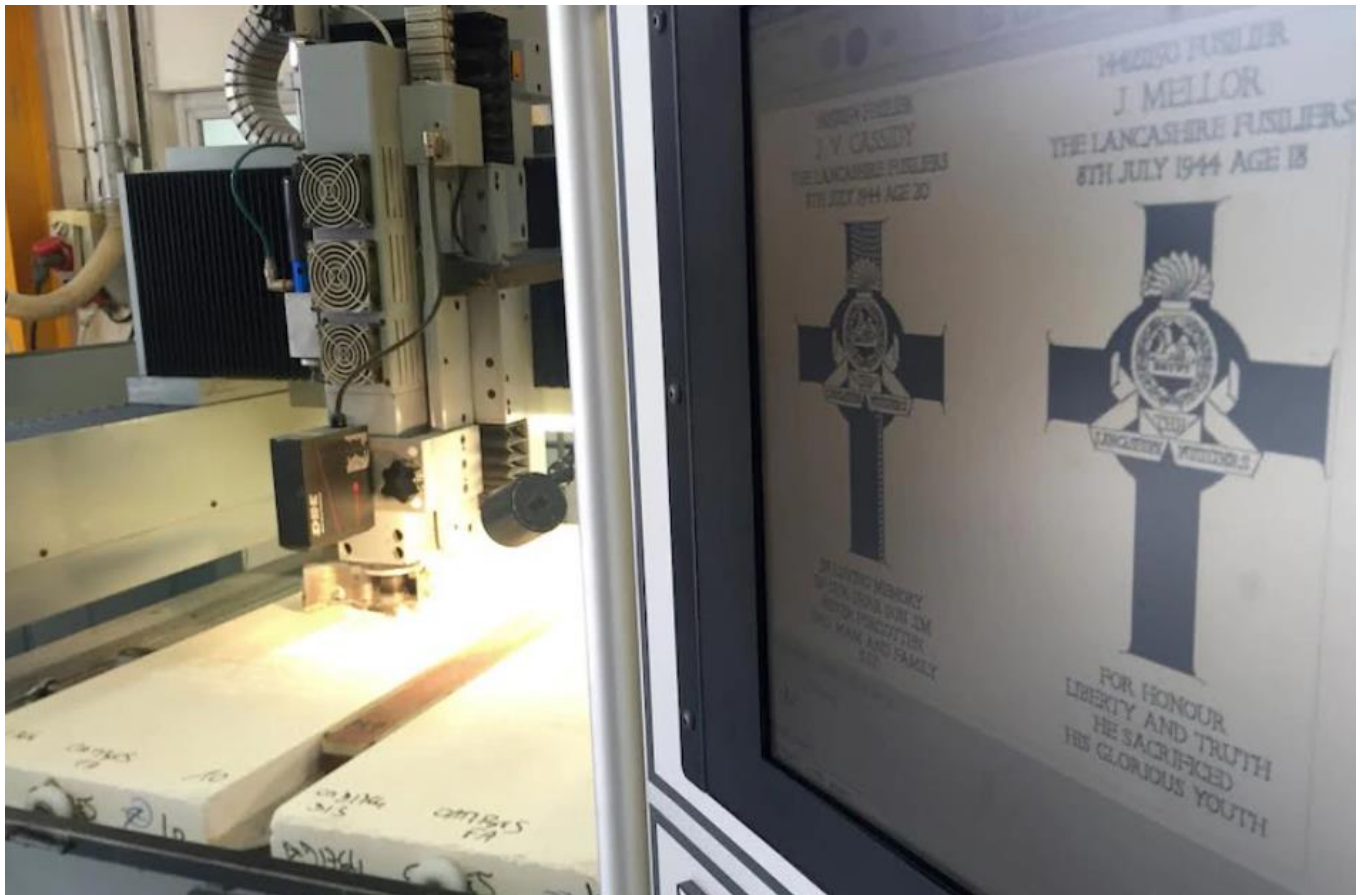
Another three will be buried at Pozieres on Saturday.

"The cemeteries should be reminiscent of an English garden," Gareth Hardware, who is in charge of horticulture for the cemeteries in Western Europe, said.

"We also select trees from the countries from which the soldiers fell, so Canadian maple, and Australian eucalyptus."

In most places, the end result is truly stunning.

Many of the men and women killed in the two world wars died far too young but thanks to this work, they will be remembered long after we are gone.



The designs for the headstones are sent from England to France.(ABC News: James Glenday)

(ABC News, Australia – 22 July, 2016)

Walter Miller is remembered on his father's headstone in Coburg Pine Ridge Cemetery, Victoria – Presbyterian P, Grave 490, along with his mother.



**Coburg Cemetery** (Photo from Find a Grave – Rebecca McIntosh)

*John James MILLER,*

*Died 1 Feb 1906, Aged 47 years*

*Walter MILLER,*

*Died 14 Sep 1915, Aged 26 years, fourth son of above,*

*Killed in Action at Gallipoli*

*Also his wife, Jane MILLER,*

*Died 4 March 1929, Aged 74 years*

### 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 Walter Beecham Miller does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

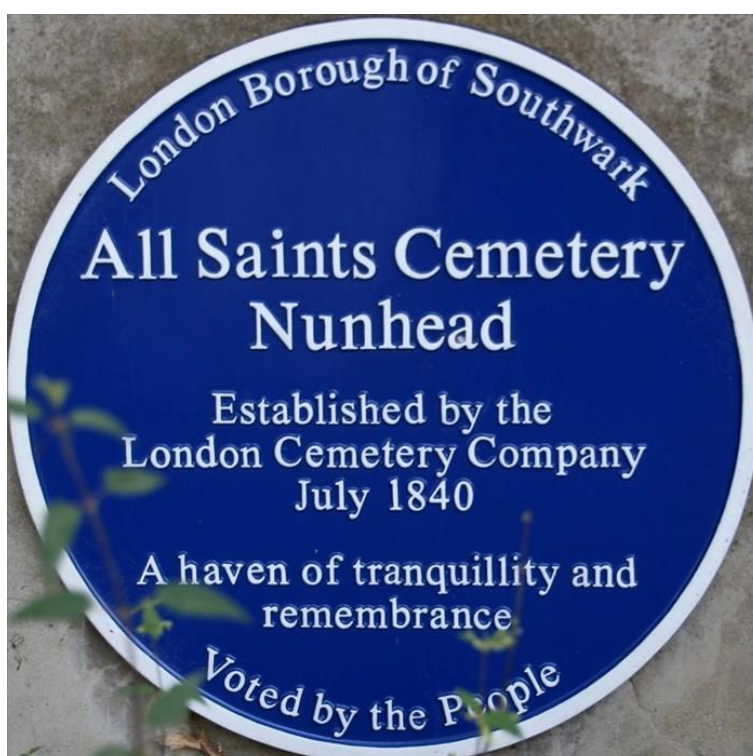
*Our Beloved Son*

### **All Saints Cemetery, Nunhead, Great London, England (also known as Nunhead Cemetery)**

Nunhead (All Saints) Cemetery contains 592 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war. The majority are in three war graves plots; the United Kingdom plot (in Square 89) has 266 graves, the Australian plot (near the main entrance) has 23 and the Canadian plot (in Square 52, also containing New Zealand and South African burials) has 36. The graves in the Australian and Canadian plots are marked with individual headstones. The graves in the United Kingdom plot and the remaining war graves scattered throughout the cemetery could not be marked individually; the casualties buried in these graves are therefore commemorated by name on a Screen Wall inside the main entrance gate to the cemetery.

A second Screen Wall commemorates the 110 burials of the 1939-1945 war in a further war graves plot in Square 5 and elsewhere in the cemetery whose graves could not be marked by headstones.

There is also 1 Belgian burial of the 1914-1918 war and 7 Non-war Service burials, all commemorated on the Screen Wall. *(Information from CWGC)*







**All Saints Cemetery, Nunhead**



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

J00776

*The Australian area at Nunhead Cemetery. The grave in the centre front is 27 Lance Corporal Eric Lyndon Lowe, 18th Battalion, from Clarence Town NSW, who died on 10 September 1915 aged 18 years. The grave to the right is 1560 Private (Pte) Leslie Raymond Talbot Gilbert, 14th Battalion, born in England, from Kogarah West NSW, who died on 20 January 1916 aged 19 years. The grave 2nd row right side is 1019 Sergeant (Sgt) Victor Ronald Coombe, 15th Battalion, of Campbelltown, Tas, who died on 29 September 1915 aged 26 years. From the collection of Mr Alfred Thomas Sharp. Mr Sharp was the Commonwealth Immigration Officer of Victoria and was based in the London Office during the First World War. He and his wife hosted and visited many soldiers, particularly those from Victoria, who were recuperating in London. He also photographed many Australian graves in English cemeteries. His photograph collection relating to this period in London was bequeathed to the Memorial in 1922 after his death. During his time in London he was a member of the British Volunteer Regiment, serving with the Willesden Battalion, Middlesex Volunteer Regiment.*



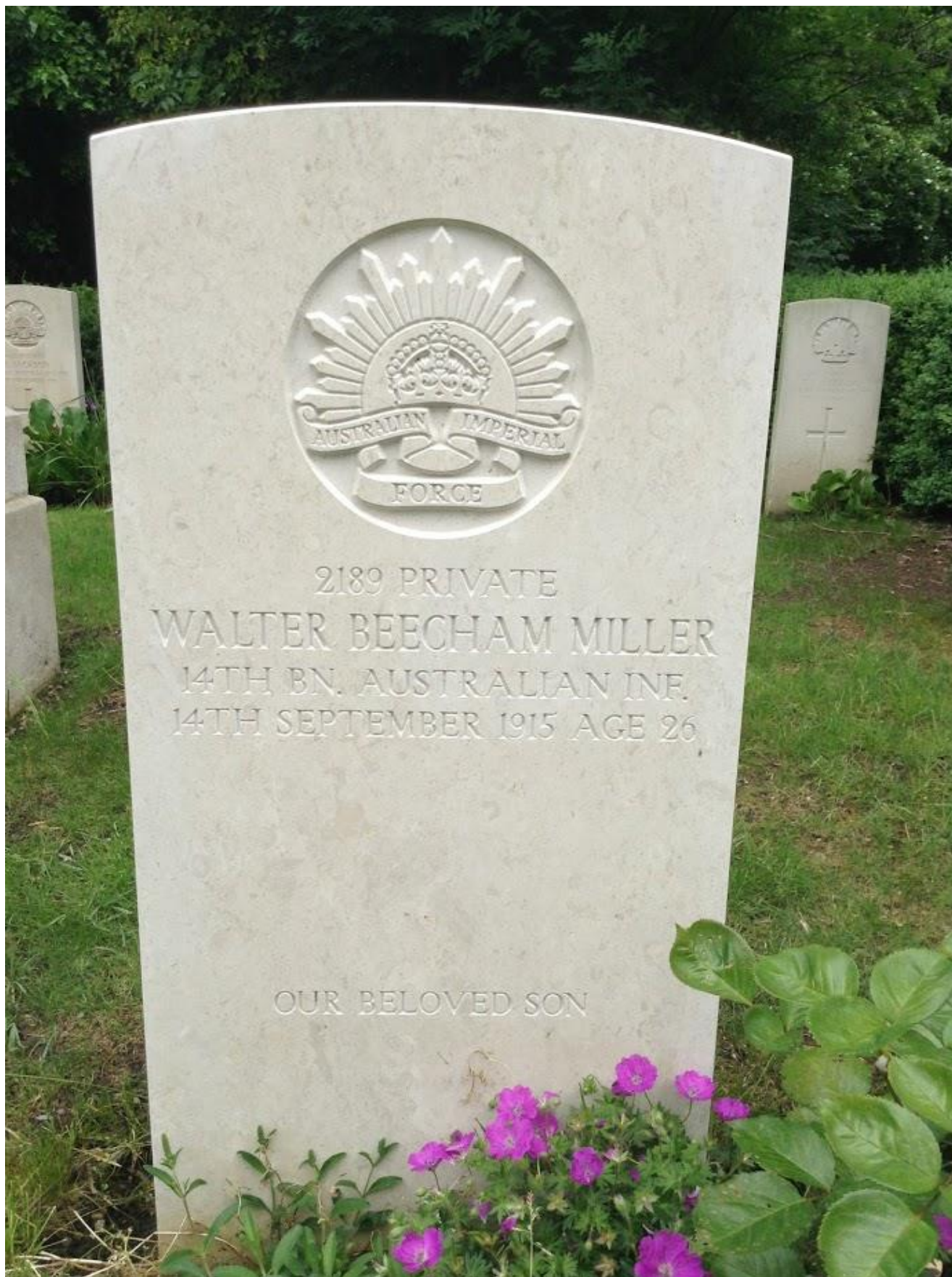


**Australian War Graves in All Saints Cemetery, Nunhead** *(Photos courtesy of Neil Bright)*





Photo of Private Walter Beecham Miller's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in All Saints Cemetery, Nunhead, Greater London, England.



*(Photo courtesy of Roberto Lagnado)*

Previous headstone with middle name of "Beecher":



*(Photo from Find a Grave – js 2009)*