

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

**War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**5065 PRIVATE**

**N. W. PALMER**

**21ST BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**14TH SEPTEMBER, 1917**

## Naseby Welford PALMER

Naseby Welford Palmer was born at Maryborough, Victoria in 1897 to parents William Henry & Emily Palmer (nee Morcom).

William Henry Palmer, father of Naseby Welford Palmer, died on 3rd January, 1916 at Maryborough, Victoria.

Naseby Welford Palmer was an 18 year old, single, Painter from Holyrood Street, Maryborough, Victoria when he enlisted in Melbourne, Victoria on 1st February, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Emily Palmer, Holyrood Street, Maryborough, Victoria. Naseby Palmer stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served with 73rd Battalion Citizen Forces (4 days?) at Maryborough & had served with Senior Cadets for 3 years.

Private Naseby Welford Palmer was posted to 22nd Depot Battalion at Royal Park on 15th February, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to Seymour on 26th February, 1916 & posted to 8th Depot Light Horse. Private Palmer was transferred on 5th April, 1916 to 13th Reinforcements of 21st Battalion at Seymour. He was transferred to 13th Reinforcements of 21st Battalion at Broadmeadows on 4th May, 1916.

Private Naseby Wilfred (middle name as per Embarkation Roll) Palmer, Service number 5065, embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Ayrshire* (A33) on 3rd July, 1916 with the 6th Infantry Brigade, 21st Infantry Battalion, 13th Reinforcements. He was admitted to Ship's Hospital on 27th July, 1916 with Influenza & was discharged on 31st July, 1916. Private Palmer disembarked at Plymouth, England on 2nd September, 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 Naseby Welford Palmer was taken on strength of 6th Training Battalion in England on 3rd September, 1916.

Private Naseby Welford Palmer proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 12th November, 1916 on S.S. *Victoria* from 6th Training Battalion. He was marched in to 2nd A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 13th November, 1916. Private Palmer joined 21st Battalion in France on 22nd November, 1916 from Reinforcements.

Private Naseby Welford Palmer reported sick on 27th January, 1917. He was admitted to 4th Australian Field Ambulance then transferred on 30th January, 1917 to Convalescent Rest Station with Scabies. Private Palmer was discharged to duty on 6th February, 1917 & rejoined his Battalion in France on 7th February, 1917.

Private Naseby Welford Palmer was wounded in action in France on 11th February, 1917. He was admitted to 45th Casualty Clearing Station on 14th February, 1917 with shrapnel wounds to Arm, left & right Feet. Private Palmer was transferred to No. 5 Ambulance Train & admitted to 11th Stationary Hospital at Camiers on 14th February, 1917 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to Left Arm. He was transferred on 21st February, 1917 & embarked for England from Calais on Hospital Ship *Dieppe* on 22nd February, 1917.

### 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.

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After evacuation from Gallipoli in December 1915, the 21st Battalion arrived in France in March 1916. In April, it was the first Australian battalion to commence active operations on the Western Front. During the battle of Pozieres it was engaged mainly on carrying duties, but suffered its heaviest casualties of the war during the fighting around Mouquet Farm.

In early May 1917, the battalion fought at Bullecourt..... *(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

War Diary – 21st Battalion

*In the TRENCHES – 11th February, 1917:*

*Lt Sullivan takes over L M G Section*

*Company Relief*

*D and A*

*C and B*

*8.50 pm – Relief complete. Casualties 3 wounded.*

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Naseby Welford Palmer was admitted to 1st Southern General Hospital, Birmingham, England on 25th February, 1917 with wound/s to left Arm.

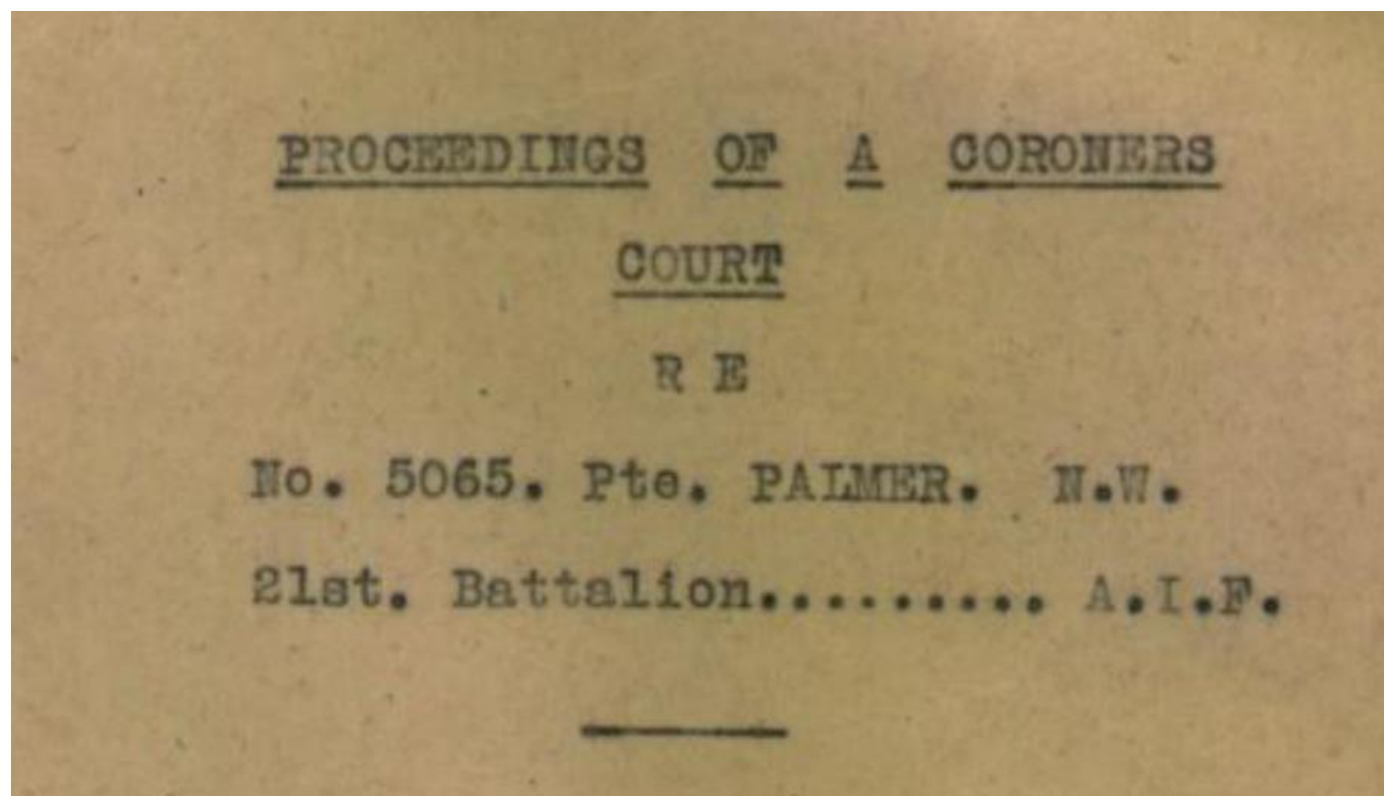
Mrs E. Palmer, Holyrood Street, Maryborough, Victoria was advised by Base Records on 6th March, 1917 that No. 5065 Private N. W. Palmer had been admitted to the 1st Southern General Hospital on 25th February, 1917 suffering from gunshot wound to left arm.

Private Naseby Welford Palmer was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, Dorset on 4th June, 1917.

Private Naseby Welford Palmer died at 9.45 pm on 14th September, 1917 at Chickerell, Weymouth, Dorset, England when he was knocked down by an Ambulance & died as a result of a fractured Skull & fractured Spine.

A death for Naseby W. Palmer, aged 20, was registered in the September quarter, 1917 in the district of Weymouth, Dorset, England.

Proceedings of Coroner's Court:



EXTRACT FROM THE "SOUTHERN TIMES" of 22nd. SEPT. 1917.

A "DEATH TRAP" FOR PEDESTRIANS.

Australian soldier killed by a Motor Ambulance.

PERIL OF WALKING IN THE ROAD.

A deplorable accident occurred just outside the Borough between Westham and Monte Video on Friday night. Three Australian soldiers, Ptes. Palmer Allen and Dickenson were walking back to camp when an Australian Motor Ambulance in clearing a smaller car in front drove into them killing Palmer on the spot, and severely wounding Dickinson who was taken to the hospital with his right leg broken.

The Coroner for South Dorset, Mr. G.P. Symes held an inquest on the body of Pte. Naseby Palmer at the Guildhall on Monday morning.

The Coroner in outlining the facts said apparently the 3 men were walking in the middle of the road; there was a wide path there and why they did not use it he did not know. There was a motor car coming on the left hand side of the road to Weymouth and there was apparently an ambulance car behind it. The motor man saw the men and cleared them but the statement of the driver of the ambulance was that the motor was slowing down as if to stop and instead of keeping behind it he drew out and passed it. When he drew out he went into 3 men. There was some conflict of evidence between the statements of the 2 drivers; it was for the jury to say whether there was any negligence. If the jury considered it necessary the inquiry could be adjourned to have the evidence of the other man who was in hospital.

Pte. John Allen A.I.F. gave evidence of identification said he had known the deceased 5 or 6 weeks. He was 20 years of age. His nearest relative was his mother who was living at Maryborough Victoria. He and deceased and another man named Dickinson were going back to camp at half past eight. They were going up the hill almost opposite Mrs. Chimmo's gate and were in the centre of the road. He saw the lights of the car coming towards them. The driver slowed down, the car was coming on the left hand side of the road. Witness stayed where he was and an ambulance car came out from behind the other one. Dickinson shouted to Palmer who had jumped to the left to keep in closer to witness. The ambulance struck Dickinson and Palmer, the first car having gone passed them. Palmer was found underneath the car and witness went to the assistance of Dickinson.

The Coroner asked witness if they had been drinking that night. Witness said they had five drinks that night (five glasses of beer). The coroner observed that the witness did not give a very clear account of what happened. Allen said it was entirely their fault. There was no blame attachable to the driver. The Coroner: Why did you not keep on the foot path instead of walking in the middle of the road where there are a lot of cars about at that time of night?

Pte. Mervyn Cyril Dean motor ambulance driver said he was coming back from Monte Video to Weymouth and was behind the taxi on the left hand side of the road. Witness saw the latter slowing down and he pulled out to get passed him. He did not see the 3 men in the road until he was right on them. The coroner suggested that his lights were not strong enough if he could not clearly distinguish anything in front of him. Witness said his car got two of the men; he went about 10 yards before he stopped the car. Dickinson remained there until another ambulance came out from the camp and took him back. He could not say how Palmer was conveyed back to the camp. The Coroner said it was a dangerous thing to come out from behind another car unless he slowed down almost to the same pace as the other car.

Albert Henry Grantham, 34 Franklin Road said he was driving an empty car back from the camp and saw three men in the road. He could see 12 yards ahead. He had no difficulty in passing the men on the near side. Witness slowed down as a matter of course

(2)

He heard the horn sounded by the ambulance which was passing him when he heard the crash. Allen was clear of the car, but witness should not say that the other 2 men clung to each other. The ambulance was only a yard away from his car when it passed. Capt Thomas A.A.M.C. said that the deceased was brought back to camp on Friday night. He was bleeding from the nose and mouth. There were abrasions and cuts of the right hand. The left thigh was broken and the neck dislocated. He should say that the man had a fractured skull as well. The other man Dickinson had his right leg broken.

The Coroner said that on Saturday the Police had gone to the hospital and had read over Allen's statement to Dickinson. He said he agreed with it and considered it was a pure accident, adding "I do not attach any blame to anyone". Therefore he did not think it necessary to adjourn the inquiry. If the man had said anything different of course they would have taken his evidence.

Mr. Jarrett Jones foreman of the Jury said that the road was a positive danger trap. It was a wonder there were not more men killed. The Coroner; Motors are going backward and forward the whole time. I do not think they can be very careless otherwise there would be a lot more people killed. Mr. Jarrett Jones suggested that the Authorities at the Camp might warn the men not to walk in the road. The Coroner said there was a similar accident near Chalbury Lodge last winter and he remembers suggesting then that there should be notices up in the camp about walking in the middle of the road. As long as men would walk in the middle of the road when motors were about there were bound to be accidents.

The jury returned a verdict of "DEATH BY MISADVENTURE".

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As listed on Casualty Form – Active Service for Private Naseby Welford Palmer:

*"Court of Enquiry. Motor Accident. Extract from the Southern Times on 22-9-17. Pte Palmer was knocked down by a motor Ambulance and was killed. Coroner's Court at Guildhall, Dorset give a verdict of Death by misadventure."*

A War Pension was granted to Emily Palmer, Holyrood Rd, Maryborough, widowed mother of the late Private Naseby Welford Palmer, in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 19th November, 1917.

Private Naseby Welford Palmer was buried on 19th September, 1917 in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England – Plot number II. C. 3147 and now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

From the burial report of Private Naseby Welford Palmer - *Coffin was Elm with brass fittings. The deceased soldier was buried with Military Honors. In the absence of a Church of England Chaplain he was buried by Rev. Skinner, C. of E., Clergyman of Weymouth. This man was knocked down by an Ambulance while returning to Camp. He died almost instantly. There was no time for a Medical Officer of Chaplain to be called to attend him. An inquest was held, and the evidence showed that the affair was purely accidental.*

A notice was prepared for the Press on 31st March, 1922 regarding the whereabouts of the next of kin of the late Private Naseby Welford Palmer.

Letters addressed to Mrs E. Plamer, Holyrood Street, Maryborough, Victoria from Base Records were returned in May, 1922 marked "Deceased."

Base Records wrote a letter on 26th September, 1922 regarding the late No. 5065 Private Naseby Welford Palmer, 21st Battalion asking to whom the War Gratuity was paid; names & address and relationships of claimants & did the War Gratuity file disclose the mother's present address (or is she was deceased) or eldest brother's address or eldest sister's address (if there are no brothers).

A handwritten reply was made on the same letter which reads: *"The War Gratuity was paid to deceased soldier's mother Mrs E. Palmer of Holyrood St. Maryborough."*

Base Records wrote to Repat Department on 13th October, 1922 with the following letter: *"It is noted that a pension has been granted to Mrs Emily Palmer, on account of the service of her son No 5065 Private Naseby Welford Palmer, 21st Battalion, and I shall be obliged if you can furnish me with her present address, as communications to Holyrood Street, Maryborough, V. have been returned unclaimed."*

A reply was received on the same letter with a note in pencil at the bottom of this letter with "Deceased 23/10/21" then initialled & dated 16th October, 1922.

Base Records wrote to Headquarters, 3rd District Base on 15th November, 1922 with the following letter: *"Upon enlistment the late No. 5065 Private N. W. Palmer, 21st Battalion, recorded as next of kin his mother, Mrs Emily Palmer, but it is stated that she is now deceased. As I desire to be in a position to properly dispose of certain items due on account of the abovementioned late soldier's service, I shall be obliged if you will advise me who is now his actual next of kin – full postal address also please."*

The District Finance Officer, 3rd District Base, Melbourne, replied to Base Records on 27th November, 1922 advising *"...that the War Gratuity was paid to deceased soldier's mother – Mrs Emily Palmer of Holyrood Stret, Maryborough. There is no record of any other dependants."*

Emily Palmer, mother of Naseby Welford Palmer, died on 23rd October, 1921 at Maryborough, Victoria.

Private Naseby Welford Palmer was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also to be sent to Private Palmer's widowed mother – Mrs E. Palmer, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll was due to be sent May, 1922. The Plaque was sent to "Untraceables" in January, 1923 as no next of kin could be located).

Base Records wrote to Mr W. E. Palmer, cr Kellett and Wales Streets, Northcote, Victoria on 18th September, 1930 with the following: *"It is understood that you are a brother of the late No. 5065 Private N. W. Palmer, 21st Battalion, and in order to facilitate the disposal of the deceased's war medals, etc., I should be glad to learn whether you have any elder surviving brothers, and if so, the name and address of the eldest. The regulations governing the issue of these mementoes prescribe that same shall be forwarded to the actual next-of-kin at the time the distribution is made. In the present instance both parents are stated to be deceased and the eldest surviving brother would therefore appear to have prior claim. I am also enclosing herewith a printed order form referring to the publication of Melcombe Regis Cemetery Register (Dorset) containing the particulars of this soldier. Prompt attention will be given to orders received in this connection and the Registers will be forwarded post free to applicants on receipt of remittance."*

\*\*\* Note: This letter addressed to Mr Willie E. Palmer was returned & stamped "Unclaimed at Northcote" & "Not known by Letter Carriers Northcote".

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Naseby Welford Palmer – service number 5065, of 21st Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Private N. W. Palmer is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 94.



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

N. W. Palmer is remembered on the Christ Church Honour Roll, located in Christ the King Anglican Church, 6 Nightingale Street, Maryborough, Victoria.



**Christ Church Honour Roll** (Photo from Monument Australia – Kent Watson)

N. W. Palmer is remembered on the Maryborough War Memorial, located in Civic Square, in front of the Post Office, Clarendon Street, Maryborough, Victoria.



**Maryborough War Memorial** (Photos from AWM Places of Pride – Western Front Association Central Victoria Branch)





N. W. Palmer is remembered on the Memorial Gates at the entrance to Prince's Park, Park Road, Maryborough, Victoria.



**Prince's Park Memorial Gates** (Photos from AWM Places of Pride – Western Front Association Central Victoria Branch)



N. W. Palmer is remembered on the Inglewood & District Honour Roll, located in Inglewood/Bridgewater RSL, 89 Brooke Street, Inglewood, Victoria.



**Inglewood & District Honour Roll** (Photo from Monument Australia – Tim Fitzgerald)

Naseby Welford Palmer is remembered with a Plaque in Soldiers Memorial Plot, Railway Street & Majorca Road, Maryborough, Victoria.

*The Soldiers Memorial Plot is a small reserve which was established in memory of local soldiers who died in service or were killed in action during World War One. Trees were planted on the site in memory of the fallen soldiers.*

*The plot fell into disrepair and was restored by the Maryborough Lions Club and rededicated on the 11th November 2011. The new sign acknowledges James Blackburne and John Watson who were pioneers of the plot. A Lone Pine Tree was planted at the ceremony.*

(Information from Monument Australia)





(Photos from Maryborough Lions Club of Victoria Facebook page)

## **Naseby Welford Palmer**

**Service Number:** 5065, Rank: PRIVATE

**Unit:** 21st Batt. 13th - 18th Reinforcements

**Parents:** (Mother) Emily. (Father. Deceased)

**Born:** Maryborough, Victoria, 1897 (Occupation. Painter)

**Enlisted:** Melbourne 1st February 1916, AGE 18

**Embarkation:** 3rd July 1916. HMAT "AYRESHIRE" A33

**Date of Death:** 14th September 1917. (Accidental)

**Place of death:** Weymouth. Dorset. ENGLAND

**Buried:** Mencombe Regis Cemetery. Westham. Dorset. UK

**Citation:** Wounded France 11/02/1917  
Gunshot wound to left arm.

Evacuated to England for recuperation.  
PTE. Palmer was returning to barracks when knocked down by an ambulance on emergency call out.  
He died almost immediately with a severe head injury.  
An inquest was held and all evidence showed that the affair was purely accidental by all parties involved.



(69 pages of Private Naseby Welford Palmer'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*



**Private Naseby Welford Palmer**

## **Newspaper Notices**

### **AUSTRALIA'S ROLL OF HONOR**

#### **279th CASUALTY LIST**

WOUNDED

Victoria

N. W. Palmer, Maryborough

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 16 March, 1917)

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### **CASUALTIES ABROAD**

Mrs E. Palmer, of Holyrood street, Maryborough, has received word that her youngest son, Private N. W. Palmer, received a gunshot wound in the left arm in action in France, and has been admitted to the First South General Hospital. Private Palmer is 19 years of age, and sailed for the front in June, 1915.

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 17 March, 1917)

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Rev C. J. T. Martin conveyed to Mrs E. Palmer, of Holyrood street, the sad tidings of the death of her youngest son, Private Naseby Welford Palmer. The deceased soldier was wounded in the left arm in February last, and on the 14th inst. he lost his life by being run down by a motor ambulance. The official news came from Colonel Hawker, who asked the Rev. Martin to convey to the soldier's parents the sympathy of the King and Queen and the Commonwealth. Another son of Mrs Palmer is a member of the Railway Unit.

(*Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser*, Victoria – 21 September, 1917)

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### **DEATHS**

#### **ON ACTIVE SERVICE**

PALMER – On the 14th September, at Weymouth, England, the result of an accident, Naseby Palmer, dearly loved youngest son of the late Wm. Palmer and Mrs Palmer, of Maryborough; brother of Mrs Dale (Adelaide), Mrs Whalley, jun, (Kew), Mrs Millgate (Clifton Hill), Fred, Syd, Leslie, Will (on active service) and Carrie Palmer, aged 20 years.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 22 September, 1917) & (*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 22 September, 1917)

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## **DIED ON SERVICE**

PALMER – In sad and loving memory of our dear friend, Naseby Palmer, who was accidentally killed at Weymouth, England, on the 14th September, after being wounded in France.

In the bloom of life God called him,

In the pride of his manhood days,

None knew him but to love him,

None speak of his name but to praise.

“Duty nobly done.”

-(Inserted by his loving friend, Amy Garlick, also E.D.)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 26 September, 1917)

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## **THE TOLL OF WAR**

### **340th CASUALTY LIST**

#### **DIED (OTHER CAUSES)**

Pte N. W. Palmer, Maryborough, accident

(*The Evening Echo*, Ballarat, Victoria – 4 October, 1917)

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## **BEREAVEMENT NOTICE**

Mrs E. PALMER and Family desire to sincerely THANK their many kind friends for expressions of sympathy, visits, letters, telegrams and cards in their recent sad bereavement of the loss of their dearly loved son and brother, Naseby, accidentally killed at Chickerell, Weymouth, England, September 14, 1917.

(*Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser*, Victoria – 10 October, 1917)

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

PALMER – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Naseby Welford Palmer, 13th Reinforcements, 21st Brigade, A.I.F., youngest son of Mrs Palmer, of Maryborough, accidentally killed at Weymouth, England on 14th September, 1917, while recovering from wounds received at Pozieres. (Inserted by his sorrowing mother, brothers, and sisters)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 14 September, 1918) & (*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 14 September, 1918)

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## IN MEMORIAM

### On Active Service

PALMER – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Naseby Welford, late 21st Battalion, A.I.F., who was killed at Weymouth, England, on 14th September, 1917.

Dearly loved and sadly missed.

-Inserted by his loving mother, brothers and sisters

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 13 September, 1919)

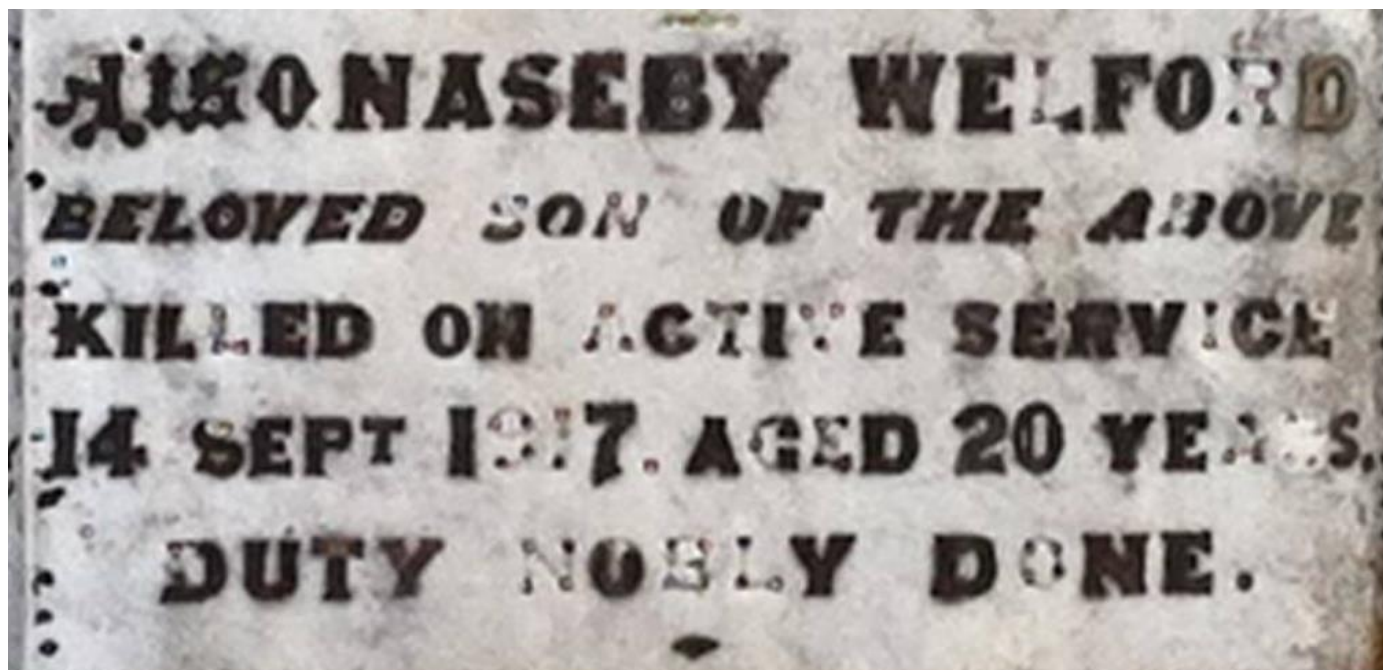
Naseby Welford Palmer is remembered on his parents' headstone in Maryborough Cemetery, Victoria.



Maryborough Cemetery, Victoria (Photo from Carol's Headstone Photographs)



(Headstone photos from BillionGraves)



*Also NASEBY WELFORD*

*Beloved Son of the Above*

*Killed on Active Service*

*14 Sept 1917 aged 20 Years*

*Duty Nobly Done*

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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)*

A letter from Base Records, dated 27th July, 1921, to Mrs E. Palmer, Holyrood Street, Maryborough, Victoria, advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of her son, the late No. 5065 Private N. W. Palmer, 21st 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.

It appears that another letter was to be sent on 21st February, 1922 to "Dear Madam" (but no address noted) advising "As the work of completing the different cemeteries is being seriously interfered with on account of the non-receipt of the accompanying form, it is to be clearly understood that if no reply is received by the Officer i/c Base Records, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne. On or before the 31st March, 1922 (28th February, 1922 was typed but crossed out & restamped with 31st March, 1922) then work upon the graves &c., will be proceeded with at once, and requests for personal inscriptions, &c. will not be considered after that date."



The form for "Inscriptions on War Graves" & information for "The Roll of Honour of Australia" & "The Nation's Histories" is located in the Service Record file for Private Naseby Welford Palmer & is not completed & would not have been sent as no next of kin could be contacted.

Private N. W. Palmer does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

### **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

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.*



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.*



*(Photo courtesy of Steve Stewart)*



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)





(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

## Australians in Weymouth

### What was life like for the Australians?

#### The Camp

Within the camp, there were educational facilities as well as medical rooms which helped to recover and re-educate the soldiers. There was help provided for soldiers suffering with physical or emotional impairments, such as massage rooms, psychotherapy training rooms and a recreational gymnasium. This strengthened the man to help them recover from their injuries. The educational aspects were diverse, allowing soldiers to pick a completely different profession for when they went back home. This included architecture, motor engineering, electrical and carpentry classes. Another option allowed the soldiers to be retrained in their previous professions which may have become more difficult, due to loss of limbs or new techniques that may have been created whilst they were at war.

#### The Town

Weymouth benefited hugely from the influx of Australian and New Zealand soldiers. One shop that still exists today is the Acutt's clothing store, which used to sell everything a soldier could possibly need for his uniform, from the whole jacket to just the buttons and epaulettes. As well as Acutt's, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia also opened up their own branch in Weymouth, for the soldiers to use during their time over here, which highlighted the permanence of their stay. There was also a monthly newsletter that circulated amongst the men, which was produced by local company Sherrens, which still operates on the Granby Industrial estate.

### Special Events

The Australian recovery camps took special occasions very seriously, such as Christmas and Easter, to try and reduce the ache of home sickness and being away from their family and friends. Most camps tried to make their soldiers feel at home, with large celebrations with Christmas dinners and special guest performances at Easter. However, there were also other special events that gained great attention, such as the opening of the YMCA building, which used to be on Abbotshbury Road. This provided help and welfare to the Australian soldiers, such as free food and blankets. There were fundraising days for the prisoner-of-war soldiers that had been captured during the fall of the AIF, who were mainly Dorset soldiers. From three fundraising days in Weymouth, Dorchester and Bridport, the towns managed to raise £3,600 to help comfort the prisoners.

### Entertainment

Entertainment was a highly important aspect of the soldiers' lives whilst they were in Weymouth. It kept the soldiers motivated and in high spirits whilst they were ill or injured, in hopes of helping to speed up their recovery. Throughout the camps in Weymouth, there was always something to watch or listen to, whether it was singing and acting companies who toured round the camps or at the Pavilion Theatre on the Esplanade. Sometimes, the soldiers even made their own entertainment, with marching bands and chairs being set up by the YMCA building in Westham. There were also balls and dances at the camps themselves and even a small trip to the Alexandra Garden along the Esplanade. Dating also became a significant part of the soldiers' lives, with many Weymouth women losing husbands and boyfriends at war, finding comfort with the new soldiers at the camp. This led to many marriages between the two groups, and some migrating back to Australia with their new families, or staying here and leaving their families.

**3**

THE COMMONWEALTH BANK OF AUSTRALIA

ACUTT BROTHERS

ROYAL PALM COURT

THE PAVILION THEATRE

THE Y.M.C.A. BUILDING

ROYAL JUBILEE HALL

PALLADIUM BILLYE GREEN

ARCADIA

Images courtesy of Australian War Memorial, Newsletter originals published by Sherrens, Ltd. Weymouth



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

## Australians in Weymouth

### From Weymouth to Auswey - A Soldier's Récovery



Weymouth, England, 1914. Australian and New Zealand Base.

During the First World War, between 1914 and 1918, many injured soldiers who were mainly from Australia and New Zealand, were brought to Weymouth. They were known as ANZACS (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps). They were placed in Repatriation and Recuperation camps in Westham, Littlehampton, Chichester and Portland. This was in the hope of sending them back to the line of action in France or back home to Australia due to lack of fitness, as it was seen as a relaxing seaside location. This would help to heal the sick and injured Australians who had been fighting in major battles of the war or on the Western Front between France and Belgium.



Weymouth, England, 1914. Group portrait of Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.

Although thousands of ANZACS passed through Weymouth during the First World War, there are some soldiers who unfortunately did not make it home. These soldiers are proudly buried in the Malcombe Regt cemetery. This is only 500 metres away from one of the major camps in Westham, with 522 soldiers buried in the cemetery, 83 from Australia and 3 from New Zealand. These graves are similar to some of the war memorials and graves placed around Europe, much like the Somme in France. Unfortunately, there are too many grave names to be displayed on this board, but they can be found on the website link at the bottom of this board.



Westham Camp, New Australian Convalescent Depot, on the eastern coast of England.

### Past and Present Westham

As you can see on the map of the Westham camp, many of the street names have an Australian connection, highlighting the history of the area. Residents of the housing estates, which are now built where the camp once stood, are still digging up remains of the camp, such as bullets or cooking equipment.



<b>Modern Day Street Names</b>	<b>Westham Camp - December 1914</b>
Dever Close	Soldiers Huts
Swanee Road	Company Officers
Queensland Road	Regimental Institute
Kilchener Road	Minister's Rifle Range
Corporation Road	Officers' Mess
Short Road	Shower Block
Longcroft Road	Vehicle Shed, Mob Store
Westcot Road	Horse Shelter
Parth Street	Coal Yard
Melbourne Street	Cook House
Adelaide Crescent	YMCA
Abbotsbury Road	Dung Pit
Sydney Street	Fire Hydrant
Shirecraft Road	



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Group portrait of 11 South Sea and attached British Army military officers at Westham Camp in southern England.



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Photo of Private N. W. Palmer's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England.



*(Photo courtesy of Allan Wood)*