

**St. Michael's Churchyard,  
St. Minver, Cornwall, England**

**War Grave**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**2208 PRIVATE**

**W. PROFITT**

**23RD BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**25TH OCTOBER, 1916 Age 22**

## William PROFITT

William James Profitt was born in Collingwood, Victoria on 20th August, 1894 to parents Francis and Mary A. Profitt (nee Smith).

William Profitt attended State School at George St. Fitzroy, Melbourne, Victoria.

William James Profitt was aged 20 years & 11 months, single & a Salesman from 12 Perry Street, Collingwood, Victoria when he enlisted on 5th July, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2208 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his father – Francis Profitt, 12 Perry Street, Collingwood, Victoria. William Profitt stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously served with Senior Cadets & also with Citizen Forces. He had previously been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service due to his height – he was 5 feet 2 ½ inches.

As William Profitt was under the age of 21 – his parents were required to sign their consent for their son to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force. “...*the Bearer William James Profitt is anxious to serve his King & Country & we the undersigned willingly give our consent*” signed by Francis Profitt (Father) & Mary A. Profitt (Mother) on 12th July, 1916.

Private William James Profitt was posted to 46th Depot Company on 5th July, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to 4th Reinforcements of 23rd Battalion on 20th July, 1915.

Private William James Profitt embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Hororata (A20)* on 27th September, 1915 with the 6th Infantry Brigade, 23rd Infantry Battalion, 4th Reinforcements.

Private William James Profitt was taken on strength of 23rd Battalion at Tel-el-Kebir on 11th January, 1916.

Private William James Profitt proceeded from Alexandria on 19th March, 1916 to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) & disembarked at Marseilles, France.

Private William James Profitt was admitted to 2nd Australian Field Ambulance on 31st July, 1916 then transferred to 3rd Casualty Clearing Station the same day with a sprained right ankle. He was transferred to Ambulance Train on 31st July, 1916 & admitted to 13th General Hospital at Boulogne, France on 2nd August, 1916. Private Profitt was admitted to No. 1 Convalescent Depot at Boulogne on 5th August, 1916. (Note: The Casualty Form – Active Service, War Gratuity Schedule form & Statement of Service form all incorrectly recorded that he was wounded in action in France on 4th August, 1916 & was invalided to England on 5th August, 1916).

Private William James Profitt was posted to 2nd Australian Division Base Depot at Etaples, France on 13th August, 1916 from Boulogne. The following was recorded on the Casualty Form – Active Service for 14th August, 1916 “*Admitted Boulogne 2/8/16 trivial, will not interfere with his efficiency, occurred 30/7/16. Being relieved from trenches slipped and fell into old German dugout was in no way to blame.*”

Private William James Profitt was marched out from 2nd Australian Divisional Base Depot at Etaples on 21st August, 1916 & rejoined 23rd Battalion in France on 24th (25?) August, 1916.

Private William James Profitt was wounded in action in France on 26th August, 1916. He was admitted to 4th Australian Field Ambulance on 27th August, 1916 with Shrapnel wounds to right Arm then transferred the same day to 49th Casualty Clearing Station with a bullet wound to right Arm. Private Profitt was transferred to No. 29 Ambulance Train on 27th August, 1916 & admitted to 9th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 28th August, 1916 with G.S.W (gunshot wounds) to left elbow, right forearm. He was invalided to England on 31st August, 1916 on Hospital Ship *St. Patrick*.

### 23rd Battalion

The 23rd Battalion was raised in Victoria in March 1915 as the third battalion of the 6th Brigade. After initial training, it left Australia in March and arrived in Egypt, where it would complete its advanced training, in June....

The battalion was next "in the line" on 10 April 1916, when it occupied forward trenches of the Armentieres sector in northern France. This relatively gentle introduction to the Western Front was followed in July by the horrific battles of Pozieres and Mouquet Farm, after which it was estimated that the Battalion lost almost 90 per cent of its original members.....

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

#### War Diary – 23rd Battalion (part of)

*Pozieres – 26th August, 1916:*

*12.35 am – Received note from Capt Rossiter that our artillery shells were falling short.*

*1 am – Interim report received from digging parties in advanced line stating enemy trench mortar bombs were being used on them also a great number of flares. Enemy evidently very nervous about this front line movements.*

*1.30 am – Enemy shelling right flank front line 8 casualties*

*2 am - Heavy barrage from Btn Hd Qrs back to Pozieres.*

*4.46 am - Our Artillery opened. Very little retaliation on our sector.*

.....

*8 am – Enemy heavily shelling sector. Particularly directed on our new forward line which has evidently been observed.*

....

*Noon – Conditions on front line normal. Men very fatigued.*

....

*6.35 pm – Enemy observed massing on their trenches on forward slope R28D7.5. Requested artillery to register.*

....

*(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)*

Private William James Profitt was admitted to Cambridge Military Hospital, Aldershot, England on 2nd September, 1916. The Hospital Admissions form recorded "*Compound commuted fracture of right radius opening into elbow joint. Acute Septicaemia.*"

Mr F. Profitt, 12 Perry Street, Collingwood, Victoria, father of Private William James Profitt, was advised by Base Records on 11th September, 1916 that Private W. J. Profitt had been wounded & on 19th September, 1916 Mr Profitt was advised that Private W. J. Profitt had been admitted to Cambridge Hospital on 2nd September, 1916 suffering from wounds. Mr Profitt was advised on 22nd September, 1916 that Private W. J. Profitt had been reported wounded - 2nd occasion (Note: this was his first occasion of being wounded). Mr Profitt was advised on 13th October, 1916 that Private W. J. Profitt was seriously ill with gunshot wound to elbow.

Private William Profitt died at 3.45 pm on 25th October, 1916 at Cambridge Military Hospital, Aldershot, England from wounds received in action in France – gunshot wound/s to right elbow.

A death for William J. Profitt, aged 22, was registered in the December quarter, 1916 in the district of Farnham, Surrey, England.

Private William Profitt was buried in WadeBridge Cemetery, Cornwall, England. The funeral arrangements were carried out by relatives.

Private William Profitt is now recorded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as being buried in St. Michael's Churchyard, St. Minver, Cornwall, England. He has a Private Headstone but his death is still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private William Profitt contains a regular report on Private Profitt's condition. Detailed below is an extract of that report by Henry W. Drew, Cambridge Hospital, Aldershot:

“.....

*12-9-16 Arm not draining well and shoulder much swollen.*

*14-9-16 Under Chc 13 (?) wound enlarged, many pieces of necrosed bone removed and a large piece of metal. Larger drainage tube passed through.*

*15-9-16 A good deal of discharged from forearm. Arm still swollen and painful. Has had some diarrhoea.*

*18-9-16 Temperature lower and arm less swollen. There is a good deal of tenderness over the elbow.*

.....

*26-9-16 The arm keeps swollen and temperature raised. Under \_\_\_ an examination was made. Several more pieces of bone removed and the head of the radius, from which the cartilage was separated .....*

*28-9-16 Temperature lower and arm and forearm less swollen.*

*1-10-16 Hot Lysol fomentation and syringed with Basel (?). Arm less swollen and forearm regaining its natural shape. Still very painful and patient looking pale and anaemic. A consultation was held and the question of opening the elbow right across was discussed.*

*2-10-16 Rather better. More discharge from forearm. No pockets in elbow.*

*4-10-16 Somewhat better and temperature lower. Pulse 108.*

*8-10-16 The last two days patient got worse, renewed high temperature and rapid pulse, the wound was explored under ChC13. The whole arm being in a very unsatisfactory condition, and pulse 136, it was thought wise to amputate just above the elbow. Would left open and packed with gauze.*

*9-10-16 Dressed. Had had a good night. Operation Modified circular amputation performed at junction of mid and lower 3rd right arm by Capt Drew.*

*10-10-16 Dressed, smells badly, condition poor.*

*11-10-16 Operation: Sir Arbuthnot Lane removed a couple of inches more of bone and packed the cavity with gauze, soaked in sulphur and glycerine. There is oedema of arm and chest wall. Fomentation applied.*

*13-10-16 – Dressed to-day. Oedema of arm and chest wall has gone, but general condition has not improved. Temperature still swings and pulse rate is high, although volume and distinction of beats is easily discernible. Fomentation to be continued. To have champagne.*

*24-10-16 Pulse 148. Dullness in axilla and behind. Breathing difficult. Needle inserted and a syringe full of blood-stained serum withdrawn. Breath sounds deficient, and crepitations heard over both bases. Aspirated chest and 20 oz. of fluid withdrawn. Pulse 146. Much weaker and wandering. Saline transfusion intravenous getting weaker, almost unconscious.*

*25-10-16 Quite unconscious and smiling. Died at 3.45 pm”*

Private William Profitt was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Profitt's father – Mr F. Profitt, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent September, 1921 & Plaque sent May, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private William Profitt – service number 2208, aged 20, of 23rd Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Francis and Mary A. Profitt, of 12 Perry St., Collingwood, Melbourne, Australia.

Private W. J. Profitt is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 100.



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

(54 pages of Private William Profitt'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 William Profitt** (*Photo courtesy of Margaret Feeney*)



### **Newspaper Notices**

#### **217TH LIST**

Wounded

Pte W. J. Profitt, Collingwood

(*The Bendigo Independent*, Victoria – 21 September, 1916)

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## AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

### 241ST LIST

Died of Wounds

Pte W. J. PROFITT, Collingwood

*(The Bendigo Independent, Victoria – 7 November, 1916)*

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Mrs H. N. Gillingham, of Cobden, has sustained a sad bereavement by the death, on active service, of two of her nephews, Private W. J. Profitt, of Collingwood, and Lance Corporal C. W. J. Profitt, of Geelong. Both lads died within a month of each other, having noble done their duty.

*(Cobden Times and Heytesbury Advertiser, Victoria – 29 November, 1916)*

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## DEATHS

### On Active Service

PROFITT – On 12th October at Cambridge Hospital, England, from wounds received in action, Pte William J., dearly loved eldest son of Mr and Mrs Frank Profitt (Profitt Bros., Furniture Warehousemen, Smith street, Collingwood), and loved nephew of Mrs H, N. Gillingham, Cobden. Aged 21 years.

Nobly died for Ling and Country.

*(Cobden Times and Heytesbury Advertiser, Victoria – 29 November, 1916)*

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## DIED ON SERVICE

PROFITT – On the 25th October, died of wounds at Aldershot, England, Pte W. J. Profitt, dearly beloved son of F. and A. Profitt, Perry-street, Collingwood, aged 22 years.

For King and Country laid down his life.

Thy will be done.

*(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 9 December, 1916)*

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## FITZROY

A patriotic demonstration has been arranged by the Fitzroy branch for Sunday afternoon in the Fitzroy Town Halt. Addresses are to be given by Mr W C Magellssen (Consul for the United States of America) and Mr J. H. Hewison, former chief , president. The headquarters' official hand will play selections and the Dead March in Saul as a tribute to the memory of members who made the supreme sacrifice: Captain Fred Stanton, Lieutenant . W. M. Olive, Lieutenant A. B. Taylor, Flight- Lieutenant T. W. Bartle, Private Gordon C. C. Hawkins, Private Henry Le Blanc, **Private W. J. Profitt**, Private C. E. Rudolph, Private P. M. Love. The collection will be for the Anzac Buffet, London.

*(The Herald, Melbourne, Victoria – 1 August, 1917)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

PROFITT – In sad remembrance of our late secretary and clubmate, Private Will J. Profitt, beloved son of Mr and Mrs F. Profitt, 12 Perry street, Collingwood, who died of wounds received in action, Aldershot, England, October 26, 1916. (Inserted by his old clubmates of the Minerva C.C.)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 26 October, 1917) & (*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 26 October, 1917)

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

PROFITT – In sad remembrance of my dear chum, William J. Profitt, who died of wounds received in France, at Aldershot, England, on the 25th October, 1916.

A soldier, yes, and a hero, too,  
He played a man's part through and through;  
His actions speak, though his voice is still,  
Forget him ? No, I never will.

-Inserted by his true pal, Jack Phillips (returned).

PROFITT – In loving but sorrowful memory of Willie, the eldest beloved son of F. and A. Profitt, of Collingwood, Melbourne, who gave his life for his country after thirteen month's active service, died of wounds at Aldershot Hospital, England, on 25th October, 1916, aged 22 years.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

The voice of Jesus said,  
Come unto me and rest;  
Lie down thou weary one  
They held upon the Saviour's loving breast. – Amen

-Inserted by his loving parents, brothers and sisters.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 27 October, 1917)

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

PROFITT – In cherished remembrance of William, beloved son of F. and A. Profitt, Melbourne, died of wounds received in France 25th October, 1916, late of 23rd Batt., aged 22 years. Also our beloved nephew, J. W. C. (Chas.) Profitt, Geelong, died of wounds in France 10th November, 1916, aged 22 years. Late of 6th A.M.C.

Forward undeterred.

They are looking down from the golden land,  
Our beloved are looking down;  
They have done their work,  
They have borne their cross,  
And received their glorious crown.



-Inserted by loving parents, sisters and brother.

PROFITT – A tribute to the memory of our dear mate, Will, who died of wounds in England on 25th October, 1916.

Duty called him, he was there,  
To do his bit and take his share;  
His heart was true, his spirit brave,  
His resting place a hero's grave.

-Inserted by his old mates, R. Wright (returned) and G. Spark (returned)

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 25 October, 1918)

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

PROFITT – A tribute to the memory of the fallen brave: Our beloved sons and nephews, Will and Chas., who gave their all for God, King, and Empire, October 25, 1916, and November 10, 1916.

Thy will be done  
O Lord, our God.

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 25 October, 1921)

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### Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for cemeteries and memorials in 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. In all 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth forces from WWI and WWII have been honoured and commemorated in perpetuity.

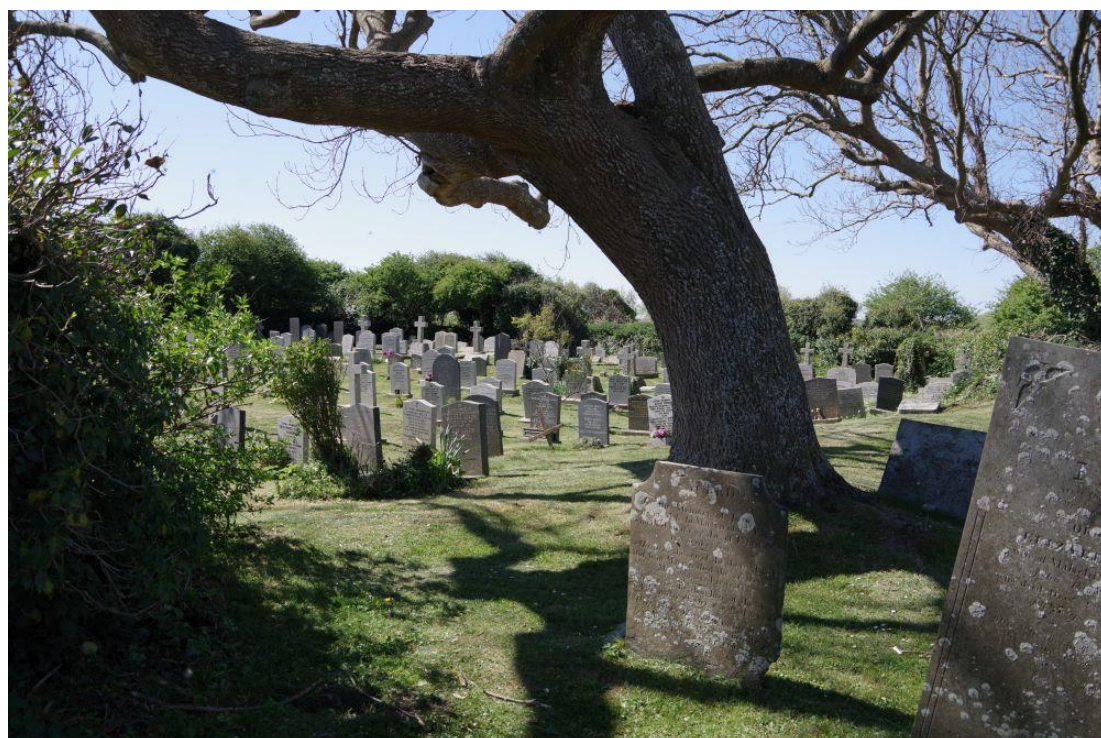
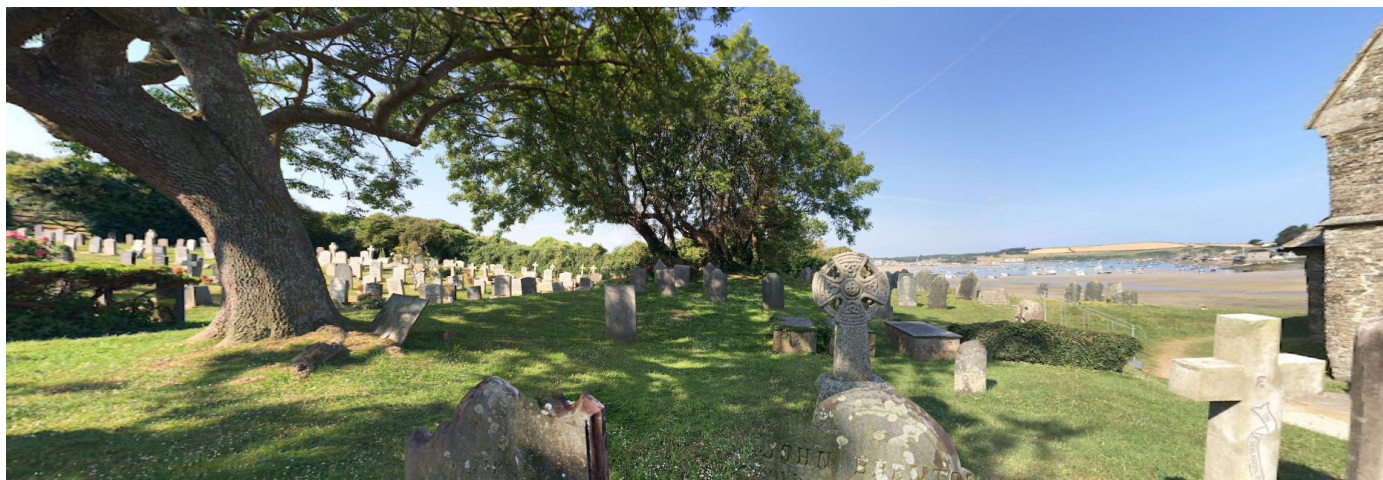
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of its mandate, is responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead individually and equally. To this end, the war dead are commemorated by name on a headstone, at an identified site of a burial, or on a memorial. War dead are commemorated uniformly and equally, irrespective of military or civil rank, race or creed.

Not all service personnel have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. In some instances the relative chose to have their own memorial/headstone placed on the deceased's grave. These private headstones are not maintained by the CWGC as they have no jurisdiction to maintain them.

Private William Profitt shares a Private Headstone with Private John Walter Charles Profitt, who is buried in Heilly Station Cemetery, France.

**St. Michael's Churchyard, Porthilly, St. Minver, Cornwall, England.**

St. Michael's Churchyard, Porthilly, St. Minver is located south west of St. Minver village, near Rock. There are just 2 Commonwealth War Graves located in this Churchyard – both from World War 1.



*(Photo from Cornwall OPC)*

Photo of Private W. Profitt's Private Headstone in St. Michael's Churchyard, St. Minver, Cornwall, England.

*(Note: Date of death on Private Headstone is incorrect – should read "25-10-16".)*



*(Photo by Harry Mably & Liz Williams)*



*In Loving Memory*

*WILLIAM Son of*

*F. Profitt,*

*Died of Wounds*

*26.10.16*

*A.I.F.*

*Aged 22 Years*

*"Oer Jordan's Waves They*

*Did Not Fear."*

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*In Loving Memory*

*CHARLES Son of*

*W. Profitt,*

*Died of Wounds*

*10.11.16*

*A.I.F.*

*Aged 22 Years*

*“Oer Jordan’s Waves They*

*Did Not Fear.”*

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John Walter Charles Profitt enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.) on 9th July, 1915 as a 21 year old, single teacher from Moolap, via Geelong, Victoria. His next of kin was listed as William Profitt. He was issued a Service number of 9028 & embarked on HMAT *Themistocles* (A32) on 28th January, 1916 from Melbourne, Victoria with 6th Infantry Brigade, 6th Field Ambulance, 9th Reinforcements.

Lance Corporal John Walter Charles Profitt died in France on 10th November, 1916 from wounds. He was buried in Heilly Station Cemetery, France.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

DA09981

