

**Stafford Cemetery, Stafford,
Staffordshire, England**

War Grave



Lest We Forget

World War 1



1760 PRIVATE

J. E. REES

20TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

29TH OCTOBER, 1918 Age 26

James Edmund REES

James Edmund Rees was born at 46 Jackson Street, Woolwich Common, London, England on 14th April, 1892 to parents James Robert & Eliza Rees. He was baptised on 8th May, 1892 at St. Mary Magdalene Church, Woolwich, London, England. The family were living at 46 Jackson Street & James Robert Rees was listed as a Labourer.

James Edmund Rees attended school at Earl Street, St. Plumstead, England.

The 1901 England Census recorded James E. Rees as an 8 year old, living with his family at 67 Robert Street, Plumstead East. London, England. His parents were listed as James R. Rees (Arsenal Labourer, aged 42, born Woolwich, London) & Eliza Rees (aged 32, born Devonport, Devon). James was the eldest of 3 children listed on this Census (all born Plumstead, London) – James then George R. Rees (aged 4) & Albert C. Rees (aged 1).

The 1911 England Census recorded James E. Rees as an 18 year old (unemployed), living with his family at 83 Elm Street, Plumstead, Kent, England in a 4 room dwelling. His parents were listed as James Robert Rees (Skilled Labourer, aged 51) & Eliza Rees (aged 42) James Robert & Eliza Rees had been married for 20 years & had a total of 7 children – 3 of whom had since died. James E. Rees was the eldest of 4 children listed on this Census – James then George R. Rees (Cartridge Machine Boy, aged 14), Albert C. Rees (Scholar, aged 11) & Percy H. Rees (aged 3).

James Edmund Rees was a 23 year old, single, Labourer from 83 Elen Street, Woolwich, London, England when he enlisted at Liverpool, Sydney, New South Wales on 10th June, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 1760 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs E. Rees, 83 Elen Street, Woolwich, London, England. James Rees stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously served with Royal Field Artillery in London for 2 ½ years. (According to information supplied by his mother for the Roll of Honour – James Rees was a Tramway man & was also a Pawnbrokers Assistant at Plumstead Rd. He arrived in Australia when he was 21).

Private James Edmund Rees was posted to 2nd Reinforcements of 20th Battalion for recruit training on 30th May, 1915 (date as per Statement of Service form).

Private James Edmund Rees embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Kanowna* (A61) on 19th June, 1915 with the 20th Infantry Battalion, 2nd Reinforcements.

Private James Edmund Rees was taken on strength of 20th Battalion at Gallipoli Peninsula on 31st August, 1915 from Reinforcements.

Mrs Moore wrote to Base Records on 14th October, 1915 wishing “*to change the address of No 1760 Private J. E. Rees 2nd Rein 20th Battalion from 53 Bourke St Redfern to 66 Flinders St Darlinghurst.*”

Base Records replied on 20th October, 1915 stating that they were “*unable to accede to your request, as next-of-kin is shown as his mother residing in England.*”

Private James Edmund Rees was wounded at Gallipoli Peninsula on 19th November, 1915. He was admitted to 1st Australian Casualty Clearing Station on 20th November, 1915 with a wound to right arm. Private Rees was transferred to Hospital Ship *Delta* on 20th November, 1915 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to right arm. He was admitted to No. 1 Auxiliary Hospital at Heliopolis on 26th November, 1915 then transferred to Abbassia temporarily (no date recorded).

20th Battalion

The 20th Battalion was raised at Liverpool in New South Wales in March 1915 as part of the 5th Brigade. A sprinkling of the 20th's original recruits had already served with the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF) in the operations to capture German New Guinea in 1914. The 20th left Australia in late June, trained in Egypt from late July until mid-August, and on 22 August landed at ANZAC Cove.

Arriving at Gallipoli just as the August offensive petered out, the 20th's role there was purely defensive. From 26

August, until its withdrawal from the peninsula on 20 December, the 20th Battalion was responsible for the defence of Russell's Top.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 20th Battalion

Fatigue Gully – 19th November, 1915:

1 Wounded & 4 sick evacuated

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private James Edmund Rees was taken on strength of Overseas Base at Ghezireh on 10th December, 1915.

Private James Edmund Rees was transferred to Anzac Police (Anzac Provost Corps) & was taken on strength at Abbassia on 3rd April, 1916.

Private James Edmund Rees was transferred back to 20th Battalion on 26th August, 1916. He was marched in to Details at Moascar on the same day.

Private James Edmund Rees embarked for overseas from Alexandria on 14th September, 1916 on *Kingstonian*.

Mrs J. Rees, c/o Mrs John Gleeson, Ben Lomond, NSW wrote to Base Records on 14th September, 1916 asking “*if No 1760 Pte J. Rees 20th Battalion 2nd Reinforce 5th Brigade A.I.E. Force has been wounded or killed as I have wrote to Victoria Barrack Sydney but they don't reply. I would like to know as this man is my husband if you would do this.*”

Base Records replied to Mrs J. Rees, c/o Mrs John Gleeson, Ben Lomond, NSW on 27th September, 1916 stating that no official report had been received concerning No. 1760 Private J. E. Rees, 20th Battalion since November, 1915 advising that he was suffering from a bullet wound in the arm. The letter goes on to state “*This soldier enlisted as a single man, and if you desire your name noted on his records as “Stated to be wife”, it will be necessary for you to forward to this office your Certificate of Marriage or sworn copy of that document, in support of your claim.*”

Mrs J. Rees, c/o Mrs J. Gleeson, Post Office, Ben Lomond, NSW wrote to Base Records on 25th September, 1916 “*asking if you could tell me anything about No. 1760 Pte Jack Rees, 20th Battalion..... I have got no reply and I am thinking my letter may have gone astray so I am again writing. I would like you to let me know if he has been wounded or killed or is he still in action as the above named is my husband, this would you kindly do and oblige me.*”

Private James Edmund Rees was transferred to Rolleston (Det Coys No. 3 Camp), from Parkhouse, Wiltshire on 2nd October, 1916.

Private James Edmund Rees was written up for an Offence on 6th November, 1916 – A.W.L. (Absent without leave) from 24.00 on 23rd October, 1916 to 07.00 on 2nd November, 1916. He was awarded a total forfeiture of 38 days' pay.

Private James Edmund Rees proceeded overseas to France on 28th November, 1916 & was marched in to 2nd A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 30th November, 1916.

Private James Edmund Rees was written up for an Offence at Etaples on 8th December, 1916 – Creating a disturbance after lights out on 7th December, 1916. He was awarded 14 days confined to camp.

Private James Edmund Rees rejoined 20th Battalion on 26th December, 1916.

Private James Edmund Rees was wounded in action in France on 15th April, 1917. He was admitted to 4th Australian Field Ambulance on 15th April, 1917 with shrapnel wound(s) to right cheek then transferred & admitted to 5th Australian Field Ambulance. Private Rees was transferred to Divisional Rest Station on 15th April, 1917. He was transferred & admitted to 56th Casualty Clearing Station on 18th April, 1917 & discharged to duty on 24th April, 1917.

War Diary – 20th Battalion

15th April, 1917

At 4.30 am Received orders to "Stand-to" as the enemy had broken through the Line. "D" Coy was ordered to send a patrol forward and locate the enemy. On coming in contact with the enemy the Company moved forward in touch with the 19th Bn. "A" Coy moved off on the Right. At 6 am "C" Coy went forward to support "D" Coy and at 6.20 am "B" Coy moved out to Support "A" Coy. About 5.30 am some Officers and men of 2 AFA Bde reported to Battalion Headquarters that they had been driven from their guns and that the enemy was in possession of all the guns of the 2nd A.F.A. Bde. By 8.30 am several enemy prisoners were brought to Battalion Headquarters and forwarded on to Divisional Cage. At 9 am the O.C. "D" Coy reported that the enemy had been driven back we had recaptured the guns of the 2 A.F.A. Bde and were holding the Original Front Line being linked up on both flanks. 19" Bn on the left & "A" Co on Right. A Company was connected up with 9" Battalion on the right. Rain fell heavily during the whole of the Operations. Despite the bad weather the Operations were very brilliantly carried out particularly by "D" Coy under the command of Capt. E. J. McDonald. The Battalion suffered very lightly in the way of Casualties Lieuts N, R, Meares & Ross were wounded. As a result of the Operations we secured over two hundred prisoners & a German machine gun. Evacuations. 2 Officers 14 ORs Hospital 6 Killed.

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private James Edmund Rees rejoined 20th Battalion from Hospital on 7th May, 1917.

Private James Edmund Rees was on leave to England from Belgium from 31st October, 1917 until 16th November, 1917.

20th Battalion

After further training in Egypt, the 20th Battalion proceeded to France. It entered the trenches of the Western Front for the first time in April 1916 and in the following month had the dubious honour of being the first Australian battalion to be raided by the Germans. The 20th took part in its first major offensive around Pozieres between late July and the end of August 1916. After a spell in a quieter sector of the front in Belgium, the 2nd Division, which included the 5th Brigade, came south again in October. The 20th Battalion provided reinforcements for the attack near Flers between 14 and 16 November, launched in conditions that Charles Bean described as the worst ever encountered by the AIF.

In 1917, the 20th was involved in the follow-up of German forces after their retreat to the Hindenburg Line, and was one of four battalions to defeat a counter-stroke by a German force, almost five times as strong, at Lagnicourt. The Battalion took part in three major battles before the year was out, second Bullecourt (3-4 May) in France, and Menin Road (20-22 September) and Poelcappelle (9-10 October) in Belgium.

The spring of 1918 brought a major German offensive. The 20th Battalion was one of many Australian battalions rushed to stop it, and it encountered some particularly severe fighting when ordered to attack at Hangard Wood on 7 April. With the German Army's last desperate offensive defeated, the 20th participated in the battles that pushed it ever closer to defeat: Amiens on 8 August, the legendary attack on Mont St Quentin on 31 August, and the forcing of the Beaurevoir Line around Montbrehain on 3 October. Montbrehain was the battalion's last battle of the war. It was disbanded on 20 April 1919.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private James Edmund Rees was detached to 5th A.I.Bde in France on 31st May, 1918.

Private James Edmund Rees was reported to be with his Unit in France on 14th June, 1918.

Private James Edmund Rees was on leave to UK from 18th October, 1918.

Private James Edmund Rees was admitted to Military Hospital, Cannock Chase, Rugeley Camp, Staffordshire, England on 27th October, 1918 with Pneumonia while on furlough in UK.

Private James Edmund Rees died on 29th October, 1918 at Military Hospital, Cannock Chase, Staffordshire, England from Pneumonia.

A death for James E. Rees, aged 26, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Lichfield, Staffordshire, England.

Private James Edmund Rees was buried on 4th November, 1918 in Stafford Cemetery, Stafford, Staffordshire, England – Plot number CE. 532. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private James Edmund Rees - *Elm Coffin. The deceased soldier was accorded a full Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and surmounted by several beautiful wreaths sent by: - MOTHER & FATHER & Mr & Mrs Sales. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside, and the Rev. Livesay of Stafford. The Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Names of relatives & Friends present at the Funeral – Mr & Mrs Rees, Mr & Mrs Sales.

Mrs J. Rees, Post Office, Glen Innes, NSW wrote to Base Records again on 3rd December, 1918 regarding Private Rees 1760, 20th Battalion. *"I was informed today that he was dead & left mother next of kin. Now if this man is John Rees from West Wallsend his mother is dead. Her name was Mrs Kyser of Carrington Street West Wallsend she died in 1913. I am send on to you or rather send to the Registry Office to have a copy of my marriage certificate send on to you. Trusting you will let me know if you get same & I would like to get his belongs anything he as left. Trusting you will let me know all particulars early. P.S. The sargent of police was here today and I gave me all I could regards him."*

Base Records received a letter from 2nd Military District , Paddington, Sydney, NSW on 18th December, 1918 regarding a report received from the Officer in Charge, Police Station, Glenn Innes, NSW. The letter stated *"I find that Mrs J. Rees is identical with Mrs Gleeson and she informs me that her husband John Rees, and she separated some few years since, he enlisted and she understands went to the war, she states she married again, and is now married to Gleeson and she is anxious to definitely ascertain whether or not her first husband Reed is dead, she has written several times and has been informed that a man named John Edmund REES who enlisted as a single man and gave his next of kin as his Mother whose registered No. was 1760, is dead and she thought it probable it might have been her husband who had given these particulars to mislead and so avoid her having any claim for maintenance. Mrs Rees or Gleeson further states that her husband's mother is dead since 1913, he was a native of West Wallsend near where his mother died and he has a brother living somewhere in that locality now but she states she is unable to get any definite information form any of his friends or relatives. From inquiries made it seems probable that Private J. E. Rees, No. 1760 is identical with this woman's husband John Rees."*

Base Records wrote to Mrs J. L. Rees, Post Office, Newcastle, NSW on 29th July, 1919 stating that they enclose a letter forwarded to her in February last which was returned unclaimed, *"You will see it points out that the late No. 1760 Private J. E. Rees, 20th Battalion was evidently not identical with your husband, and also that you Marriage Certificate did not come to hand at this office. If No. 1064 (not 1045 as stated by you) Sergeant J. Rees, 17th Battalion, who recently returned to Australia, is your husband, and you desire to be recorded as his wife, you should forward the full personal description and other particulars requested in the last paragraph of attached letter. A certified extract from the Registrar of Marriages should also be obtained from the Registrar of the locality in which the ceremony took place, and should be forwarded to this office together with a Statutory Declaration that you were not divorced or legally separated. An application form for the nearest female relative's badge would then be forwarded to you. Only the one badge is available in this instance."*

Private James Edmund Rees was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Rees mother – Mrs E. Rees, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque issued in England November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private James Edmund Rees – service number 1760, aged 26, of 20th Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Private J. E. Rees is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 92.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(64 pages of Private James Edmund Rees' 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





AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

E02616

Rivory, near Amiens, France. 26 June 1918. Group portrait of Headquarters Details of the 5th Australian Infantry Brigade, with the Signals Section attached. This group contains runners, signallers, drivers, clerks, gas experts, veterinary experts, observers, batmen and cooks.

Identified: 5815 Private (Pte) Eric C. Fox, O Section (1); 4553 Pte C. C. Shepherd, 20th Battalion (2); 4710 Pte R. F. McIntyre, 18th Battalion (3); 589 Pte S. C. Jarvis, 20th Battalion (4); 5426 Pte C. Large, 20th Battalion (5); 3805 Pte W. A. Funnell, 17th Battalion (6); 3822 Pte P. A. Ezzy, 20th Battalion (7); 5381 Pte R. J. Mullins, 17th Battalion (8); 4278 Pte J. Smith, 20th Battalion (9); 3832 Pte D. Fulton, 17th Battalion (10); 4162 Pte B. Melrose, 17th Battalion (11); 1261 Pte J. McGaughey, 5th Battalion Headquarters (BHQ) (12); 4112 Pte Leslie George Fairall, 5th BHQ (13); 6105 Driver (Dvr) Albert Lindsay J. Carey, 20th Battalion (14); 954 Pte F. E. Nicholas, 20th Battalion (15); 14763 Sapper (Spr) J. C. Bowes, AAPC (16); 1292 Pte G. S. Stewart, AAPC (17); 2518 Pte V. A. R. Knight, 18th Battalion (18); 4433 Pte T. Henderson, 20th Battalion (19); 3972 Pte M. W. Thorburn, 20th Battalion (20); 4687 Pte F. D. Davies, AAPC (21); 1977 Spr F. W. Parker, 2nd Divisional Signals (22); 2291 Spr J. N. Beattie, 2nd Divisional Signals (23); 195 Pte W. P. Champion, 5th BHQ (24); 5626 Pte Maurice Edgar Rowell, 17th Battalion (25); 6413 Pte W. T. Sawkins, 20th Battalion (26); 6136 Pte R. G. Owen MM, 18th Battalion (27); 667 Spr L. B. Spedding, 2nd Divisional Signals (28); 16167 Spr F. B. McDonald, 2nd Divisional Signals (29); 3982 J. Robertson, 18th Battalion (30); 6009 Spr F. Campbell, 2nd Divisional Signals (31); 5856 Sergeant (Sgt) J. O. Love, BHQ (32); 717 Corporal (Cpl) B. D. Fraser, 18th Battalion (33); 1064 Cpl H. D. Knight, 2nd Divisional Signals (34); 890 Cpl G. B. Hammond, 20th Battalion (35); 1734 Cpl V. B. Lipscombe, BHQ (36); 4977 Cpl W. T. Brett, BHQ (37); 1800 Lance Sergeant H. G. Lewis, AAPC (38); 16 Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant H. H. S. Rodgers MSM, BHQ (39); 3456 Company Quartermaster Sergeant W. A. Bryant MSM, BHQ (40); 1596 Sgt E. M. Sparkes MM, Signals (41); 1612 Sgt T. Ryan MM, Signals (42); 1245 Cpl R. J. Rubie, BHQ (43); 19 Cpl F. W. May, BHQ (44); 3652 Lance Corporal A. V. Ackworth, 2nd Divisional Signals (45); 526 Sgt W. C. Higgs, Veterinary Section (46); 3709 Spr A. C. Gain, 2nd Divisional Signals Company (47); 2895 Pte G. W. Cullen, 18th Battalion (48); 1535 Pte T. Ridsdale, 20th Battalion (49); 6388 Pte P. McInerney, 20th Battalion (50); 6334 Pte W. H. C. Garner, 20th Battalion (51); 4783 Pte G. M. Chivers, 18th Battalion (52); 6141 Pte E. Myers, 20th Battalion (53); 6374 Pte A. Orr, 18th Battalion (54); 4486 Pte G. W. Mercer, 18th Battalion (55); 1918 Pte F. K. Dutton, 18th Battalion (56); 4051 Pte A. B. Ackland, 17th Battalion (57); 488 Pte T. W. Archibald, 20th Battalion (58); 1879 Pte T. Ansell, BHQ (59); 5895 Pte G. T. Wallace, BHQ (60); 5624 Pte O. L. Robson, BHQ (61); 2505 Pte H. J. H. Blake, BHQ (62); 1113 Pte P. C. Reynolds, BHQ (63); 2237 Pte

C. Webb, BHQ (64); 4840 Pte E. Taylor, BHQ (65); 1704 Pte A. Harrison, 18th Battalion (66); 340 Pte H. E. Taylor, 17th Battalion (67); 1936 Spr E. Harrop, 2nd Divisional Signals Company (68); 2391 Spr O. H. Heard, 2nd Divisional Signals Company (69); 3671 Pte T. M. Simpson, 18th Battalion (70); 5140 Pte E. M. Williams, 18th Battalion (71); 2396 Spr T. J. Lynch, 2nd Divisional Signals Company (72); 6028 Pte F. W. Abrahams, 17th Battalion (73); 1352 F. Mahony, 18th Battalion (74); 5991 Pte H. Larke, 19th Battalion (75); 3190 Spr Sylvander, 2nd Divisional Signals Company (76); 6597 Spr S. W. C. Jones, 2nd Divisional Signals Company (77); 415 Pte T. S. Greenberg, 17th Battalion (78); 4169 Pte I. B. Mosman, 17th Battalion (79); 671 Pte B. G. Starr MM, 17th Battalion (80); 2216 Pte R. J. Smith, 19th Battalion (81); 5373 Pte C. H. Meadowcroft, 17th Battalion (82); 811 Pte W. H. Jury, 18th Battalion (83); 2403 Pte E. Mark, 20th Battalion (84); 505 Pte F. J. Caple, 17th Battalion (85); 1225 Pte D. P. Hefferman, 17th Battalion (86); 326 Pte E. C. Birschel, BHQ (87); 5893 Spr S. M. Neil, 2nd Divisional Signals Company (88); 5427 Private (Pte) R. Cassells, BHQ (89); 709 F. J. Vine, BHQ (90); 22 W. J. Jarvis, BHQ (91); 1793 Driver W. H. McKenzie, 2nd Divisional Signals Company (92); **1760 Pte J. E. Rees, 20th Battalion (93)**; 5343 Sapper (Spr) V. S. L. Sanderson, 2nd Divisional Signals Company (94); 551 Pte W. Garlick, BHQ (95); 17056 Spr A. F. Boys, 2nd Divisional Signals Company (96); 16393 Spr H. W. Vonthethoff, 2nd Divisional Signals Company (97).



Newspaper Notices

ROLL OF HONOR

121st CASUALTY LIST

NEW SOUTH WALES

Wounded:.....J. E. Rees (England).....

(The Tamworth Daily Observer, NSW – 10 December, 1915)

OFFICIAL CASUALTY LIST

The 297th list of casualties sustained by Australian troops was issued yesterday...

NEW SOUTH WALES

Pte J. E. REES, England (second occasion)

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 15 May, 1917)

NEARER THE END

DOUBLE CASUALTY LIST

MANY AUSSIES ILL

NO. 448

DIED, OTHER CAUSES

J. E. REES, England (illness, p.r.w.)

(The Sun, Sydney, NSW – 30 November, 1918)

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. E. Rees does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Stafford Cemetery, Stafford, Staffordshire, England

Stafford Cemetery is located in the northern part of the town. There are 119 Commonwealth War Graves in this Cemetery – 38 from World War 1 & 81 from World War 2.

There is just 1 Australian WW1 War Grave in this Cemetery.

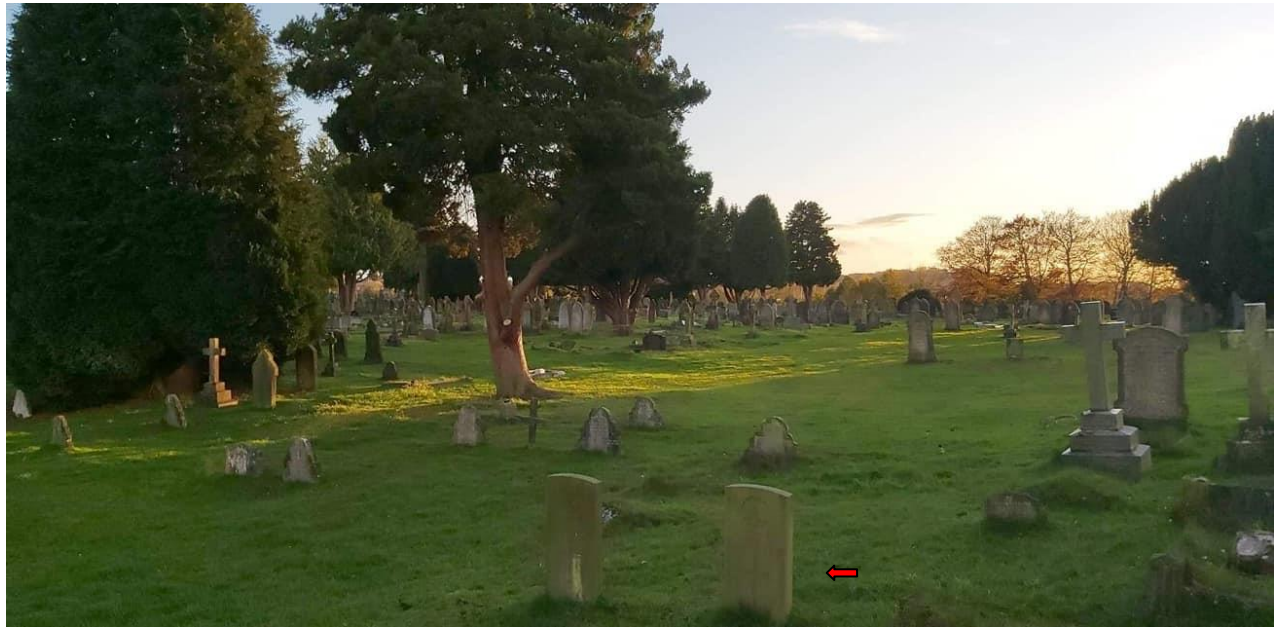


Cross of Sacrifice & War Graves *(Photo from CWGC)*

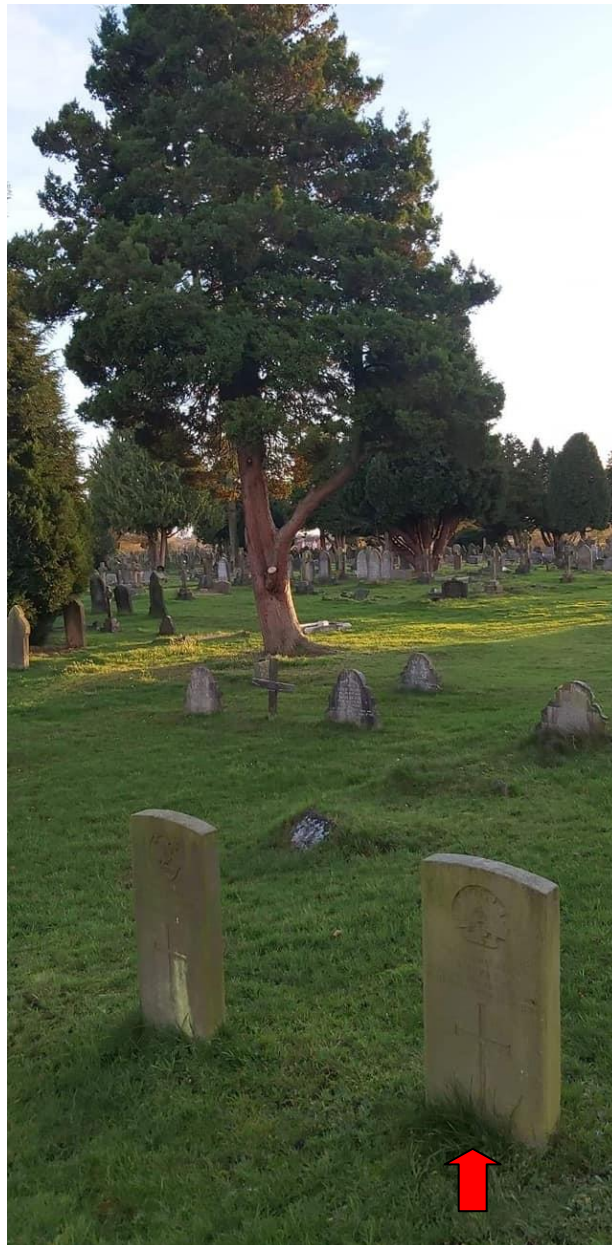
Photo of Private J. E. Rees' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Stafford Cemetery, Stafford, Staffordshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of Mattithiah Woodman)



Private Rees' Headstone marked with arrow (Photos courtesy of Mattithiah Woodman)





Private Rees' Headstone marked with arrow (Photo courtesy Peter Bennett – Private

Bereavement Services
Eccleshall Road Cemetery Layout



Environmental and Health | www.staffordbc.gov.uk

(photo by Karen – Find a Grave)