

Cheltenham Cemetery
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



1722 PRIVATE

R. W. RESSO

54TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

25TH SEPTEMBER, 1918 Age 25

As Long As Life

And Memory Last

We Will Remember Thee

Robert William RESSO

Robert William Resso was born at William Street, North Wagga Wagga, NSW in 1893 to parents Robert Bartholomew Resso and Rebecca Resso (nee Dunn).

Robert William Resso was a 22 year old, single, Railway Labourer from Wagga Wagga, NSW when he enlisted at Wagga Wagga, NSW on 1st December, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 1722 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr Robert Bartholomew Resso, of Kincaid Street, Wagga Wagga, NSW.

Private Robert William Resso was posted to "B" Company, A.I.F. Camp, Goulburn, NSW on 1st December, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to 2nd Reinforcements of 55th Battalion.

Private Robert William Resso embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Ceramic (A40)* on 14th April, 1916 with the 55th Infantry Battalion, 2nd Reinforcements & disembarked at Port Said on 16th May, 1916.

Private Robert William Resso joined 54th Battalion from 2nd Reinforcements of 55th Battalion at Ismailia on 16th June, 1916.

Private Robert William Resso embarked on H. T. *Caledonian* from Alexandria on 19th June, 1916 to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 29th June, 1916.

Private Robert William Resso was sent to Field Ambulance from his Unit on 30th October, 1916. He was transferred to 21st Casualty Clearing Station then transferred to No. 18 Ambulance Train on 3rd November, 1916. Pte Resso was admitted to 9th General Hospital, at Rouen, France on 4th November, 1916 with Trench Feet. He was transferred from Rouen for Hospital Ship on 6th November, 1916 & embarked for England from Havre on Hospital Ship *Panama* on 11th November, 1916.

Private Robert William Resso was transferred from Graylingwell War Hospital on 8th December, 1916 to 2nd Auxiliary Hospital at Southall with Trench Feet. He was discharged from 2nd Auxiliary Hospital to Headquarters for Furlough on 12th December, 1916. Private Resso was marched in from Southall Hospital to No. 4 Command Depot at Wareham, Dorset, England on 12th December, 1916.

Private Robert William Resso was written up for an Offence while at No. 4 Command Depot at Wareham, Dorset, England - 1. A.W.L. (Absent without leave) from 3 pm on 27th December, 1916 to 5 pm on 28th December, 1916. 2. Urinating in Lines. He was awarded 48 hours Detention & was in custody awaiting trial 1 day on 5th January, 1917. Total forfeiture – 5 days' pay.

Private Robert William Resso was transferred to 61st Battalion on 23rd March, 1917 from 55th Battalion while posted at Wareham.

Private Robert William Resso was transferred to 54th Battalion on 12th September, 1917. He proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 12th September, 1917 to reinforce the 54th Battalion. Private Resso was marched in to 3rd A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Havre, France on 13th September, 1917. He was marched out to his Unit on 2nd October, 1917 & joined his Unit in France on 2nd October, 1917.

Private Robert William Resso was wounded in action on 17th October, 1917. He was admitted to 3rd Australian Field Ambulance then transferred & admitted to 3rd Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 17th October, 1917 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to left arm & abdomen. Private Resso was transferred to Ambulance Train on 17th October, 1917 & admitted to 22nd General Hospital at Camiers, France on 19th October, 1917. He was transferred to England on 28th October, 1917.

54th Battalion

The 54th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 16 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 2nd Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 2nd, the 54th was predominantly composed of men from New South Wales. The battalion became part of the 14th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

After a freezing winter manning trenches in the Somme Valley, in early 1917 the 54th Battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line. It was spared the assault but did, however, defend gains made during the second battle of Bullecourt. Later in the year, the AIF's focus of operations switched to the Ypres sector in Belgium. The 54th's major battle here was at Polygon Wood on 26 September.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 54th Battalion

Westhoek Ridge 17th October, 1917:

With the exception of parties permanently employed no details were requisitioned from the Battalion for work today, and final arrangements were made for the relief of the 59th Battalion in the front line during the evening. In consequence of yesterday's losses and in consideration of the weakness of the Companies instructions were forwarded to rear Battalion Headquarters for Lieut. Green and the 25 O/Ranks who had volunteered to act as stretcher bearers during the Operations – 5th to 12th October – and whom we believed to be at the Transport Lines. The day passed off very quietly, Enemy Artillery activity being not at all heavy and very spasmodic. In accordance with Battalion Order, Adj. 27, Companies moved off from their positions in WESTHOEK RIDGE at 5 pm. As this Battalion moved out the 29th Battalion (8th Australian Infantry Brigade) moved in. Notwithstanding the fact that the duck-board tracks leading to the front line had been constantly shelled during the last three days our relief of the 59th Battalion was completed without casualties by 7-5pm. "D" Company on the right and "A" Company on the left occupied the front line. "C" Company occupied the support line and "B" Company remained in reserve. Battalion Headquarters was situated in a pill box at J.4.b.7.5. About 10 pm the front line was very heavily barraged by the enemy. Our casualties for the day were:- 4 O/Ranks killed, Lt. Carrick and 40 O/Ranks wound, 31 O/Ranks gassed. A great number of these casualties were the result of the heavy enemy shelling mentioned in the diary of the 16th inst., but which were not evacuated until today. In accordance with instructions received from Brigade Major Hansen (Bn.S.I.C.) reported to B.H.Q., at 5 pm and is to remain during out tour in the line.

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Robert William Resso was admitted to 2nd Eastern General Hospital at Brighton, England on 28th October, 1917 with gunshot wounds to arm, abdomen & side – severe. He was transferred to 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield on 13th December, 1917 then discharged to No. 3 Command Depot at Hurdcott, Wiltshire, England on 22nd December, 1917.

Base Records advised Mr R. B. Resso of Kincaid Street, Wagga Wagga on 6th November, 1917 that Private R. W. Resso had been wounded. They contacted Mr Resso again on 23rd November, 1917 to advise that Private R. W. Resso had been admitted to 2nd Eastern General Hospital, Brighton, England on 28th October, 1917 "suffering from gunshot wound to left leg, arm & side severe." Base Records advised Mrs R. Resso of Kincaid Street on 7th December, 1917 that Private Robert Resso's condition was improving.

Private Robert William Resso was marched to No. 3 Command Depot at Hurdcott, Wiltshire, England on 23rd December, 1917 from 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield.

Base Records advised Mr R. B. Resso of Kincaid Street, Wagga Wagga on 1st January, 1918 that Private R. W. Resso had been reported convalescent.

Private Robert William Resso was medically classified as B1 A1 (fit for light duty only) on 13th February, 1918 while posted at Hurdcott, Wiltshire, England. He was classified as B1 A2 (fit for overseas training camp in three or four weeks) on 22nd February, 1918 & much improved & classified as B1 A3 (fit for overseas training camp in two to three weeks) on 15th March, 1918. Private Resso was classified as B1 A4 (fit for overseas training camp when passed dentally fit) on 18th March, 1918.

Private Robert William Resso was marched in to Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deverill, Wiltshire on 23rd March, 1918.

A District Court Martial was held at Longbridge Deverill on 11th May, 1918 - Private Robert William Resso was charged with being "AWL from 23/4/18 until arrested at Longbridge Deverill on 24/4/18." The Court found Private Resso guilty & he was sentenced to 96 hours detention from 11th May, 1918 – not confirmed.

Private Robert William Resso proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 22nd May, 1918 from Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deverill.

Private Robert William Resso was marched in to A.I.B.D. (Australian Infantry Base Depot) at Havre, France from England on 24th May, 1918. He was marched out to his Unit on 26th May, 1918 & rejoined his Unit (54th Battalion) in France on 6th June, 1918.

Private Robert William Resso was transferred to 55th Battalion (no date).

Private Robert William Resso was transferred back to 54th Battalion on 16th June, 1918.

Private Robert William Resso was wounded in action (2nd occasion) on 1st September, 1918. He was admitted to 6th Field Ambulance then transferred & admitted to 53rd Casualty Clearing Station the same day with shrapnel wounds to right leg. Private Resso was transferred & admitted to 12th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 2nd September, 1918 with shrapnel wounds to right leg. He embarked for England from Rouen on 11th September, 1918.

54th Battalion

Once the German offensive had been defeated, the Allies launched their own offensive in August 1918. The 14th Brigade did not play a major role in these operations until late in the month, but its actions, including those of the 54th Battalion at Anvil Wood, were critical to the capture of Peronne, which fell on 2 September.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Robert William Resso was admitted to Voluntary Aid Hospital, Cheltenham, England (affiliated with 2nd South General Hospital, Bristol) on 12th September, 1918 with gunshot wounds to right leg – dangerously ill.

Base Records advised Mr R. B. Resso of Kincaid Street, Wagga Wagga on 17th September, 1918 that Private R. W. Resso had been admitted to a French Hospital on 2nd September, 1918 wounded.

Mrs R. Resso, of 323 Abercrombie Street, Redfern, Sydney, mother of Private Robert William Resso, wrote to Base Records on 19th September, 1918 asking for the latest information on Private R. W. Resso. Base Records replied on 25th September, 1918 stating *“the latest report received here concerning No. 1722 Private R. W. Resso, 54th Battalion, is to the effect that he was admitted to French Hospital, France on 2/9/18, wounded, second occasion. As his condition was not stated to be serious, in the absence of later reports it may be assumed he is progressing favourably, the practice of the Overseas Authorities being to notify this Office of any material change for the worse in a soldier's condition....”*

Private Robert William Resso died at 6.30 am on 25th September, 1918 at Cheltenham V.A.D. Hospital (affiliated with 2nd South General Hospital, Bristol) from wounds received in action – *“GSW Right leg, compound fracture.”* (Note – the Hospital Admissions form has stamp of *“Priory Hospital, Cheltenham.”*)

A death for Robert Resso, aged 24, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England.

According to information provided by his father for the Roll of Honour, Robert William Resso was one of eight cousins who enlisted in World War 1 – seven of them *“paid the supreme sacrifice.”*

Private Robert William Resso was buried at 2.30 pm on 27th September, 1918 in Cheltenham Cemetery, Gloucestershire, England – Plot number N. 9285 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private Robert William Russo - *Coffin was good, polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Australian Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the “Union Jack” and surmounted by a beautiful wreath sent from the Hospital. Six Nurses, 10 Australian soldier patients and a large number of Imperial soldiers attended the funeral. Rev. A. C. Gabrel of Cheltenham*

conducted the funeral service. An oak cross will be erected by the A.I.F. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London, were represented at the funeral.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Robert William Resso contains a letter from the County Director, Glos. V.A. Red Cross Office, Cheltenham which reads: *“Pte R. W. Resso was admitted to the Priory Hospital on the 12th September, 1918, with a compound fracture of right tibia and fibula, below knee. Two large wounds were present, and as the Patient’s condition was very unsatisfactory, a consultation was held with the Head Surgeon on the 21st September, 1918, who recommended amputation. The limb was amputated through the middle of the thigh (right), but In spite of all possible care and attention (saline stimulants and oxygen being constantly administered) the patient died on the 25th September. He was buried in the Australian corner of the Cheltenham Cemetery on 27.9.18 and was given a military funeral with full military honours. The funeral was attended by Mrs W. Charles, CMG., from the Australian Headquarters. The Commandant and several members of the Staff of the Priory Hospital were also present.”*

Private Robert William Resso was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Resso’s father – Mr R. B. Resso, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent February, 1922 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Robert William Resso – service number 1722, aged 25, of 54th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Robert Bartholomew Resso and Rebecca Resso, of 323 Abercrombie St., Redfern, Sydney, New South Wales.

R. W. Resso is remembered on the Victory Memorial Gardens Cenotaph, located at Baylis & Morrow Streets, Wagga Wagga, NSW.



Victory Memorial Gardens Cenotaph, Wagga Wagga (Photos from Monument Australia – Roger Johnson)



Private R. W. Resso is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 159.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(88 pages of Private Robert William Resso'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



Newspaper Notices

WAGGA WAGGA

Pte R. W. Resso, writing to his parents at Wagga, from "Somewhere in France," states that he is well and likes the country. He mentions that 20 of the "Kangaroos" were sent to join the various battalions, and all that were sent into the 54th with him were W. E. Bradney and the Oakman brothers. He met several of the Wagga boys in France.

(Albury Banner and Wodonga Express, NSW – 15 September, 1916)

DISTRICT NEWS

WAGGA WAGGA

News came to hand that Pte R. W. Resso has been wounded. Pte Resso was a member of the Kangaroo contingent.

(Albury Banner and Wodonga Express, NSW – 16 November, 1917)

PERSONAL

Mr R. Resso, of Kincaid-street, Wagga, has been advised from the Base Records Office that his son, Private R. W. Resso, has been admitted to the 2nd Eastern General Hospital, Brighton, England, suffering from gunshot wound in the left leg, arm and side, the wounds being of a severe nature.

(Daily Advertiser, NSW – 27 November, 1917)

FOR AUSTRALIA

New Death Roll

CASUALTY LIST NO. 437

DIED OF WOUNDS

R. W. RESSO, Wagga Wagga (p.r.w.)

(The Sun, Sydney, NSW – 26 October, 1918)

ROLL OF HONOUR

RESSO – In sad but loving memory of Private Robert William Resso, No. 1722, 54th Battalion, who died in The Priory Hospital, Cheltenham on September 25, 1918, from the effect of wounds received at Peronne on September 1, 1918, aged 25 years and 7 months.

We mourn because a hero died,
Our proven true, though sorely tried;
He fought for honor and for king,

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His comrades will his praises sing.
May God with consolation rare,
Help us out heavy cross to bear.
Always happy and cheerful,
 With a heart that knew no fear,
He went to fight life's battle
 For all he loved so dear.
Far and oft our thoughts do wander
 To a grave so far away.
Where they laid our dear son and brother,
 Just two years ago to-day.

-Inserted by his loving father and mother, sisters May, Rose, Grace and brother Charlie.

(Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga, NSW – 25 September, 1920)

HONOR ROLL

RESSO – In sad but loving memory of Private Robert William Resso, No. 1722, 54th Battalion, who died in the Priory Hospital, Cheltenham on 25th September, 1918, from the effect of wounds received at Peronne on the 1st September, 1918.

Although dead he is not forgotten,
 Nor will he ever be,
My loving thoughts of him
 Are always fresh in my sad memory.
When his country called, he answered,
 For which his life he gave,
And now he sleeps in honor
 'Midst the bravest of the brave.

-Inserted by his loving father and mother, brother and sisters.

(Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga, NSW – 24 September, 1921)

TRIBUTE TO "AUSSIES"

Anzac Day in Gloucester

The Gloucestershire Echo of May. 1 devotes a column to reports of the Anzac Day demonstrations, which were held the day before at Cheltenham, and in which Boy Scouts and Girl Guides took a prominent part. Beautiful wreaths were placed by the Scouts and Guides on the well-kept graves of 10 Australian soldiers, after the Deputy-Mayor gave a fervent address. The names of the 10 Australian were:— Pte. J. Warren, 5th Pioneer Battalion; Pte. S. G. Turner, 53rd Battalion; Pte. J. H. Fenton, 15th Field Ambulance; Sgt. W. R. B. Johnson, 15th Field Ambulance; Pte. A. R. Callaghan, 54th Battalion; Pte. W. R. Jerrom, 3rd Machine Gun Battalion; Pte. A. W. Stevens, 7th Battalion; **Pte. R. W. Resso, 54th Battalion**; Pte H. C. Vale, 3rd Pioneer Battalion; Lce.-Cpl. P. J. Penketh, 17th Battalion (the wreath of the last named was deposited by Miss Hattersley Smith). The following is a copy of a letter sent to the next-of-kin to those Australian soldiers by the Cheltenham Remembrance Day committee (represented in the signatures by Aid. C. H. Margret, Acting Mayor and Mr. T. H. Packer, acting Secretary: — We fell sure that you will be pleased to know that on Cheltenham's Anzac Day, the graves of the 10 Australian soldiers who died in

Cheltenham from wounds and other, injuries received, in battle, and were buried in our beautiful cemetery, were visited and wreaths and flowers deposited thereon. In this way the memory of those sons of the Empire who have found a last resting place far from their homes, at the foot of the historic Cotswold Hills, will be kept fresh in the minds of Cheltonians. From our charmingly placed cemetery there are beautiful views of a long stretch of the hills and of the wide expanse of the vale of the Severn— indeed, there is no more charming or picturesque spot in the whole of the Western Shires. And bordering the cemetery are: — “A rise steeply sloping, a fence with stone coping, the last - we diverged round the base or the hill.”— The scene of Adam Lindsay Gordon's (a Cheltonion) famous poem "How We Beat the Favourite." Within sound are the “Chimes of sweet St. Mary's On far English ground,” and can be seen from it – “the mist of the Cotswold Hills Where I once heard the blast of the huntsman's horn, Not far from, the Seven rills.” —the source of the River Thames. The proceedings arranged by the Remembrance Day Committee commenced at the War Memorial — erected in memory of 1,400 men of Cheltenham, who, like their Australian comrades, “died that we might live.” To this spot were brought many wreaths and bouquets of flowers, which were conveyed to the cemetery — two miles away— by over 500 Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, a selected number of whom proudly carried large bouquets of red, white, and blue flowers— the national colours— and both wreaths and flowers were garnished with ribbons of the same colour, while a wreath sent by an Australian mother bore the black and green colours of the battalion to which her dead son belonged. The long procession headed by the bugle band of the scouts had a striking effect as it passed along the principal streets and timbered avenues, crowded by townsfolk, on its way to the cemetery. ... At the close of the proceedings the beautiful hymn, “Fight the good fight” was sung by the whole audience—more than 2,000 – the “Last Post” was sounded, and scarcely had its rallying echoes along the hillside died away when “God save the King” had been sung, and the simple, effective, yet reverent ceremony had come to an end, and the dead soldiers were “left alone in their glory.”

(The Register, Adelaide, South Australia – 19 July, 1922)

HONOR ROLL

RESSO – In sad but loving memory of our son and brother, Private Robert William Resso, No. 1722, 54th Battalion, who died in the Priory Hospital, Cheltenham on September 25, 1918, from the effect of wounds received on September 1, 1918 at Peronne.

He sleeps not in his native land,

But under foreign skies;

Far from those who loved him,

In a hero's bed he lies.

He never shunned his country's call, But gladly gave his life – his all.

He died the helpless to defend:

An Australian soldier's noble end.

- Inserted by his loving father and mother, brother (Charlie), sisters (May, Rose and Grace).

(Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga, NSW – 22 September, 1922)

HONOR ROLL

RESSO – In sad but loving memory of our son and brother (Private Robert William Resso, No. 1722, 54th Battalion), who died in the Priory Hospital, Cheltenham, England, on September 25, 1918, from the effects of wounds received at Peronne on September 1, 1918, aged 25 years and 7 months.

He rose responsive to his country's call

And gave for her his best, his life, his all.

Inserted by his loving father and mother, brother (Charlie), sisters (May, Rose and Grace).

(Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga, NSW – 25 September, 1923)

ROLL OF HONOUR

RESSO – In sad but loving memory of our son and brother (Private Robert William Resso) 54th Battalion, who died in The Priory Hospital, Cheltenham on September 25, 1918, from the effect of wounds received on September 1, 1918 at Peronne.

Far away, somewhere in France,
He nobly fought and fell;
His life he gave, your life to save,
That you know, we need not tell.

- Inserted by his loving father and mother, brother (Charlie), sisters (May, Rose and Grace).

(Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga, NSW – 25 September, 1924)

HONOR ROLL

RESSO – In loving memory of Robert William Resso, who died in Cheltenham on September 25, from wounds received at Peronne.

He rose responsive to his country's call
And gave for her his best - his life, his all.

Inserted by his loving father, brother and sisters.

(Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga, NSW – 25 September, 1925)

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 R. W. Resso does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

As Long As Life And Memory Last We Will Remember Thee

Cheltenham Cemetery, Gloucestershire, England

(Also known as Bouncer's Lance Cemetery and Prestbury Cemetery)

This cemetery contains burials of both wars. The 110 First World War graves are mainly of men who died in the local voluntary hospitals. The burials are scattered except for a small plot of 10 Australian graves. The Second World War burials number 71, half of them forming a war graves plot in the eastern part of the cemetery. There are 2 Polish war burials and a further 4 Non World War service burials within C.W.G.C. care in this cemetery. Cheltenham Crematorium is situated within the cemetery and 28 servicemen and women of the Second World War whose remains were cremated there are commemorated on bronze panels within the crematorium cloisters.

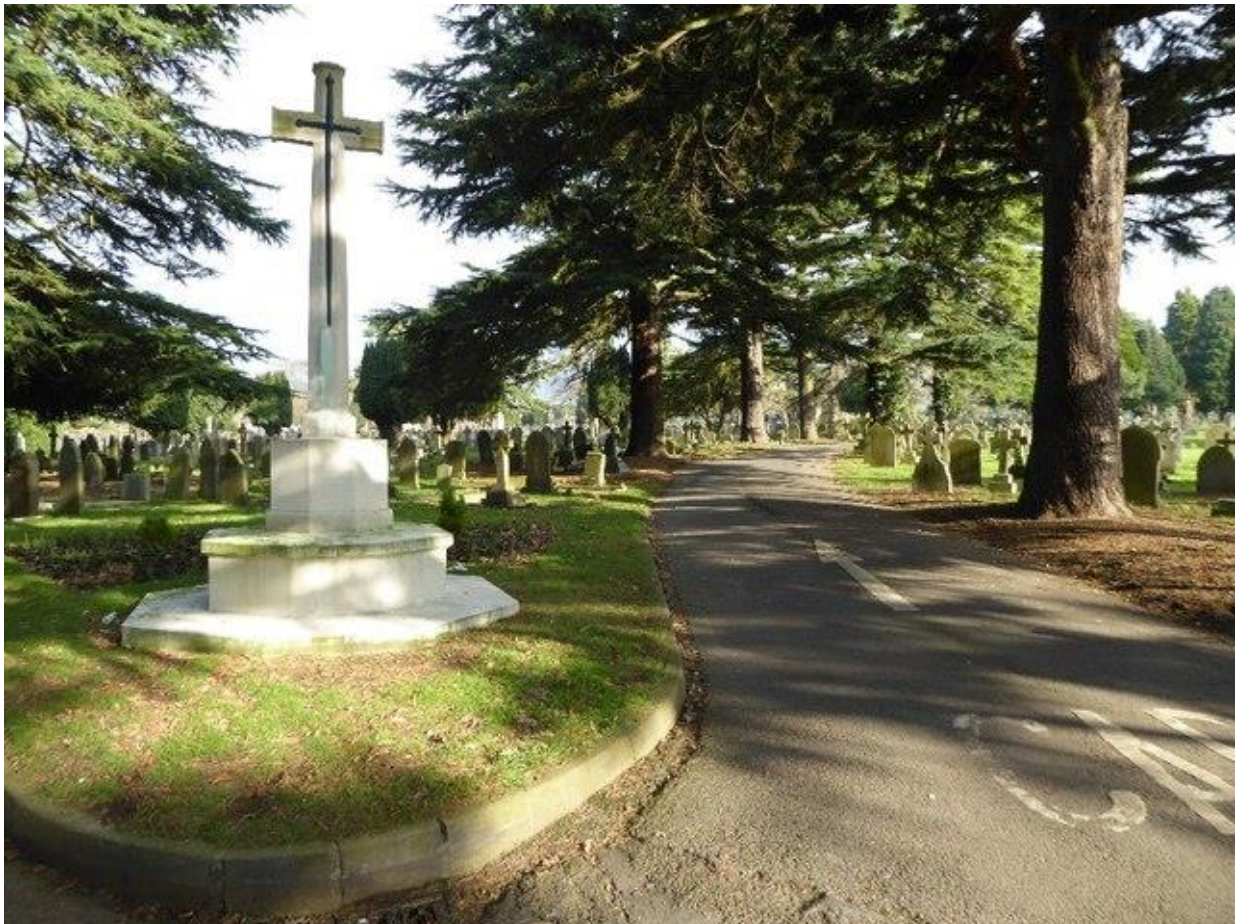
(Information from CWGC)



Entrance to Cheltenham Cemetery, Gloucestershire *(Photo by julia&keld – Find a Grave)*



War Graves in Cheltenham Cemetery, Gloucestershire *(Photo from CWGC)*

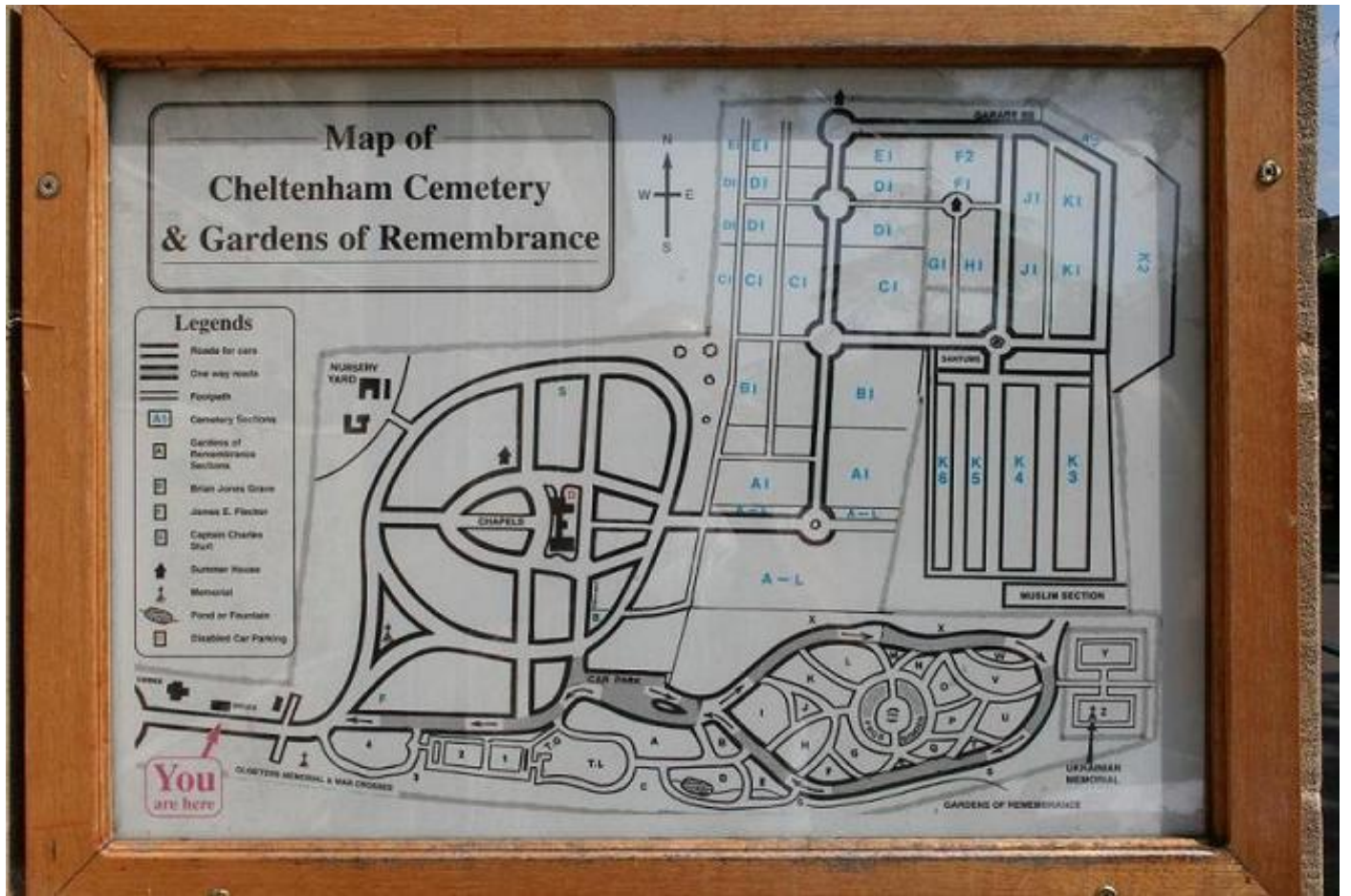


Cross of Sacrifice in Cheltenham Cemetery, Gloucestershire *(Photo by Philip Halling)*

Photo of Private R. W. Resso's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Cheltenham Cemetery, Gloucestershire, England.



(Photo by ColinA – Find a Grave)



Map of Cheltenham Cemetery, Gloucestershire (Photo by julia&keld – Find a Grave)