

**Botley Cemetery,
Botley, Oxfordshire, England
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2126 LANCE CPL.

J. P. RILEY

35TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

11TH SEPTEMBER, 1918 Age 32

A Beautiful Memory

Left Behind

His Duty

Bravely And Nobly Done

James Percy RILEY

James Percy Riley was born on 10th January, 1886 at Stewarts Brook, Scone, New South Wales to parents Cornelius William and Harriett Isabella Riley (nee Rose).

The 1913 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Upper Hunter, subdivision Stewart's Brook, NSW listed James Percy Riley, Grazier, of Stewart's Brook.

James Percy Riley was a 30 year old, single, Labourer from Stewart's Brook, Scone, NSW when he enlisted at West Maitland, NSW on 25th April, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2126 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr Cornelius Riley, Stewart's Brook, Scone, NSW.

Private James Percy Riley was posted to 36th Depot Battalion, West Maitland on 27th April, 1916 for recruit training.

Private James Percy Riley embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Anchises (A68)* on 24th August, 1916 with the 9th Infantry Brigade, 36th Infantry Battalion, 3rd Reinforcements & disembarked at Devonport, England on 11th October, 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 James Percy Riley was sent to Hospital on 14th October, 1916 from 9th Training Battalion, Codford Camp, Wiltshire, England. He was sent sick to Sutton Veny Hospital on 3rd November, 1916 then marched into 3rd Divisional Amalgamated Training Battalion the same day.

Private James Percy Riley was marched out to 36th Battalion at Larkhill from Reinforcements on 11th November, 1916 & taken on strength of 36th Battalion on the same day.

Private James Percy Riley proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 22nd November, 1916.

Private James Percy Riley was wounded in action on 18th February, 1917. He was admitted to 10th Australian Field Ambulance on 18th February, 1917 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to back. Private Riley was transferred & admitted to 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station on 18th February, 1917 then transferred on 21st February, 1917 to No. 10 Ambulance Train. He embarked for England from Boulogne on 26th February, 1917 on Hospital Ship *Princess Elizabeth* from 3rd Canadian General Hospital.

War Diary – 36th Battalion

Armentieres 18-2-17 – Were relieved by 34th Battalion at 5 am & proceeded to billets in Armentieres.

.....

36th Battalion Routine Order No. 256

In the Field – 23rd February 1917

.....

STRUCK OFF STRENGTH 1310. The following N.C.O.'s and men being Casualties and in Hospital outside Divisional Area struck off Strength from date set opposite their names:

.....

2126 Pte Riley J. P. "D" 2ACCS 18-2-17

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private James Percy Riley was admitted to Norfolk War Hospital, Thorpe, Norwich, England on 26th February, 1917 with GSW to back. He was transferred to 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford on 15th March, 1917.

Private James Percy Riley was discharged to furlo from 23rd March, 1917 to 7th April, 1917 & was then to report to Perham Downs.

Private James Percy Riley was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire, England on 30th March, 1917. He was medically classified as B1 A3 (fit for overseas training camp in 2 to 3 weeks).

Private James Percy Riley was transferred to 62nd Battalion on 25th April, 1917 then marched out to Windmill Hill Camp from No. 1 Command Depot on 26th April, 1917.

Private James Percy Riley proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 23rd August, 1917 to reinforce 3rd Division. He was marched in to 3rd A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Rouelles, France on 24th August, 1917. Private Riley was marched out from 3rd A.D.B.D. on 31st August, 1917 & taken on strength of 36th Battalion in France on 1st September, 1917 from 62nd Battalion.

Private James Percy Riley was appointed Lance Corporal with 36th Battalion on 19th February, 1918.

Lance Corporal James Percy Riley was on leave to UK from 2nd March, 1918 & rejoined from leave on 21st March, 1918.

36th Battalion

The 36th Battalion was raised at Broadmeadow Camp, in Newcastle, New South Wales in February 1916. The bulk of the battalion's recruits had been enlisted as a result of a recruiting drive conducted amongst the rifle clubs of New South Wales by the Minister for Public Information in the New South Wales government, Ambrose Carmichael. Thus, the battalion became known as "Carmichael's Thousand". Carmichael led by example and enlisted as well, serving in the battalion as a captain.

The 36th Battalion became part of the 9th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division. It left Sydney, bound for the United Kingdom on 13 May 1916. Arriving there in early July, the battalion spent the next four months in training. It crossed to France in late November, and moved into the trenches of the Western Front for the first time on 4 December, just in time for the onset of the terrible winter of 1916-17.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Lance Corporal James Percy Riley was transferred to 35th Battalion on 30th April, 1918 in France from 36th Battalion. He was taken on strength of 35th Battalion the same day.

Lance Corporal James Percy Riley was promoted to Temporary Corporal on 17th May, 1918 with 35th Battalion vice L/Sergeant Sutherland evacuated sick.

Temporary Corporal James Percy Riley was sent to Lewis Gun School on 3rd July, 1918. He reverted to the rank of Lance Corporal on 10th July, 1918 on the return to duty of L/Sergeant Sutherland. Lance Corporal Riley rejoined his Battalion on 24th July, 1918.

Lance Corporal James Percy Riley was promoted to Temporary Corporal on 5th August, 1918 while in France.

Temporary Corporal James Percy Riley was wounded in action (2nd occasion) on 22nd August, 1918. He was admitted to 9th Australian Field Ambulance on 22nd August, 1918 with shrapnel wounds to thigh & his rank reverted to Lance Corporal on being evacuated on 22nd August, 1918. Lance Corporal Riley was admitted to 8th General Hospital at Rouen on 27th August, 1918 with shrapnel wounds to thigh. He was transferred to England on Hospital Ship *Grantully Castle* on 2nd September, 1918.

35th Battalion

The 35th Battalion was formed in December 1915 in Newcastle, New South Wales. The bulk of the battalion's recruits were drawn from the Newcastle region and thus it was dubbed "Newcastle's Own". Reflecting the demographics of the area, there were a high proportion of miners among the battalion's original members.

The 35th Battalion became part of the 9th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division.....When the German Army launched its last great offensive in the spring of 1918, the battalion was part of the force deployed to defend the approaches to Amiens around Villers-Bretonneux. It took part in a counter-attack at Hangard Wood on 30 March, and helped to defeat a major drive on Villers-Bretonneux on 4 April. The desperate nature of the fighting at this time

is revealed by the fact that the 35th Battalion suffered nearly 70 per cent casualties during these operations.

Later in 1918, the 35th also played a role in the Allies' own offensive. It took part in the battle of Amiens on 8 August; fought several small battles during the rapid advance that followed; and at the end of September provided reserves for the joint Australian-American operation that breached the Hindenburg Line, thus sealing Germany's defeat. The 35th Battalion disbanded in March 1919.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 35th Battalion

BRAY – 22/8/18

Approach march started at 2.15 am. Moonlight night. Enemy very quiet & all coys got in position safely by 3.30 am. About 3.45 am the enemy opened a heavy barrage along the whole of our front & kept it up till a few minutes before zero which was at 4.45 am. The enemy put down a counter-barrage almost at the same time as ours & kept it going till our first objective was reached, when it slackened. (see App. 29) The day was warm & bright. Bn Hd Qrs was moved to large dugout in Copse at L14b13 at 11 am. & was ordered to move back to original place at 3 pm & was finally established in the Copse at 6 pm. At 5.15 pm parties of the enemy with guns could be seen advancing from CEYLON WOOD & at 5.45 pm a very weak counter attack developed on our left flank, the 33rd Bn's post in CHALK PITT held up the left of attack, but the 141st & 142nd Bdes, B.E.F. retired for no reason at all & necessitated a defensive flank being formed by 34th Bn. All quietened down at dusk & nothing further developed.

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REVERSIONS 594. 2126 T.Cpl J. P. RILEY (D. Coy) reverts to his permanent rank (L/Cpl) on being evacuated wounded. Dated 22.8.18

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Lance Corporal James Percy Riley was admitted to 3rd Southern General Hospital at Oxford, England on 3rd September, 1918 seriously ill with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to left thigh & fractured femur. The Hospital Admissions form records the following: "*Admitted with Comp Fract 12 days old. Thigh very swollen wds opened & gangrenous hamstrings excised. 6-9-18 Gangrene extended – Thigh amputated & as much muscle as possible excised but condition too bad to be as radical as necessary. Died of shock without regaining consciousness 6 hours after operation.*"

Lance Corporal James Percy Riley died at 8.30 pm on 11th September, 1918 at 3rd Southern General Hospital (Cowley Section) at Oxford, England from wounds received in action – GSW left thigh & amputation.

A Telegram was sent from Oxford to Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London on 12th September, 1918 advising that No. 2126 L/Cpl J. Riley had died last evening. The address of nearest friend in England was Miss Charlton, 138 Milburn St., Carlisle, Cumberland who was present at the death. An autopsy was to be performed.

A death for James P. Riley, aged 32, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of Headington, Oxfordshire, England.

Lance Corporal James Percy Riley was buried on 16th September, 1918 in Botley Cemetery, Botley, Oxfordshire, England – Plot number 11. 119 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Lance Corporal James Percy Riley - *Coffin was good polished Elm. 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 beautiful wreaths, sent by, Miss Edie Charlton, and Mr & Mrs Charlton, and family. The burial service was conducted at the graveside by the Rev: Napier Clovering and the "Last Post" was sounded. Captain Simmons represented the 1st Southern General Hospital, Oxford. The grave will be turfed and an oak cross will be erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Names of relatives or friends present at the Funeral: (Friends) Miss Charlton, 138 Milbourne Street, Carlisle, Scotland. Mrs Whitmore, 202 Cowley Road, Oxford.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Lance Corporal James Percy Riley contains a letter from Effie White, Matron, Cowley Section, 3rd Southern General Hospital, Oxford : *"Pte J. P. Riley, A.I.F. had a compound fracture of femur also gas gangrene from which he died. The Sister and Nurses speak very highly of the patient way he bore his suffering, and of his pluck and bravery. I need not tell you that everything was done that we possibly could do – at the last he passed quietly away. A friend of his was with him, she seemed a nice girl, and felt his death very much. He was buried at Botley Cemetery, just outside the City where we have a corner for our men who pass away in the 3rd Southern General. The funeral was simple and impressive and the Chaplain tells me the "firing part" consisted of Australian Cadets, who are training at Oxford – also a special representative from the Australian Headquarters was present.*

We think a lot of the Australian boys, who have a very warm corner in our hearts – they are always so cheerful and bright and make the best of everything –and we have a real sorrow and sympathy for our Sisters Overseas, who will never see their boys again – but I feel sure they know we do our utmost for them."

Newspaper item – The Scone Advocate, NSW – 8 November, 1918:

THE LATE L.CORPL. PERCY RILEY

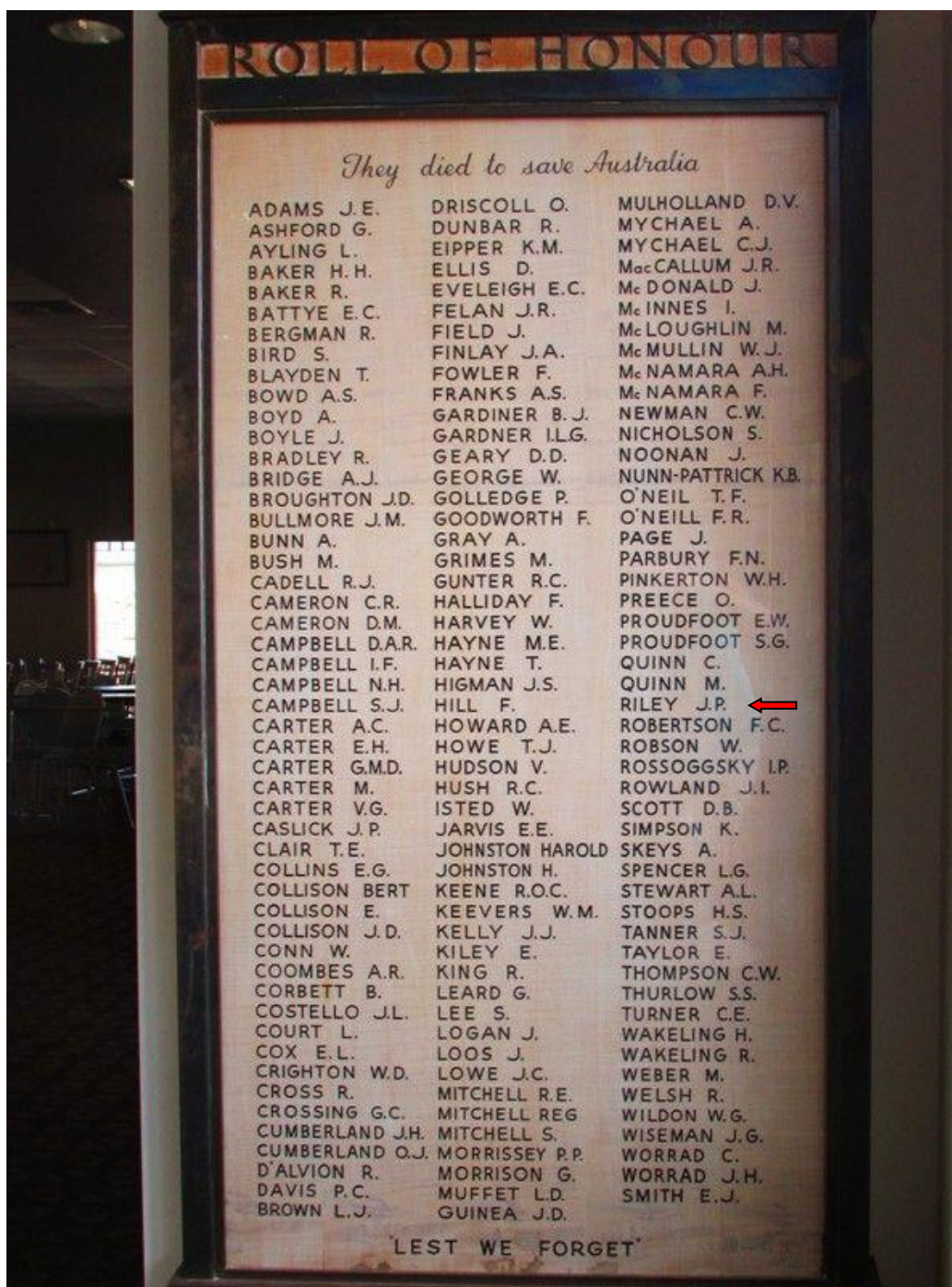
Mr Con. Riley, of Stewarts Brook, is in receipt of the following letter apropos of his son, Percy, from Lieut. R. W. Johnson, M.R..C., of the U.S. Army, written from the 3rd Southern General Hospital, Oxford (England) , under date September 6 last: "Your son, L.-Corpl. Riley, is a patient of mine, and I am writing to tell you a little of his condition, though I realise that my letter will not arrive until the battle we are helping him to fight for his life is decided. Just at present his condition is very critical, as he was very badly wounded. His left thigh and bone were shattered by a bullet at close range, so that the bone and soft parts were extensively injured; but after, an operation at the C.C.S. (casualty clearing station) in France it was hoped that his leg would be saved. The wound, however, became infected, and in the last couple of days gas gangrene, set in. To-day, Colonel Parker, our chief surgeon, operated on him, and all the infected tissue was cut away. Had he been in a condition to stand an amputation, it would have been done, but we had to limit our action for the present. The leg will probably have to be sacrificed later, but then he will be in better shape and the risk will be much reduced or even done away. Have just came in from seeing him, and he has rallied very well, though, as I say, he is still in a critical condition. I am very much in hopes, after seeing him, that his splendid physical condition and resolute courage and nerve will pull him through where a weaker man's chance would be nothing. You may rest assured that everything in our power is being done to help him in his fight, not only because he is a wounded soldier, but also because his wonderful courage, and uncomplaining patience have won our personal affection and have added to our determination to pull him through. In this I speak for the nurses as well as Colonel Parker and myself, and since you are so far away and helpless to aid him, it may be of comfort to you to know that your boy is not really among strangers, but with friends to help him. Personally, I cannot speak too highly of his pluck and endurance, though fortunately in cases like these where the battle is short and desperate, we are able to take the edge off the suffering, and I am honest, in saying that while the dressing is painful, he is not more than slightly uncomfortable most of the time and is sleeping quite well. There is little more that I can add, except that you have a son to be justly proud of, both in action at the front and in the more trying and wearisome battle he is fighting in our hospital. I wish you both no better fortune than that he gets back to the 'range' safely, and to the life that made him the fine soldier he is both in the field and in the cot. I shall try and write you again in a few days of his progress, and send you good news, though I know that the cable will have brought, you the story long before me."

In a letter written from hospital to his parents, the brave lad states that he was wounded in the taking of Bray, on the Somme, in the early morning of 8th August. He remarks that his wound, certainly a bad one, and which was giving him much pain, would necessitate his having to remain in hospital for at least three months. But the one great consolation he found was that the war would end within the next twelve months. He was writing, he went on, under difficulties, as he was on the broad of his back. Both the paper and the envelope he secured from a captured German. "We came down from Flanders the latter end of March," he continued, "and stopped the brutal Huns', advance at Villers Brettoneaux early in April. We were rushed up in trains, motor lorries, and on foot, our trip occupying days, and were finally put in the thick of it at Villers. We have held the line ever since between Albert and Hangard Wood, and also have taken an active part in the big offensive ever since. The 'Yanks' are good men, and are using the Aussies to give them an idea of things as they are inexperienced. The Germans cannot hang out much longer, and the summer should just about pull them up. If that doesn't, the Yanks will."

Lance Corporal James Percy Riley was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Lance Corporal Riley's father - Mr C. Riley, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent February, 1923).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Lance Corporal James Percy Riley – service number 2126, aged 32, of 35th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Cornelius and Harriett Riley, of Stewarts Brook, Scone, New South Wales.

J. P. Riley is remembered on the Scone RSL Club Roll of Honour, located in Scone RSL Club, 71 Guernsey Street, Scone, NSW.



Scone RSL Club Roll of Honour (Photo from Monument Australia)

J. P. Riley is remembered on the Scone War Memorial, located in front of War Memorial Pool, New England Highway & Guernsey Street, Scone, NSW.



Scone War Memorial (Photo from Monument Australia)

J. P. Riley is remembered on the Scone Memorial Arch, located in front of Soldiers' Memorial School of Arts, 206 Kelly Street (New England Highway), Scone, NSW.



Scone Memorial Arch (Photos from Monument Australia)

Lance Corporal J. P. Riley is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 126.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(57 pages of Lance Corporal James Percy Riley'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 *(A selection of newspaper notices):*

Further local recruits: - Roy Jack Dodds, Ray H. Harper (returned ill, and discharged, but again accepted), Hercules Jas. Johnston, Herbert H. Hillier and James Percy Riley, the latter two being from Stewarts Brook.

(The Scone Advocate, NSW – 24 March, 1916)

ROLL OF HONOR

Mr. Con. Riley, of Stewarts Brook, who, as mentioned in a previous Issue, sustained the loss of his son, Lance-Corpl. James Percy Riley, in the fighting in France, has now been officially apprised that the deceased succumbed whilst under an operation which was necessary owing to his having been wounded in the thigh. The late L. Corpl. Riley, who had previously been wounded, had been in the firing line since 2nd March last.

(The Scone Advocate, NSW – 1 October, 1918)

Return Thanks

Mr and Mrs Con. Riley and FAMILY, of Stewarts Brook, desire to return sincere THANKS to all kind friend for letters and expressions of sympathy in their late sad bereavement in the death in France of their son and brother, Lance-Corporal James Percy Riley.

(The Scone Advocate, NSW – 1 October, 1918)

Church Services

Church of England, Gundy

Sunday, October 13th – Stewarts Brook 10.30 am., H.C. (Memorial Service for L-Cpl. J. P. Riley)

(The Scone Advocate, NSW – 8 October, 1918)

Latest Casualty List

NAMES OF NORTHER MEN

The 433rd casualty list contains the following names;-

Died from wounds: Corp J. P. Riley (Scone)

(Daily Observer, Tamworth, NSW – 15 October, 1918)

Stewarts Brook

On Sunday afternoon last, the marble font erected by Mr and Mrs Riley and family to the memory of their eldest son, Lance-Corporal James Percy Riley, who died of wounds received in battle on 11th September, 1918, was unveiled during the Church of England service, by the Rector, the E. Bull. Prior to the dedication, the rev. gentleman expressed his deepest sympathy for the bereaved family, in which he was joined by the whole congregation, which was a very large one, the seating capacity of the Church being taxed to the uttermost. After speaking of the life and character of the late Lance-Corporal Riley, which the rev. gentleman did in sympathetic language, the ceremony of unveiling the font took place. The rev. gentleman said : 'I unveil this font and dedicate it to the glory of God and His Church, in memory of the late Lance-Corporal James Percy Riley, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.' Prayers were then said, and the solemn ceremony closed.

(The Scone Advocate, NSW – 16 May, 1919)

ROLL OF HONOR

RILEY – In loving memory of our dear brother, L.-Corp. James Percy Riley, No. 2126, L.M.G., 35th Batt., late 36th, died of wounds, 11th September, 1918.

The memory of his upright ways

Will linger with us all our days.

Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Mattie and Ted Charlton, Aberdeen.

(The Daily Telegraph, Sydney, NSW – 16 September, 1919)

ROLL OF HONOUR

RILEY – In loving memory of our dear brother, L.-Corp. James Percy Riley, No. 2126, L.M.G., 35th Batt., late 36th, died of wounds, 11th September, 1918. Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Mattie and Ted. Charlton, Aberdeen.

(The Daily Telegraph, Sydney, NSW – 11 September, 1920)

ROLL OF HONOUR

RILEY – In loving memory of our dear brother, No. 2126 Corporal J. P. RILEY, 36th Battalion, A.I.F., died of wounds, 11th September, 1918, at Oxford, England.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on his soul.

Sunshine passes, shadows fall,
But love and remembrance outcast all.

Inserted by his loving brother, Jack, late A.I.F.

(The Scone Advocate, NSW – 13 September, 1921)

ROLL OF HONOUR

RILEY – In loving memory of our dear son, and brother, Lance-Corporal JAMES PERCY RILEY, who died of wounds received in battle in France, 11th September, 1918, 3rd General Hospital, Oxford, England.

Over the sea our sad thought roam
To where our dear son sleeps far from home.
In a soldier's grave he is sleeping,
One of the bravest and best,
In our hearts he will live for ever,
For we know he is only at rest.
In life missed, in memory ever present.

Inserted by his ever-loving parents, C. and H. Riley, and sister, Lulu.

RILEY – In loving memory of my dear brother, Lance-Corporal JAMES PERCY RILEY, who died of wounds received in battle in France, 11th September, 1918, 3rd General Hospital, Oxford, England.

He sleeps not in his native land,
But 'neath the foreign skies;
Far from those who loved him best,
In a hero's grave he lies.

Inserted by his ever fond brother, Hercules.

RILEY – In loving memory of my dear brother, Corporal JAMES PERCY RILEY, who died of wounds, in England, 11th September, 1918.

Deep in my heart is a picture
Of my brother who has gone to rest;

In memory's fame I shall keep it,
Because he was one of the best.

Inserted by his fond brother, Jack H. Riley.

RILEY – In loving memory of our dear brother, Corporal JAMES PERCY RILEY, who died of wounds 11th September, 1918, at Oxford, England.

What more? What more dost thou require?

What more was left to give or take?

Yet more there was. Write this in fire!

“He gave his life for his country's sake.”

Last gift of all. With courage fine.

Though far from stars that watched his birth –

He fell. Write then his final line:

“He gave his clay to alien earth.”

Inserted by Elsie and Charlie Taylor, Aberdeen.

RILEY – Lance-Corporal JAMES PERCY RILEY, who died of wounds 11th September, 1918, now resting in Bottley Cemetery, Oxford, England.

But never in vain does a brave man fall,

When he dies as a brave man should;

In the flower of his manhood, daring all,

That a foul wrong be withstood.

Always remembered by his loving sister and brother-in-law, M.A. and D. G. McPhee.

RILEY – In loving memory of our dear brother, Lance-Corporal J. P. RILEY, who died of wounds, Oxford, England, 11th September, 1918.

Dearer to memory than words can tell

Are the thought of a brother we loved so well.

And those who loved him only know

How much we lost four years ago.

And when we come where you have stepped,

We will wonder why we've wept.

Inserted by his fond sister and brother-in-law, Mabel and Eric.

(The Scone Advocate, NSW – 12 September, 1922)

IN MEMORIAM

RILEY – In loving memory of our dear brother, PERCY, who died of wounds 11th September, 1918, at Oxford.

There is someone who misses you sadly,

Finds the years long since you went,

There is someone who thinks of you dearly,

And tries to be brave and content.

You have gone from this earth and its toiling,
Relieved from all sorrow and pain,
And soon with our Saviour in heaven,
We will meet our loved ones again.

Never forgotten by his sister and brother, Mary and D. McPhee

(The Scone Advocate, NSW – 14 September, 1923)

ROLL OF HONOUR

RILEY – In loving memory of our dear son, Corporal J. P. RILEY, who died of wounds in France on 11th September, 1918.

No one knows the silent heart ache,
Only those can tell
Who have lost a darling son
Without a last farewell.

Inserted by his loving parents, Con. and Harriett Riley.

RILEY – In loving memory of our dear brother, JAMES PERCY RILEY, who died in Oxford Hospital, September 11th, 1918, through wounds received while on active service.

You are not forgotten, dearest brother,
'Tis sweet to breathe your name;
In life we loved you dearly,
In death we do the same.

Never forgotten by Sister Mabel and Eric Hopping.

(The Scone Advocate, NSW – 9 September, 1924)

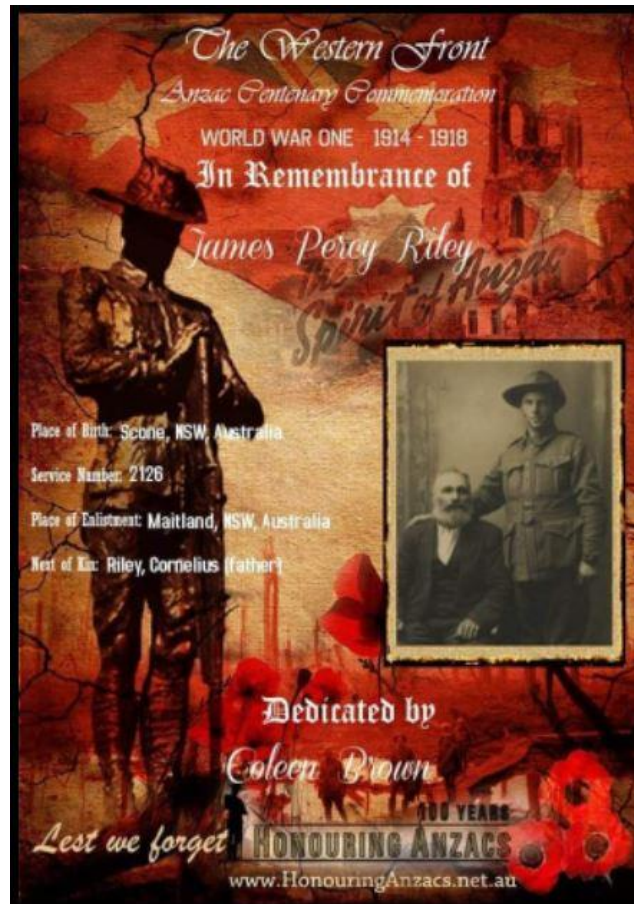
IN MEMORIAM

RILEY – In memory of L. Corporal James Percy Riley, died of wounds, 11th September, 1918, resting in Bottley Cemetery, Oxford, England.

His memory, still so sweet and dear,
Is treasured still with love sincere.

Inserted by his fond parents, C. and H. Riley, and sisters, Martha, Mary and Lulu.

(The Scone Advocate, NSW – 17 September, 1926)



(Photo courtesy of Audrey Jones)





(Percy Riley (left) & Stan Ninness (right) – Best Friends)



Two Brothers Remembered

Jack and Percy Riley from Stewarts Brook were only two kilometres apart on the Western Front when they were injured within two days of each other.

Bruce Brown, a veteran of Vietnam, told the story of his great-uncles during the commemorative service of Armistice Day in Scene:



Bruce Brown remembered his great-uncle James Percy Riley, from Stewarts Brook, who fought on the western front.

Both Percy and Jack Riley were on active service at the Battle of Amiens on August 8, 1918 although they were unaware they were both so close.

Percy Riley was in the 35th Battalion, 9th Brigade, 3rd Division and Jack Riley was in the 4th Battalion, 12th Brigade, 4th Division.

The Battle of Amiens map shows the location of the 9th and the 12th Brigades located just to the south of Hamel village and next to each other on the map.

Also the 3rd and 4th Division command locations to the west of Hamel village. Both the Brigades would have been within a kilometre or so of each other.

So it is unfortunate that the brothers never met in 1918 and never saw each other again.

James Percy Riley enlisted in April 1916 and arrived in France on October 22, 1916 with the 36th Battalion, 9th Brigade of the 3rd Division. In late November 1916 the 36th Battalion moved into the trenches of the western front in northern France just before winter of 1916-17. On February 18, 1917, he was wounded in the back and evacuated to England.

On August 24, 1917 he returned to the 36th Battalion located on Ypres Salient sector of Belgium and in October fought in the Battle of Passchendaele.

From November 1917 until March 1918 the 36th Battalion alternated between periods of rest, training, labouring and service on the western line and in March 1918 moved south to the Somme River and was deployed to defence the approaches to Amiens around Villers Bretonneux, it helped defeat a major drive on Villers Bretonneux on April 4, 1918.

The 36th Battalion was disbanded on April 30, due to heavy losses in the 3rd Division, so that other Battalions could be reinforced.

On April 30, James Percy Riley transferred to the 35th Battalion, 3rd Division. On August 8, the 35th Battalion took part in the battle of Amiens and fought several other battles during the rapid advance of the allies that followed.

On August 24 he was wounded, with a gunshot to the left thigh and was evacuated to Oxford, England. He died on September 11, 1918 at the Southern General Hospital in Oxford after an operation and the amputation of his left leg. James Percy Riley is buried at Botley Cemetery Oxford.

John Hampton Riley, uncle Jack, enlisted on May 8, 1917 and departed Australia on October 31 in the 3rd Battalion. He arrived in England in December 1917 where he stayed until he departed for France in 1918.

Jack Riley arrived in France on June 24, 1918 and was taken on strength on July 3, 1918 in the 45th Battalion. On August 8, the 45th Division was involved in the allied counter offensive at the battle of Amiens. On the first day of this battle his Battalion captured 400 German prisoners, 30 artillery pieces and 18 machine guns. August 8 became known as the “blackest day of the German army” and initiated a German retreat eastwards to the defensive barrier known as the Hindenburg line.

During August the Battalion moved east as the Germans retreated and on August 21 the 45th Battalion was located near Lihons, which is a small town located 20 kilometres east of Villers Betonneux.

Jack Riley was wounded on August 21 and evacuated to the Southern General Hospital at Birmingham, England. He was suffering debility and asthma and returned to Australia in February 1919 and discharged on March 13, 1919.

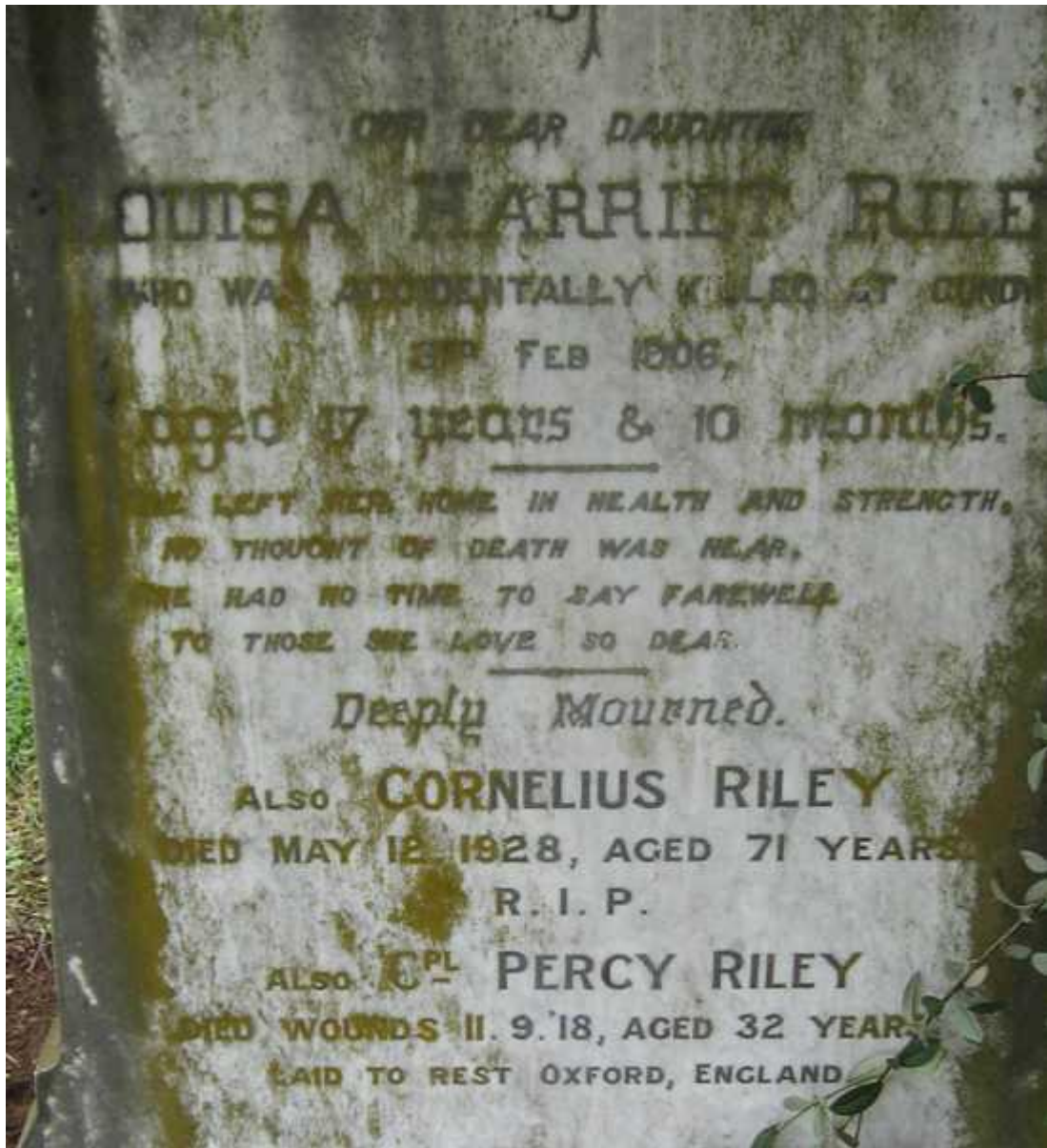
Although injured in August his family was unaware where he was or how badly injured until his father expressed concern about his state of health and whereabouts in December 1918. He also wished to advise him of Percy’s death.

(Scone.com.au – November 11, 2018)

Corporal Percy Riley is remembered on the family headstone at Gundy General Cemetery, New South Wales.



(Photo by Red – Find a Grave)



(Photo by Peter Jones – Find a Grave)



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)

Lance Corporal J. P. Riley does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

A Beautiful Memory Left Behind

His Duty Bravely And Nobly Done

Botley Cemetery, Botley, Oxfordshire, England

During the two world wars, the United Kingdom became an island fortress used for training troops and launching land, sea and air operations around the globe. There are more than 170,000 Commonwealth war graves in the United Kingdom, many being those of servicemen and women killed on active service, or who later succumbed to wounds. Others died in training accidents, or because of sickness or disease. The graves, many of them privately owned and marked by private memorials, will be found in more than 12,000 cemeteries and churchyards.

During the First World War, the 3rd Southern General Hospital (an Oxfordshire Territorial Unit) was housed in the Examination Schools and a number of other buildings in Oxford. Oxford (Botley) Cemetery contains 156 burials from the First World War, all in the war graves plot in section I/1. The cemetery was designated a Royal Air Force regional cemetery during the Second World War and was used by RAF stations in Berkshire and neighbouring counties. Practically all of the 516 Second World War burials (one of them unidentified) are in the war graves plot, which was extended from the section used during the First World War. The architectural features of the plot were designed by Edward Maufe, ARA. In addition to the Commonwealth war graves, Oxford (Botley) Cemetery contains almost 70 war graves of other nationalities.

There are eight Australian World War 1 War Graves.

(Information from CWGC)



(Photo by Stephen Potts – Find a Grave)



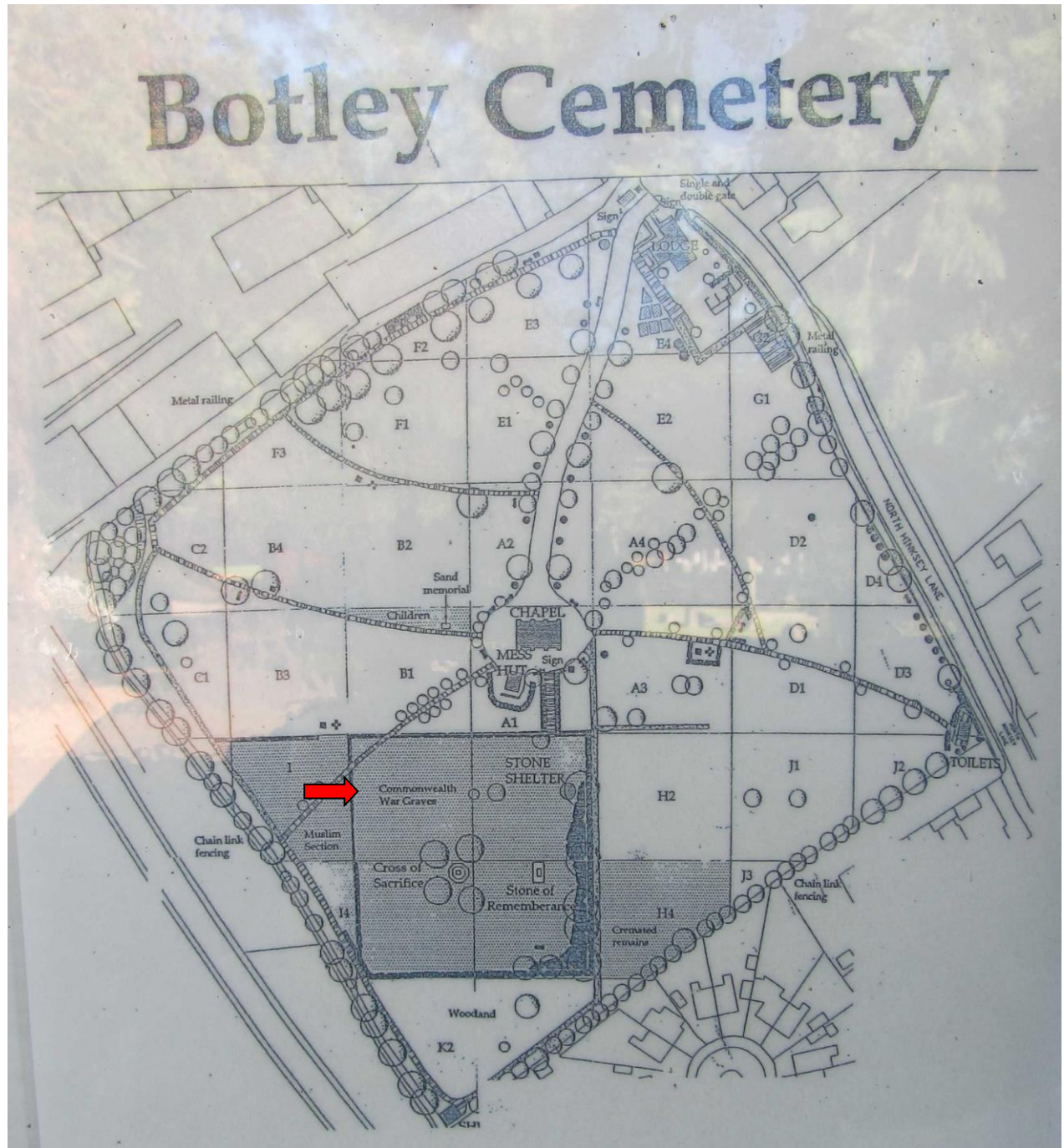
Botley Cemetery *(Photos from CWGC)*



Photo of Lance Corporal J. P. Riley's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Botley Cemetery, Botley, Oxfordshire, England.



(Photo by Stephen Potts – Find a Grave)

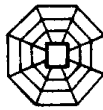


(Maps by Kevin Smith – Find a Grave)



STONE OF
REMEMBRANCE

PLOT H. 3



CROSS OF
SACRIFICE

PLOT I. 2



SHELTER
REGISTER
BOX

PLOT H. 1

1914-1918
WAR
BURIALS

PLOT I.1

GERMAN
BURIALS

ITALIAN
BURIALS

GERMAN
BURIALS

E
N
T
R
A
N
C
E

OXFORD (BOTLEY) CEMETERY
WAR GRAVES PLOT