

**Brookwood Military Cemetery,
Brookwood, Surrey, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



5189 PRIVATE

G. H. ROOM

58TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

28TH OCTOBER, 1917 Age 22

Our Hero

So Dearly Loved

So Sadly Missed

Mother, Brothers, Sisters

Gordon Hamilton ROOM

Gordon Hamilton Room was born at Ballarat, Victoria on 13th May, 1894 to parents Thomas Samuel & Margaret Anne Room (nee Hamilton).

Gordon Hamilton Room attended Colac State School, Victoria.

Gordon Hamilton Room was a 22 year old, single, Bootmaker (as per Embarkation Roll. He listed his trade as Boot repairer on his Attestation Papers) from Heese Street, Colac, Victoria when he enlisted on 15th January, 1916 in Melbourne, Victoria with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs M. Room, Hesse Street, Colac, Victoria.

Private Gordon Hamilton Room was posted to "B" Company, 23rd (Depot) Battalion at Royal Park on 15th January, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to "A" Company, 20th Depot Battalion at Castlemaine on 19th January or February (date stamped "Jan 18 1916" as date he left Royal Park & hand written "19-2-16" as the date he arrived at Castlemaine), 1916. Private Room was transferred on 18th March, 1916 to 5th Battalion 16th Reinforcements at Broadmeadows.

Private Gordon Hamilton Room, Service number 5189, embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Suffolk (A23)* on 1st April, 1916 with the 5th Infantry Battalion, 16th Reinforcements & disembarked at Suez on 11th May, 1916.

5th Battalion

The 5th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. Like the 6th, 7th and 8th Battalions it was recruited from Victoria and, together with these battalions, formed the 2nd Brigade.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Gordon Hamilton Room was transferred to 57th Battalion on 19th May, 1916 (One of the Statement of Service forms has the date as 24th May, 1916). He was taken on strength of 57th Battalion at Tel-el-Kebir on 19th May, 1916 from 5th Battalion. Private Room was reallocated from 2nd Training Battalion (6th Reinforcements to 5th Battalion) to 15th Training Battalion (as reinforcements to 57th Battalion) on 24th May, 1916.

57th Battalion

The 57th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 18 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 5th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 5th, the 57th was predominantly composed of men from the suburbs of Melbourne. The battalion became part of the 15th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Gordon Hamilton Room embarked from Alexandria on 21st June, 1916 on H.T. *Ivernian* to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 30th June, 1916. Private Room was marched out to his Unit from 5th A.D.B.D. on 14th September, 1916 & was taken on strength of 58th Battalion in France on 15th September, 1916.

Private Gordon Hamilton Room reported sick on 28th September, 1916. He was admitted to 15th Field Ambulance with P.U.O. (Pyrexia (fever) of unknown origin) then transferred on 29th September, 1916 & admitted to Divisional Rest Station with P.U.O. Private Room was discharged to his Unit on 4th October, 1916 & rejoined 58th Battalion in France the same day.

Private Gordon Hamilton Room reported sick on 5th June, 1917. He was admitted to 5th Divisional Rest Station on 5th June, 1917 with Trench Fever & was discharged on 13th June, 1917. Private Room rejoined his Unit on 21st June, 1917.

Private Gordon Hamilton Room was on Leave to England from 12th August, 1917 & rejoined from Leave on 25th August, 1917.

Private Gordon Hamilton Room was detached for duty on 15th October, 1917 to 15th Australian Machine Gun Company from 58th Battalion.

Private Gordon Hamilton Room was wounded in action on 18th October, 1917 while on detachment to 15th Machine Gun Company. He was admitted to 3rd Australian Field Ambulance then transferred to 10th Casualty Clearing Station on 18th October, 1917 with shrapnel wound/s to Head (fractured) & multiple burns to Face & Hands. Private Room was transferred to Ambulance Train on 19th October, 1917 & admitted to 83rd General Hospital at Boulogne, France on the same day with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) & burns to his Hands & Face. He embarked for England on 21st October, 1917 on Hospital Ship *Jan Breydel*.

58th Battalion

The 58th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 17 February 1916 as part of the expansion of the AIF. Roughly half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 6th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 6th, the 58th was predominantly composed of men from Victoria. The battalion became part of the 15th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

Having only arrived in France on 23 June, the 58th became embroiled in its first major battle on the Western Front at Fromelles on 19 July. The battle was a disaster. The 58th had the dual role of providing carrying parties and a reserve force. The reserve force (approximately half of the battalion) was ordered to attack late in the battle and was virtually annihilated by machine-gun fire; as a whole, the 58th suffered casualties equal to almost a third of its strength. Despite the grievous losses in its battalions, the 5th Division continued to man the front in the Fromelles sector for a further two months.

Early in 1917 the 58th battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, but it was spared from the assault. It did, however, defend gains made during the second battle of Bullecourt, between 9 and 12 May. Later in the year, the AIF's focus of operations switched to the Ypres sector in Belgium. The 58th's major battle here was at Polygon Wood on 26 September.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 58th Battalion

18th October, 1917:

Weather - Fine

10 am - Guides proceeded to OUDERDOM. Received warning message re move to OUDERDOM AREA.

1.30 pm – Received Brigade Order No. 124 (See Appendix No. 14)

2 pm – 58th Battalion passed starting point (CAFÉ BELGE X ROADS 29 B 7.5) ROUTE:- X roads H16D1.2 – road junction H14B4.8 – OUDERDOM.

4 pm – Bn arrived at OTTAWA CAMP (G30B4.6)

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Gordon Hamilton Room was admitted to 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth, London, England on 21st October, 1917 with G.S.W. to Jaw & Burns.

Private Gordon Hamilton Room died at 5.40 pm on 28th October, 1917 at 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth, London, England from wounds – G.S.W. to Head & Meningitis. The Report of Death of a Soldier (Army Form B. 2090) recorded that Private Gordon Hamilton Room was with “D” Company, 58th Battalion, A.I.F.

A death for Gordon H. Room, aged 23, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Wandsworth, London, England.

Private Gordon Hamilton Room was buried at 1 pm on 1st November, 1917 in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England – Australian Military Burial Ground - Plot number 179964.

From the burial report of Private Gordon Hamilton Room - Coffin was good polished Elm brass mountings. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military Funeral. The coffin was draped with the Australian Flag. Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers, under the command of an Officer, were supplied by the South African Regiment, stationed at Woking. The grave will be turfed immediately, and an oak cross will be erected by the A.I.F. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.

Base Records wrote to Mrs M. Room, Denning Lane, Tamworth, NSW on 29th March, 1923 stating that the site of her son's grave in Brookwood Military Cemetery had been officially registered as Plot 11 Row B Grave 3.

This is now recorded by CWGC as Memorial reference – XI. B. 3. Private Gordon Hamilton Room now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

A War Pension was granted to Margaret Ann Room, Hesse St, Colac, widowed mother of the late No 5189 Private Gordon Hamilton Room, 58th Battalion, in the sum of 40/- per fortnight from 3rd January, 1918.

Mrs M. Room, "Frostly", Heese Street, Colac, wrote to Base Records on 4th June, 1919 with the following letter: *"I am writing in regard to my late son's Kit & belongings late No 5189 Pte G. H. Room, 58th Battalion who paid the sacrifice on the 28th Oct 1917. I have not received as yet any word or anything belonging to him nor have I received my Mother's Badge others have got them in this district why not me if He had been spared to come back I would not have minded thanking you in anticipation for kind enquiries."*

Base Records replied to Mrs M. Room, "Frostly", Heese Street, Colac, Victoria on 10th June, 1919 advising: *"I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 4th instant and to state, no personal effects of your son, the late No. 5189 Private G. H. Room, 58th Battalion, have been returned to this Office to date but any coming to hand later will, in the nascence of testamentary instruction prescribing otherwise, be promptly forwarded to you. Your inquiry re badge has been referred to the Assistant Adjutant-General, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, for attention and reply to you direct."*

Base Records wrote to The District Finance Officer, 3rd District Base. Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, on 25th November, 1922 requesting the present address of No. 5189 Private G. H. Room, 58th Battalion (mother) Mrs M. Room, Denning Lane, Tamworth, NSW. (A request was also included for another soldier).

The District Finance Officer, 3rd District Base replied to Base Records on 1st December, 1922 quoting the same address for Private Room's mother - Mrs M. Room, Denning Lane, Tamworth, NSW.

Mrs M. Room, Denning Lane, Tamworth, wrote to Base Records on 21st December, 1922 with the following: *"This is to inform you having received notice of the Plaque that I am to receive it was on 30th September 1922. I got your letter but so far I have not received the Plaque as advised. I am letting you know."*

Private Gordon Hamilton Room was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Room's widowed mother - Mrs M. Room, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent December, 1921 & re-despatched January, 1922. Plaque sent September, 1922 & returned November, 1922. Mrs M. Room signed for Plaque in January, 1923).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Gordon Hamilton Room – service number 5189, aged 22, of 58th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Margaret Anne and the late Thomas Room, of Denning Lane, Tamworth, New South Wales. Native of Ballarat.

Private G. H. Room is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 166.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

G. Room is remembered on the St. John's Honour Roll, located in St. John's Church, 17 Hesse Street (Hesse & Pollock Streets), Colac, Victoria.

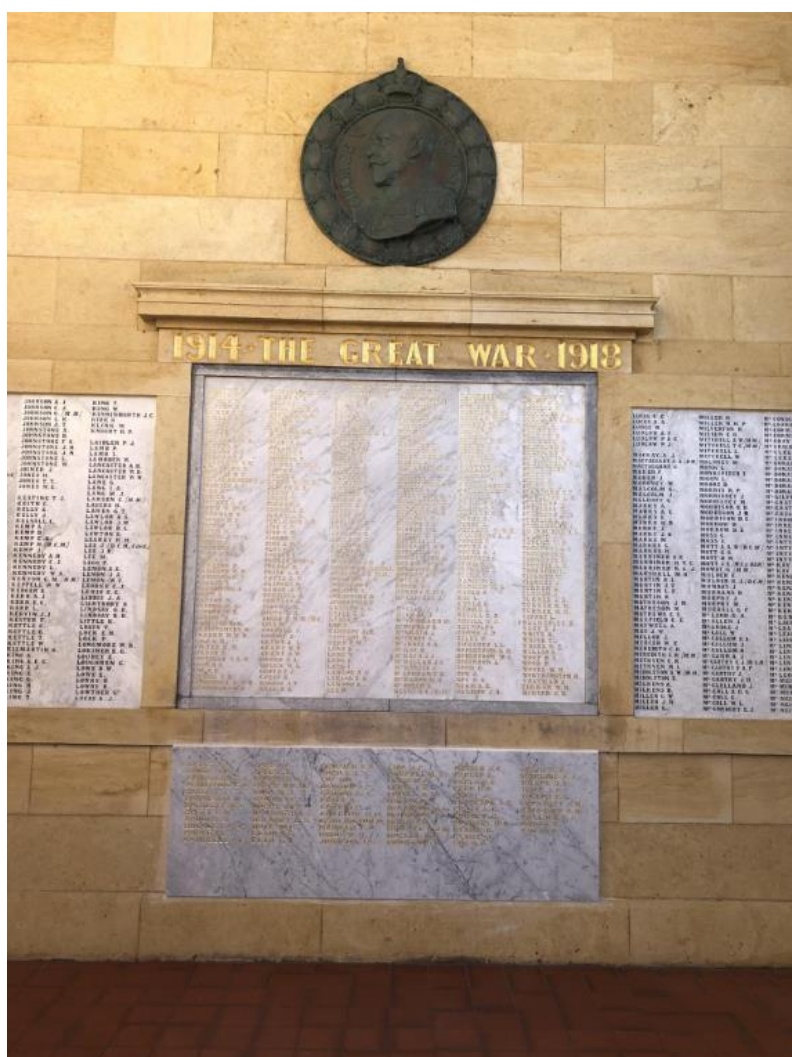


St. John's Honour Roll (Photos from Monument Australia – Sandra Brown)

G. Room is remembered on the Colac Soldiers' Memorial, located at Memorial Square, Murray Street, Colac, Victoria.



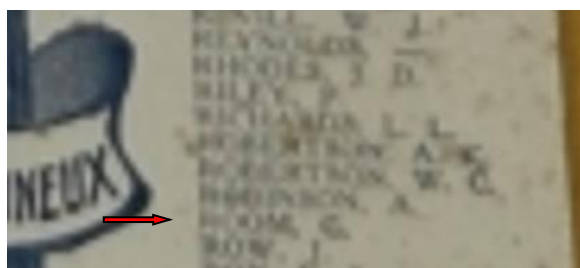
Colac Soldiers' Memorial (Photos from AWM Places of Pride)



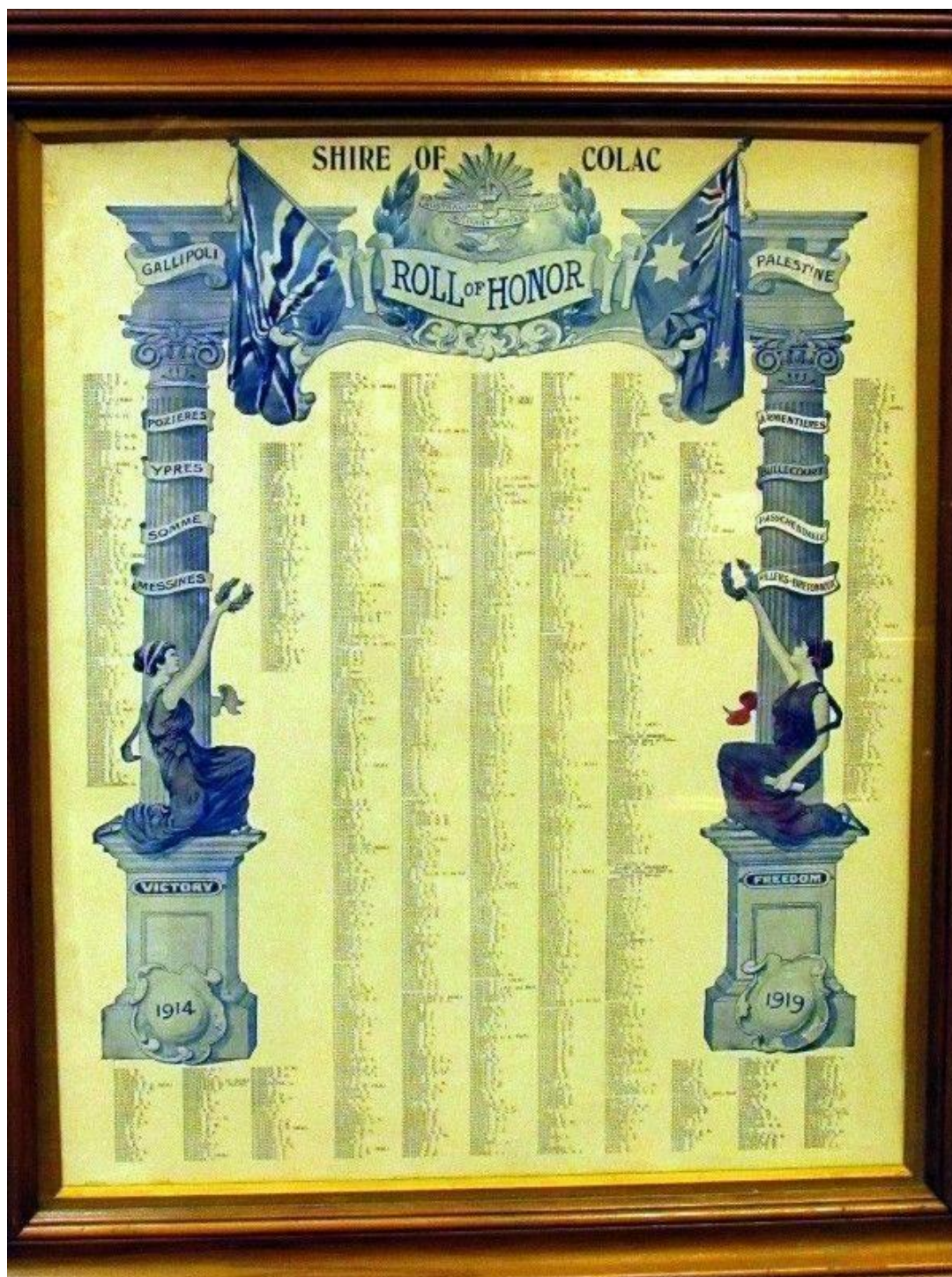
G. Room is remembered on the Shire of Colac Roll of Honour, located in Colac RSL Club, 21 Murray Street, Colac, Victoria.



Shire of Colac Roll of Honour (Photo from AWM Places of Pride – Arthur Garland)



G. Room is remembered on the Shire of Colac Roll of Honour. Another copy is located in Colac & District Historical Society's History Centre at Colac Performing Arts & Cultural Centre, Gellibrand & Rae Streets, Colac, Victoria.



Shire of Colac Roll of Honour (Photo from Monument Australia – Sandra Brown)

(63 pages of Private Gordon Hamilton Room'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) & National Archives



Newspaper Notices

RECRUITS

The following further enlistments have been made at the Shire Hall, Colac, viz.:-

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Gordon Hamilton Room, Colac

(*Colac Reformer*, Victoria – 7 August, 1915)

A WAR RELIC

An interesting relic of the Somme battle is on view in Mr W. C. Sydenham's window in Murray street, in the shape of a helmet of a Prussian Guard. It was picked up on the field, and sent to his mother by Private Gordon Room.

(*Colac Reformer*, Victoria – 21 June, 1917)

Private Jack McAllen who was formerly on the "Colac Herald" writing to a member of the staff from France on June 19th says:—"I will keep my news of this part of the world until I see you. Plenty to do at present and for the next few months, and then we may see the finish. There are lovely woods here, but more or less knocked about by shell-fire. It is nice to walk through them when we are out of the line. **Young Gordon Room is doing good work. Heard he had been recommended for conspicuous bravery in the recent fighting.** Lieut. Turner, from Nalangil, was killed. He was in my battalion. Alex. Watson was wounded, but only slightly, and he is back with us again. Was very sorry indeed to hear of poor Eddie Farrell's death. It nearly broke me up, because he was a great friend of mine. I have felt for some of my pals here but the other news hurt. However, these things only show us what a small part we play in the world. Eddie may be as well off now as we if we lived 100 years. I have not seen Les. Moon or Joe. McMahon for a long while. They are not in my division. Remember me to all who ever give me a thought."

(*The Colac Herald*, Victoria – 7 September, 1917)

CASUALTY

Mrs Room, of Colac, received the sad news on Tuesday that her son, Private Gordon Room, died on October 28th in the General Hospital, London, from gunshot wound in the head and meningitis. He was 25 years of age.

(*Colac Reformer*, Victoria – 8 November, 1917)

THE 365th AND 366th CASUALTY LISTS

DIED OF WOUNDS

Private G. H. Room, Colac

(*The Mildura Cultivator*, Victoria – 12 December, 1917)

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 G. H. Room does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Our Hero

So Dearly Loved So Sadly Missed

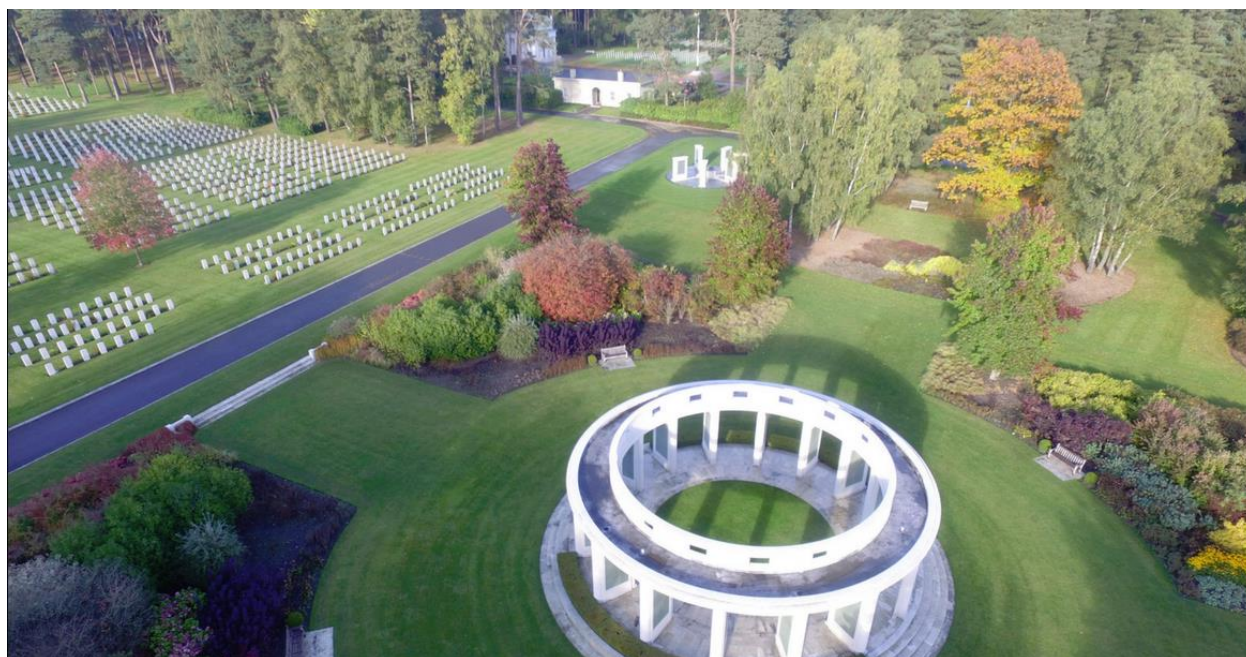
Mother, Brothers, Sisters

Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England

Located 30 miles from London in Surrey, Brookwood Military Cemetery is the largest CWGC cemetery in the United Kingdom. The cemetery contains the graves of more than 1,600 servicemen of the British Empire in the First World War and over 3,470 from the Second World War.

Brookwood Military Cemetery lies adjacent to Brookwood Cemetery (The London Necropolis), a vast space which covers 500 acres. In 1917, an area to the north of the cemetery was set aside as Brookwood Military Cemetery for men and women of Commonwealth forces who died, many of battle wounds, in the London district. This site was further extended to accommodate Commonwealth casualties of the Second World War. *(Information from CWGC)*

There are 446 Australian War Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery – 351 from World War 1 & 95 from World War 2.



Brookwood Military Cemetery *(Photo from CWGC)*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00185

A large crowd attends an A.I.F. military funeral at Brookwood Cemetery. In the foreground wooden crosses mark rows of graves. (Photo c1919)

Identified: Front row, left to right: Second Lieutenant Douglas Abbott Ferguson, Australian Flying Corps, died of accidental injuries 18 August 1918; Lieutenant (Lt) Francis John Smedley MC, 7th Battalion, died of wounds 20 August 1918. Second row: 6860 Private (Pte) James Alexander McKeown, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 20 June 1918; 3622 Pte S T Wilson, 2nd Australian Pioneers, died of wounds 4 July 1918; 2390 Sergeant Frederick Charles Stronell, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 9 July 1918; Lt Arthur Melville Lilburne MC, 6th Brigade Australian Field Artillery, died of disease 11 July 1918.



Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photos by Magicfingers)



Australian Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photos by Magicfingers)





(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher)



Australian War Graves *(Photo courtesy of Neil Bright 2020)*

Photo of Private G. H. Room's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England.



(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher)



(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher – Jan 2021)

