

**Compton Chamberlayne  
War Graves Cemetery,  
Wiltshire, England**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**1995 PRIVATE**

**T. J. SKIPPER**

**51ST BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**7TH JANUARY, 1918 Age 45**

*THOUGH COMPARATIVELY LITTLE*

*I DID MY BEST*

## Thomas James SKIPPER

Thomas James Skipper was born in 1871 at Mount Barker, South Australia to parents Octavius and Annie Skipper (nee Bourke).

Thomas James Skipper was a 43 year old, single, Prospector (previously an Accountant) from Marble Bar, Western Australia when he enlisted at BlackBoy Hill, Western Australia on 25th February, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 1995 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his brother – Mr Michael John Skipper of Mount Barker, South Australia.

Private Thomas James Skipper was posted to Area No. 3 on 25th February, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 52nd Depot Company on 3rd March, 1916 then transferred to 3rd Reinforcements of 51st Battalion on 4th April, 1916.

Private Thomas James Skipper embarked from Fremantle, Western Australia on HMAT *Seang Bee (A48)* on 18th July, 1916 with the 51st Infantry Battalion, 3rd Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 9th September, 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 Thomas James Skipper proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 28th November, 1916 for active duty. He was marched in to 4th A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples on 30th November, 1916.

Private Thomas James Skipper was sent sick to Hospital at Etaples, France on 5th January, 1917 then admitted the same day to 18th General Hospital at Camiers with suspected mumps. He was discharged to Base Depot on 27th January, 1917. Private Skipper proceeded from 4th A.D.B.D. at Etaples on 15th February, 1917 and was taken on strength of 51st Battalion in the Field on 17th February, 1917.

Private Thomas James Skipper was sent sick to Hospital on 17th February, 1917. He was admitted to 4th Australian Field Ambulance on 17th February, 1917 with Haemorrhoids then transferred to 7th Australian Field Ambulance the same day. Private Skipper was discharged to duty on 26th February, 1917 & rejoined his Unit the same day.

Private Thomas James Skipper was wounded in action on 2nd April, 1917. He was admitted to 13th Australian Field Ambulance on 2nd April, 1917 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to left leg. He was transferred & admitted to 32nd Stationary Hospital at Wimmereux, France on 4th April, 1917. Private Skipper embarked for England from Boulogne on 8th April, 1917 on Hospital Ship *Jan Breydel*.

### 51st Battalion

The 51st Battalion was raised in Egypt in the first week of March 1916, as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Approximately half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 11th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 11th, the 51st was predominantly composed of men from Western Australia. The battalion became part of the 13th Brigade of the newly-formed 4th Australian Division.

..... Early in 1917, the battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line. On 2 April it attacked at Noreuil, a village which had been fortified to delay the Australian advance.

*(Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

### War Diary – 51st Battalion

*1-2nd April, 1917*

*A. B. & D. Coys moved into position for advance and attack on NOREUIL vide Bn Order No. 18. Copy attached marked I. Report on Operations attached marked II.*

*Battalion Order No. 18*

*In conjunction with troops on Right and Left the Battalion will on the morning of 2nd April 1917 advance and capture the high ground N.E. of road BOREUIL-LONGATTE. The 50th Battalion will be on our right, the 20th Brigade on our*

*left will co-operate and capture LONGATTE. The 49th Battalion will move up to Sunken Road North of VRAUCOURT, and become Brigade Reserve.....*

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Thomas James Skipper was admitted to Spalding Hall Hospital (Edmonton Military Hospital), Edmonton, England on 8th April, 1917. He was granted furlough from 8th June, 1917 to 22nd June, 1917 & was then to report to Perham Downs – Hurdcott.

Private Thomas James Skipper was medically classified as B1 A3 (fit for overseas training camp in 2 – 3 weeks) on 23rd June, 1917 while posted at No. 3 Command Depot, Hurdcott, Wiltshire, England. He was medically classified as C1 (fit for Home Service only) on 26th June, 1917.

Private Thomas James Skipper was taken on strength of Permanent Cadre of No. Command Depot at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 1st July, 1917. He was classified as P.B. (Permanent Base) on 14th August, 1917.

Private Thomas James Skipper was sent sick to Brigade Hospital at Hurdcott on 15th December, 1917 with Debility. He was transferred to Military Hospital at Fovant, Wiltshire on 27th December, 1917 – cause N.Y.D. (not yet determined).

Private Thomas James Skipper died at 10.30 p.m. on 7th January, 1918 at the Military Hospital at Fovant, Wiltshire, England from Phthisis (Tuberculosis).

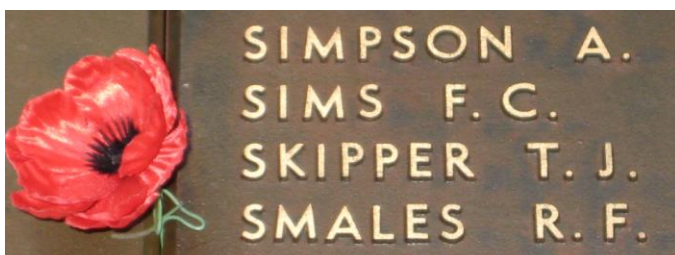
A death for Thomas J. Skipper, aged 46, was registered in the March quarter, 1918 in the district of Wilton, Wiltshire.

Private Thomas James Skipper was buried on 10th January, 1918 at Compton Chamberlayne War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire, England – Middle Row, Grave Plot #3. From the burial report of Private Skipper – Coffin was of Polished Elm with Brass Mountings. Private Skipper was accorded a Military Funeral.

Private Thomas James Skipper requested in his Will, dated 20th July, 1917 that “*my personal estate I bequeath to my brother Michael John Skipper, Mount Barker, S. Australia.*”

Private Thomas James Skipper was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque (July, 1923) were sent to Pte Skipper’s new next of kin – his brother – Mr O. W. Skipper of Innamincka, South Australia. Pte Skipper’s previous next of kin – brother Mr Michael John Skipper – deceased.

Private T. J. Skipper is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 154.



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

*(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)*

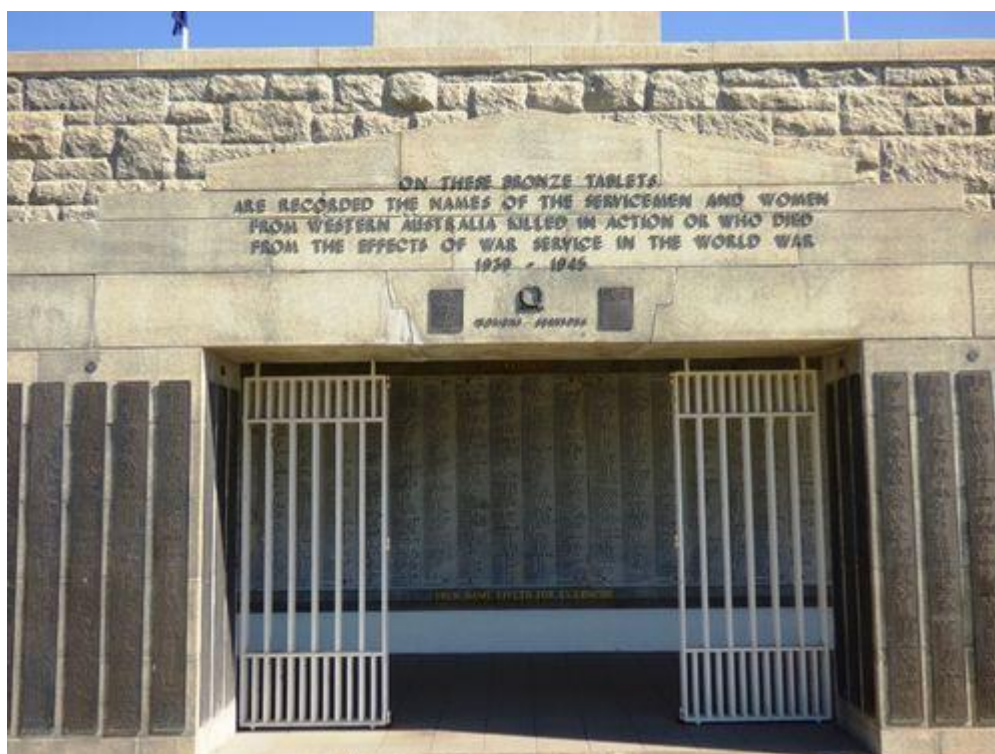
T. J. Skipper is remembered on the Western Australia State War Memorial which is located at the top of Kings Park and Botanic Garden escarpment, ANZAC Bluff, Fraser Avenue, Perth, Western Australia. The memorial was developed around an 18 metre tall obelisk as the principal feature, which is almost a replica of the Australian Imperial Force Memorials erected in France and Belgium.

The heavy concrete foundations are supplemented by heavy brick walls which enclose an inner chamber or crypt. The walls surrounding the crypt are covered with The Roll of Honour; marble tablets which list under their units the names of more than 7,000 members of the services killed in action or as a result of World War One.



**Western Australia State War Memorial Cenotaph, Kings Park (above)  
& (below) The Crypt with the Roll of Honour names**

*(Photos from Monument Australia – Kent Watson/Sandra Tattersall/Graeme Saunders)*

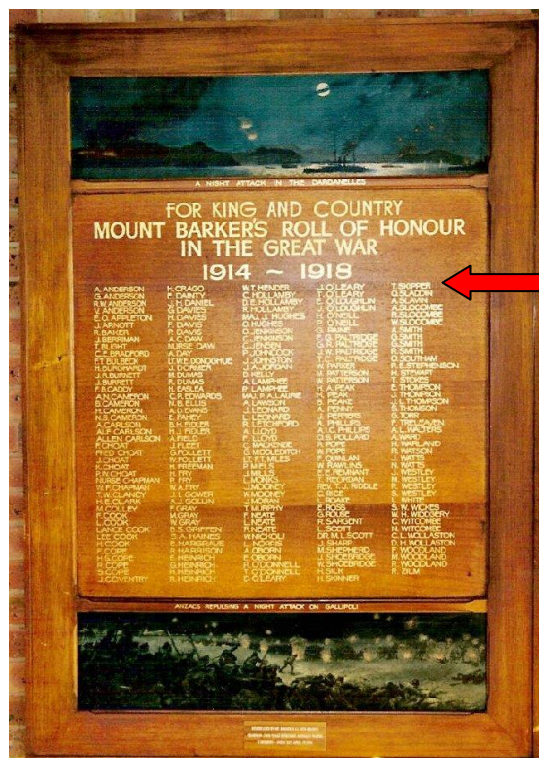






51st Battalion Panel (Photo courtesy of Gordon Stuart)

T. Skipper is remembered on the Mount Barker Honour Board, located in the Mount Barker Soldiers' Memorial Hospital foyer on Wellington Road, Mount Barker, South Australia. (last column , first name)



Mount Barker Honour Board

( 77 pages of Private Skipper's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll) & National Archives



\*\*Three of Private Skipper's nephews (eldest sister's sons) fought in World War 1 – two died.

- Patrick Thomas Pyne – Service no 973, died between 25th April, 1915 & 29th April, 1915 (Killed in Action Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey) Buried Beach Cemetery, Gallipoli, Turkey.
- Octavius John Pyne – Service no 2428, died 17/3/17 (Severe gunshot wound to head – led to Septic Meningitis). Buried Boulogne Eastern Military Cemetery, France)
- Cpl William Ewart Pyne – Service no 6526 was discharged from AIF at Adelaide on 2/10/1919 Termination of period of enlistment.



**Men Who Have Enlisted From the Pilbarra District**

Back row: Privates R. Davidson, P. Phillips, **L.J. Skipper**, R. Keesing, D. Barron, P. Jackson, H. Power, G. Spence, W. barker, M. McGrath, A.F. Heaton.

Second row standing: Privates L. Green, F. Atkins, C. Frisby, J. Pratt, F. Lucas, J. Gallop, J. Haywood.

Third row sitting: Private J. Borsoff, T. Hogg, Corporal Styles, Corporal Saul (R.M.) Mr. G. W. Miles (chairman Marble Bar Recruiting Committee), Private V. Furhman (R.M.) Corporal McSwain, Private W. Pratt,

Front row sitting: Privates N. Hansen, J. F. Kidd, J. Edwards, D. Messingham, A. Purcell, E. Jefferies, W. Thompson, E. F. Ronan.





(*Western Mail*, Perth, Western Australia – 11 August, 1916)

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## Newspaper Reports

### Notice of an Application for a Gold Mining Lease – Thomas James Skipper

**N**OTICE of APPLICATION for a GOLD-MINING LEASE.

No. 13.

Notice is hereby given, that we, the undersigned, have MADE APPLICATION this day for a LEASE under "The Goldfields Act 1895," and the Regulations, of ground known as the EMPRESS HELENA, containing 24 acres, adjoining Lease No. 5, on Crown lands outside goldfield (known as the Queen of the South), to the southwards, datum point starting 15½ chains south of above lease; thence running north to southern boundary of above lease; thence 18 chains west; thence 15½ chains south; thence 18 chains east to point of commencement; all measurements being only approximate.

As witness our hands and seal at Perth, this 22nd day of August, 1899.

EDWARD JACKSON  
THOMAS JAMES SKIPPER.  
ROBERT SYKES.

OBJECTIONS against the above application must be lodged at the office of the Under-Secretary for Mines, on or before the 22nd day of September, 1899.

J. J. CROCKETT,  
For Under-Secretary for Mines.

2659

(*The Daily News*, Perth, Western Australia – Thursday 21st September, 1899)

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## PERSONAL

The death occurred at Mount Barker on Saturday last of Mrs Skipper, widow of Mr Octavius Skipper, who was for over 30 years clerk of the court at many of the south-eastern towns, and latterly of Mount Barker. The deceased, who had resided at Mount Barker for many years was born in Ireland in 1840, and came to Australia with her parents in 1847. For some time they resided in the vicinity of Gepp's Cross, and afterwards removed to Echunga, where they lived for many years. Mrs Skipper was married at the old St Patrick's Church, West-terrace, Adelaide, by the late Rev. Father Smythe. There were seven children of the marriage, five of whom survive. The sons are Mr M.J. Skipper, who has just recently been appointed to the clerkship of the Mount Barker Council; and Messrs. O.W. Skipper, of Broken Hill and T. J. Skipper, of Western Australia. Mrs J.A. Pyne of Strathalbyn, and Miss T Skipper, of Mount Barker, are the surviving daughters.

(*The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia – Wednesday 13th May, 1914) & (*The West Australian*, Perth – Tuesday 26th May, 1914) & (*The Western Mail*, Perth, WA – Friday 5th June, 1914)

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## WESTERN AUSTRALIA – The Roll of Honour

### Wounded

T.J. Skipper (Mt Barker, South Australia)

(*The West Australian*, Perth – Tuesday 8th May, 1917) & (*Barrier Miner*, Broken Hill, NSW - Tuesday 8th May, 1917)

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## CASUALTIES

Pte T. J. Skipper, brother of Mr M. J. Skipper, of Mount Barker, has been officially reported as having died from wounds in a military hospital at Fovant, France. The deceased soldier, who was 46 years of age, enlisted from West Australia. The sad news was conveyed to Mr Skipper by the Rev. Father Landy who held the late Pte Skipper in the highest esteem.

(*The Mount Barker Courier and Onkapringa and Gumeracha Advertiser*, South Australia – 18 January, 1918)

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## THE AUSTRALIANS

### 381st Casualty List – South Australia

#### DIED OF ILLNESS

1995 –Pte. T. J. SKIPPER, Mount Barker (Jan. 7)

(*The Register*, Adelaide, Sth Australia – Friday 1st February, 1918) & (*The Chronicle*, Adelaide, Sth Aust – Saturday 2nd February, 1918)

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## THE ROLL OF HONOUR

Died of Illness – T.J. Skipper (Mt Barker, S. Aus)

(*Sunday Times*, Perth, WA – Sunday 3rd February, 1918)

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### 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 at Compton Chamberlayne Cemetery. 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)*

Pte T. J. Skipper does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*THOUGH COMPARATIVELY LITTLE*

*I DID MY BEST*

### **Compton Chamberlayne War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire, England**

Compton Chamberlayne War Graves Cemetery contains 34 Commonwealth War Graves all from World War 1. Of these 28 are of Australian Soldiers.



*(Photo courtesy of Andrew Stacey)*





**Left & right of Cemetery with central Plinth** (Photos courtesy of Andrew Stacey 2012)



**Photo taken from back of Cemetery looking towards the Entrance** (Photo courtesy of Andrew Stacey)



Photo of Private T. J. Skipper's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone at Compton Chamberlayne War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire, England.



*(Photo courtesy of Andrew Stacey)*



## Compton Chamberlayne War Grave Locations



British Soldier



Irish Soldier



Australian Soldier

Front Row	Grave		Middle Row	Grave		Back Row	Grave
<i>Public</i>	1		Oliver	1			1
<i>Public</i>	2		Knowles	2		<i>Public</i>	2
	Haywood	3		Skipper	3		Turner
	Gilbert	4		Wehrmann	4		Evans
	Le Tisser	5		Park	5		Dreckow
	Jones	6		Riley	6		Cass
	Cook	7		Turnbull	7		Arnold
	Pairman	8		White	8		Sillar
		9		Howard	9		Ross
	Norris	10		Tull	10		Finn
	Lintott	11		Snell	11		McCarthy
	Redman	12		Ferrow	12		Trengove
<i>Public</i>			<i>Public</i>				13
<i>Public</i>			<i>Public</i>				14
<i>Public</i>						Walsh	15
							16
						Hooper	17
							18
						Larkin	19



**Compton Chamberlayne War Graves** (Photo from CWGC)



(Photo taken c March, 1919)

Graves of Australian soldiers in the cemetery at Compton-Chamberlyne, each marked by a cross.

*Back row, left to right:* 55821 Private (Pte) Alfred Alwin Dreckow, 32nd Battalion (Bn), died 19 October 1918; 3712 Pte Thomas Cass, 10th Bn, died 17 August 1918; 3764 Pte William Joseph Arnold, 31st Bn, died 2 July 1918; Captain Roy Allan Sillar, Australian Army Medical Corps, died 30 June 1918; 1993A Pte Sydney Ross, 18th Bn, died 31 May 1918.

*Front row:* 1666 Sergeant Percy Robert Knowles, 9th Australian Light TM Battery, died 30 January 1918; **1995 Pte Thomas James Skipper, 51st Bn, died Fovant Military Hospital 7 January 1918;** 687 Pte John Thomas Wehrmann, 32nd Bn, died 3 November 1917; 3462 Pte William Joseph Park, 60th Bn, died 23rd September 1917; 1725 Pte William Ernest Riley, 60th Bn, died 22 May 1917.