

**Hollybrook Memorial,
Southampton, Hampshire, England
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



19867 DRIVER

J. H. SOMMERVILLE

AUSTRALIAN FIELD ARTILLERY

2ND JULY, 1916

James Herbert SOMMERVILLE

James Herbert Sommerville was born at Clovelly, North Devon, England on 9th June, 1893 to parents James & Anne Elizabeth Sommerville (nee Picketts). His birth was registered in the September quarter 1893 in the district of Bideford, Devon, England. James Herbert Sommerville was baptised on 8th July, 1893 in Anglican Church at Clovelly, Devon, England.

Anne Elizabeth Sommerville, mother of James Herbert Sommerville, died in 1895. Her death was registered in June, quarter, 1895 in the district of Bideford, Devon, England.

The 1901 Wales Census recorded James Herbert Sommerville as a 7 year old, living with his family at Union Terrace, St. Dogmells (place name as listed on Census), Pembrokeshire, Wales. His father & stepmother were listed as James Sommerville (Chief Boat Man – Coast Guard (Navy), aged 43, born Glasgow, Scotland) & Augusta E. Sommerville (aged 28, born Clovelly, N. Devon). James Herbert Sommerville was one of 3 children listed on this Census – James Herbert then his 2 half siblings - William Archibald (age 2 – born Clovelly, N. Devon) & Ellen August Sommerville (aged 10 months, born St. Dogmaels, Pembrokeshire).

James Herbert Sommerville was a 24 year old, single, Labourer (as listed on Embarkation Roll but listed as a Mason's Labourer on Attestation Papers) from Port Victor (place name as per Embarkation Roll – should be "*Port Victoria*"), Yorke Peninsula, South Australia when he enlisted in Adelaide, South Australia on 9th September, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his father – Mr J. Sommerville, Clovelly, North Devonshire, England. James Herbert Somerville stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service due to his Teeth.

*(**Note: Some forms in the Service Record file have the surname as Somerville, but most have the surname as Sommerville. I have used Sommerville in my research below)*

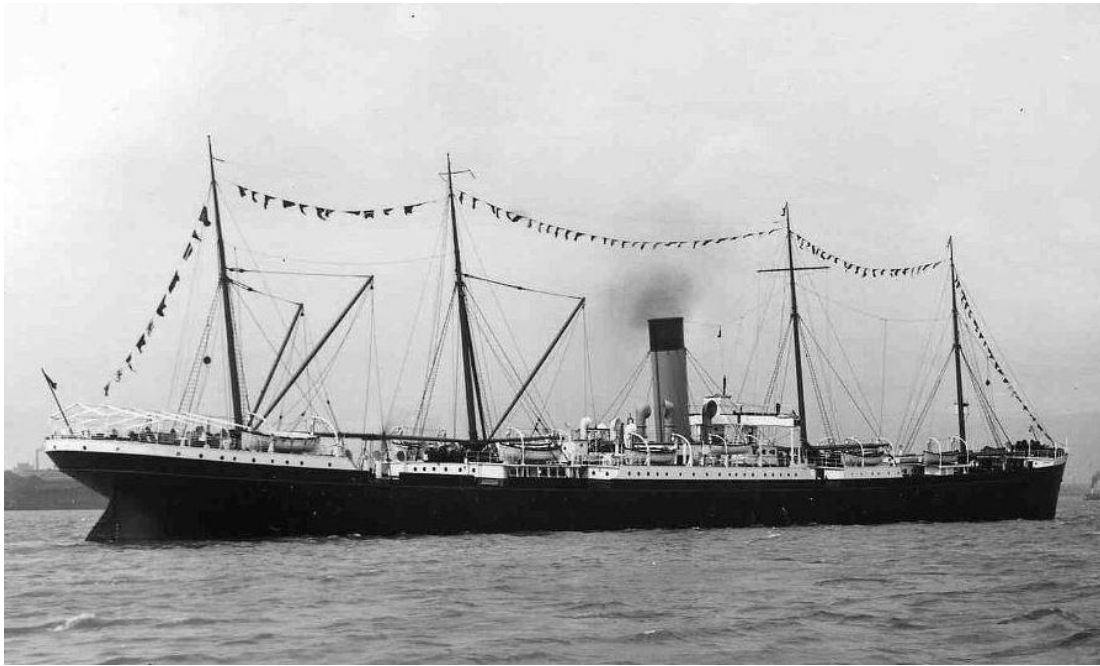
Private James Herbert Sommerville was posted to "E" Company on 27th September, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to "D" Company, 2nd Depot Battalion on 15th October, 1915 then on 1st November, 1915 he was transferred to Field Artillery Reinforcements as Gunner. Gunner Sommerville was transferred to 8th Field Artillery Brigade, 30th Battery on 1st April, 1916 as Driver (Note: One copy of Statement of Service form recorded he was posted to 8th Field Artillery Brigade, however another copy of the Statement of Service form has "Driver" crossed out & replaced with "Gunner").

Gunner (rank as listed on Embarkation Roll) James Herbert Sommerville, Service number 19867, embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Medic (A7)* on 20th May, 1916 with the 8th Field Artillery Brigade, 30th Battery.

Driver James Herbert Sommerville was admitted to Ship's Hospital on 24th June, 1916 with Influenza which was crossed out & replaced with Double Pneumonia.

Driver James Herbert Sommerville died on 2nd July, 1916 at Sea on board HMAT *Medic (A7)* from Pneumonia.

The Register of Deceased Passengers recorded Gunner James Herbert Sommerville died on 2nd July, 1916 on *Medic* at co-ordinates 2.31 N; 13.12 W from Pneumonia.



HMAT *Medic* (A7)



Position of HMAT *Medic* at the time of Driver James Herbert Sommerville's death

Driver James Herbert Sommerville was buried at Sea on 2nd July, 1916 from HMAT *Medic* (A7). He is commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England as he has no grave. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Driver James Herbert Sommerville was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Driver Sommerville's stepmother – Mrs. A. Sommerville. (Scroll & Plaque issued in England in August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Driver James Herbert Somerville – service number 19867, of 8th Bde., Australian Field Artillery. He was the son of James and Augusta E. Somerville, of Clovelly, North Devon, England. (Note: The CWGC has the name listed incorrectly as “Somerville” & Augusta was his stepmother)

Driver J. H. Somerville is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 15.

(****Note: Driver Somerville is named on the Roll of Honour as “Somerville”. The Australian War Memorial were advised of the discrepancy at the time of researching)



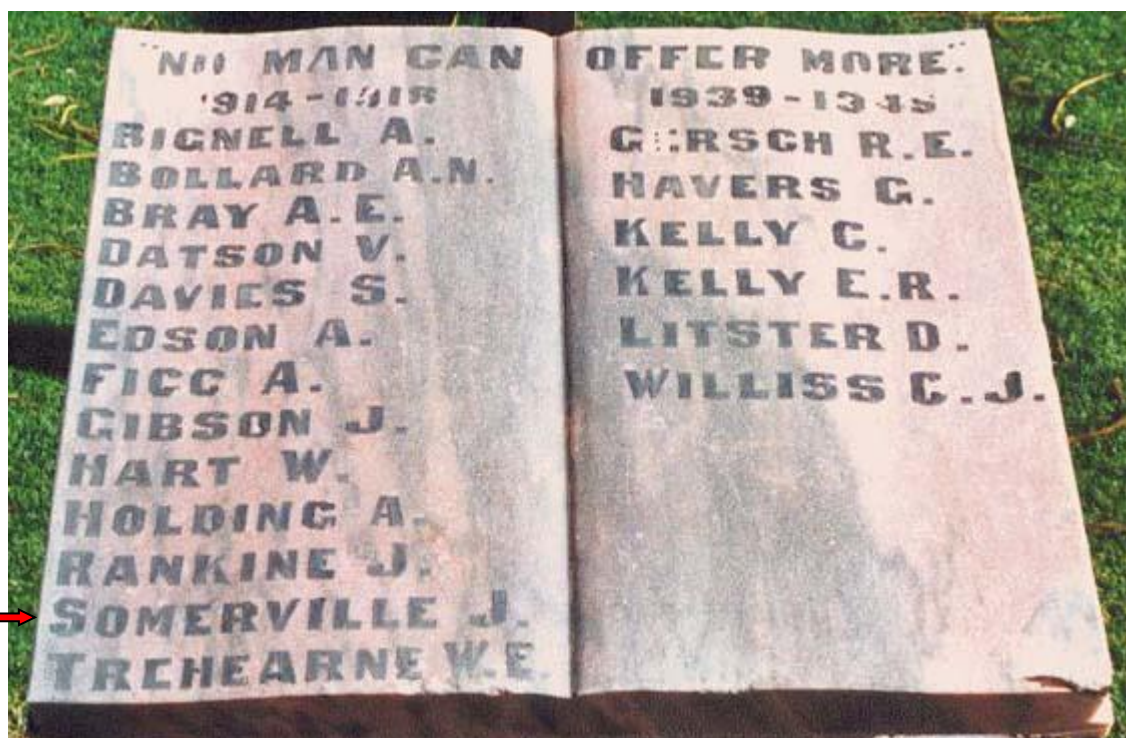
Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

J. Somerville is remembered on the Port Victoria War Memorial, located on Main Street, Port Victoria, South Australia.





Port Victoria War Memorial (Photos from VWMA)



J. H. Sommerville is remembered on the National Soldiers Memorial in Adelaide. The Adelaide National War Memorial commemorates those from South Australia that served in the First World War. The names of those that died are listed inside the Memorial, which is located on the corner of North Terrace & Kintore Avenue, Adelaide.



National War Memorial – Adelaide (Photos by Bilby)

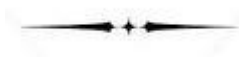
James H. Somerville is remembered on the Clovelly Roll of Honour, located in All Saints Church, Clovelly, Devon, England.



Clovelly Roll of Honour (Photo by Geoffrey Gillon)

(32 pages of Driver James Herbert Sommerville'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



LAST POST CEREMONY

Driver James Herbert Sommerville, 19867, was remembered in the Last Post Ceremony held at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on 11th January, 2022.

Commencing at approximately 4.30 pm AEST, the Memorial farewells visitors with its moving Last Post Ceremony in the Commemorative Courtyard. Each night the ceremony shares the story behind one of the names on the Roll of Honour.

The ceremony begins with the Australian national anthem followed by the piper's lament. Visitors are invited to lay wreaths and floral tributes beside the Pool of Reflection. An individual's story is told, and the Ode is recited by Australian Defence Force personnel. The ceremony ends with the sounding of the Last Post.

(Information from The Australian War Memorial)



Speech transcript

19867 Driver James Herbert Sommerville, 8th Field Artillery Brigade
DOD 2 July 1916

Today we remember and pay tribute to Driver James Herbert Sommerville.

James Sommerville was born in England on 9 June 1893 to James and Augusta Sommerville of Clovelly, Devon. He was educated in Clovelly, where he was described as "a well-mannered, conscientious schoolboy, with strength of will enough never to be associated in that which was wrong or low." His father worked for the coast guard, and around the turn of the century, the family moved to St Dogmell's in Pembrokeshire, Wales, where James's father worked as Chief Boat Man of the Coast Guard.

James undertook an apprenticeship on the ship *Arethusa* at the age of 15, coming to Australia to collect a load of wheat. Instead of reboarding the ship to return to England, however, he chose to remain, finding employment with a contractor in Port Victoria, a small town on the Yorke Peninsula in South Australia.

James Sommerville tried to enlist for service in the Australian Imperial Force shortly after war broke out in August 1914, but was turned down because of his dental problems. He was rejected once more before being accepted for service in September 1915.

Sommerville went into camp in Adelaide to begin his military training. Shortly after arriving, however, he volunteered for the artillery, and so was transferred to Maribyrnong Camp near Melbourne. He emerged from his training with the rank of driver, and embarked on board the troopship Medic at Melbourne on 230 May 1916.

On 24 June 1916, Driver Sommerville presented to the Medic's hospital bay with what appeared to be influenza. His condition quickly deteriorated into double pneumonia. Within a few days it was clear there was little to be done, and James Sommerville died quietly on 2 July 1916. He was buried at sea the same day.

Today James Sommerville is commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial in Southampton, England. Erected to commemorate a number of service men and women with no known graves, the Hollybrook Memorial bears the names of those who died and were buried at sea and have no other commemorative stone. James Sommerville was 23 years old.

His name is listed on the Roll of Honour on my right, among almost 62,000 Australians who died while serving in the First World War.

This is but one of the many stories of service and sacrifice told here at the Australian War Memorial. We now remember Private James Herbert Sommerville, who gave his life for us, for our freedoms, and in the hope of a better world.

Meleah Hampton
Historian, Military History Section

Newspaper Notices

THE AUSTRALIANS

189th CASUALTY LIST

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

DIED OF ILLNESS

Gnr J. H. SOMERVILLE, England, July 2

(*The Register*, Adelaide, South Australia – 4 August, 1916)



THE LATE GNR. J. SOMERVILLE,
who for seven years was a resident of Port
Victoria.

(*Observer*, Adelaide, South Australia – 19 August, 1916)

BIOGRAPHICAL PARTICULARS

THE LATE GUNNER J. H. SOMMERVILLE

Gunner J. H. Sommerville, who died at sea on July 2, was only 23 years of age. He was born at Clovelly, Devon, and arrived at Port Victoria eight years ago. He was employed by Mr W. Symonds, contractor, at Port Victoria. Gunner Sommerville was a son of Mr James Sommerville, an old naval officer at home, who was Chief Naval Officer at Lundy Island when war broke out, and shortly afterwards recalled for active service.



Gunner J. H. Sommerville.

Another brother is in the Transport service at home. Gunner Sommerville was one of the first to enlist from Port Victoria. He was rejected first time trying. He went into camp at Adelaide in September last, but shortly afterwards volunteered for the Royal Field Artillery, was accepted, and transferred to Maribyrnong Camp, Melbourne. Gunner Sommerville was highly respected, and was a quiet, industrious, and manly young fellow, and had many friends.

(The Adelaide Chronicle, South Australia – 19 August, 1916)

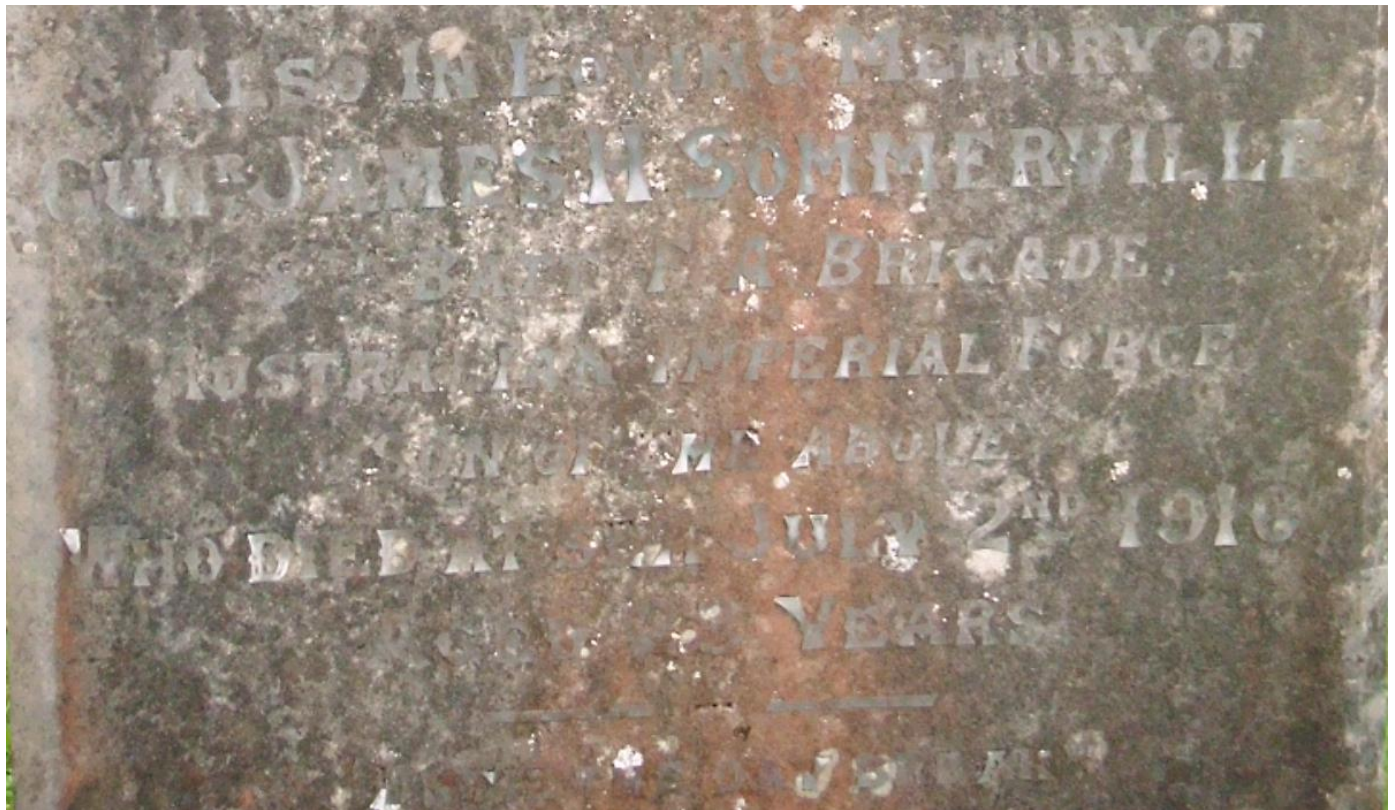
James H. Sommerville is remembered on his mother's headstone in All Saints Churchyard, Clovelly, Devon, England.



All Saints Churchyard, Clovelly (Photo by Philip Halling)



James H. Sommerville's name on his Mother - Annie Sommerville's Headstone in All Saint's Churchyard, Clovelly, Devon (Photo from Find a Grave – Janice Dennis)



Also In Loving Memory Of
Gunr JAMES H. SOMMERVILLE
8th Batt. F.A. Brigade
Australian Imperial Force
Son Of The Above
Who Died At Sea July 2nd 1916
Aged 2_ Years

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for cemeteries and memorials in 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. In all 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth forces from WWI and WWII have been honoured and commemorated in perpetuity.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of its mandate, is responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead individually and equally. To this end, the war dead are commemorated by name on a headstone, at an identified site of a burial, or on a memorial. War dead are commemorated uniformly and equally, irrespective of military or civil rank, race or creed.

Not all service personnel have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. In some instances the relative chose to have their own memorial/headstone placed on the deceased's grave. These private headstones are not maintained by the CWGC as they have no jurisdiction to maintain them.

Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England

The Hollybrook Memorial is situated in Southampton (Hollybrook) Cemetery behind the plot of First World War graves near the main entrance.

The Hollybrook Memorial commemorates by name almost 1,900 servicemen and women of the Commonwealth land and air forces* whose graves are not known, many of whom were lost in transports or other vessels torpedoed or mined in home waters (*Officers and men of the Commonwealth's navies who have no grave but the sea are commemorated on memorials elsewhere). The memorial also bears the names of those who were lost or buried at sea, or who died at home but whose bodies could not be recovered for burial. Almost one third of the names on the memorial are those of officers and men of the South African Native Labour Corps, who died when the troop transport Mendi sank in the Channel following a collision on 21 February 1917. Other vessels sunk with significant loss of life were: HS Anglia, a hospital ship sunk by mine off Dover on 17 November 1915. SS Citta Di Palermo, an Italian transport carrying Commonwealth troops, sunk by mine off Brindisi on 8 January 1916. In rescuing survivors, two Royal Naval Otranto drifters were themselves mined and blown up. HMTs Donegal and Warilda, ambulance transports torpedoed and sunk between Le Havre and Southampton on 17 April 1917 and 3 August 1918. HS Glenart Castle, a hospital ship torpedoed and sunk off Lundy on 26 February 1918. SS Galway Castle, torpedoed and sunk in the Atlantic on 12 September 1918. RMS Leinster, the Irish mail boat, torpedoed and sunk in the Irish Sea on 10 October 1918. Among those commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial is Field Marshall Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, who died when the battle cruiser HMS Hampshire was mined and sunk off Scapa Flow on 5 June 1916.

The memorial was designed by T. Newham and unveiled by Sir William Robertson on 10 December 1930.

There are approximately 162 Australian World War 1 Service Personnel commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England.

(Information & photos from CWGC)





Cross of Sacrifice

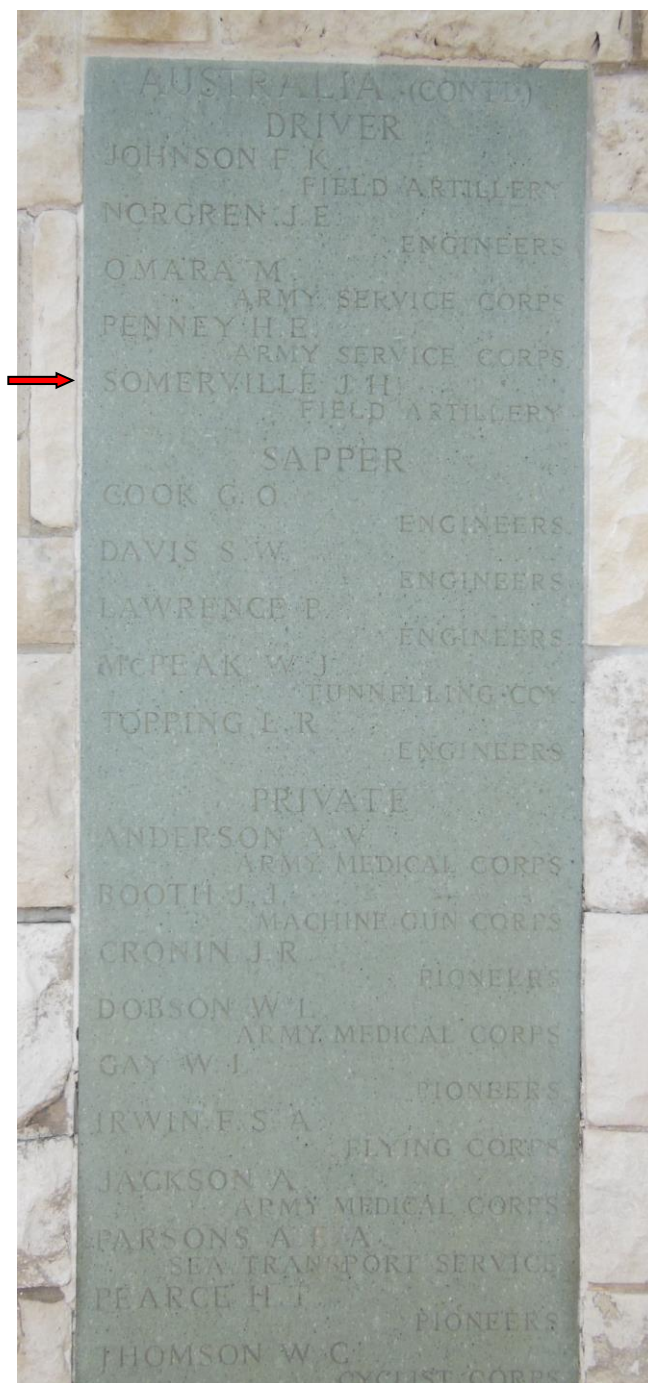


Name Panels behind Cross of Sacrifice *(Photo from CWGC)*



CWGC Graves in Hollybrook Cemetery with Cross of Sacrifice & Hollybrook Memorial *(Photo from CWGC)*

Photo of Driver J. H. Somerville's name on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England.



(Photo by julia&keld – Find a Grave)

