

**Reading Cemetery,
Reading, Berkshire
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



685 PRIVATE

E. STEPHENSON

38TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

23RD OCTOBER, 1918 Age 25

Edgar STEPHENSON

Edgar Stephenson was born at Curran's Creek near Crookwell, NSW in August, 1893 to parents Benjamin & Rebecca Stephenson (nee Hunt).

Rebecca Stephenson, mother of Edgar Stephenson, died on 9th September, 1899 at Crookwell, NSW.

Edgar Stephenson attended Curran's Creek Public School.

Edgar Stephenson was a 23 year old, single, Labourer from Curran's Creek, Crookwell, NSW when he enlisted at Goulburn, NSW on 19th September, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 41350 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr B. Stephenson, of Curran's Creek, Crookwell, NSW.

Private Edgar Stephenson was posted to "C" Company, Depot Battalion on 19th September, 1916. He was transferred to "E" Company, 59th Battalion on 11th October, 1916 then transferred to "D" Company, 55th Battalion on 27th October, 1916. Pte Stephenson was transferred to 7th Reinforcements, 60th Battalion on 30th October, 1916.

Private Edgar Stephenson embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Afric (A19)* on 3rd November, 1916 with 7th Reinforcements, 60th Battalion. He disembarked from HMAT *Afric* at Adelaide sick on 7th November, 1916. He was placed in isolation.

Private Edgar Stephenson was transferred to 9th Reinforcements, 48th Battalion on 1st November, 1916 until 21st December, 1916.

Pte Stephenson was transferred to Machine Gun Reinforcements on 1st January, 1917 & allotted a new Service number of 685. He was transferred to Machine Gun Depot on 17th January, 1917.

Private Edgar Stephenson was invalided to 3rd M.D. from 4th May, 1917 to 23rd May, 1917.

Private Edgar Stephenson was posted to Machine Gun Depot at Seymour on 29th May, 1917.

Private Edgar Stephenson embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Suevic (A29)* on 21st June, 1917 with 8th Machine Gun Company, 12th Reinforcements & disembarked at Liverpool, England on 26th August, 1917.

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 Edgar Stephenson was marched in from Australia to 8th Training Battalion at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 26th August, 1917.

Private Edgar Stephenson was transferred to 29th Battalion Details on 27th August, 1917.

Private Edgar Stephenson was marched in from 8th Training Battalion to 15th Training Battalion at Codford, Wiltshire on 5th November, 1917.

Private Edgar Stephenson proceeded overseas to France from Codford, Wiltshire via Southampton on 18th December, 1917 to Reinforcements of 38th Battalion.

Private Edgar Stephenson was marched in to A.I.B.D. (Australian Infantry Base Depot) at Rouelles, France on 19th December, 1917. He was marched out to the Front on 21st December, 1917.

Private Edgar Stephenson was taken on strength with 38th Battalion in the field on 24th December, 1917.

Private Edgar Stephenson was reported with his Unit in the field on 1st July, 1918.

Private Edgar Stephenson was wounded in action (gassed) in France on 29th September, 1918. He was admitted to 132nd Field Ambulance suffering from Mustard Gas then transferred to 12th Casualty Clearing Station on 30th September, 1918. Pte Stephenson was transferred to 1st Australian General Hospital at Rouen, France on 3rd October, 1918. He was listed to be invalided to UK on 3rd October, 1918 & embarked for England on 4th October, 1918 on the Hospital Ship *West Australian*. (According to information supplied by his father for the Roll of Honour Pte Edgar Stephenson was apparently gassed at Polygon Wood).

38th Battalion

The 38th Battalion was rushed from Belgium to the south of France in late March, 1918 to meet the German Army's Spring Offensive. The Allies launched their own offensive on 8 August 1918, but the 38th was in reserve on this day and did not play an active role. It was involved, however, in an ill-conceived attack that failed to capture the village of Proyart on 10 August. Undaunted, the battalion continued to play an active role throughout August and early September in the 3rd Division's advance along the Somme Valley.

The 38th participated in its last major action of the war between 29 September and 2 October 1918 as part of the Australian-American operation that breached the formidable defences of the Hindenburg Line along the St Quentin Canal. It was disbanded in April 1919.

(Information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Edgar Stephenson was admitted to Reading War Hospital, Reading, Berkshire, England on 5th October, 1918 with Gas shell poisoning. The Hospital Admissions forms reads: "*Severely gassed – Conjunctivitis, Pharyngitis, Laryngitis, extensive burns of 2nd degree on thighs, scrotum & forehead. Developed Lobar Pneumonia (R. upper lobe) & died of heart failure.*"

Private Edgar Stephenson died at 4.30 am on 23rd October, 1918 at Section 4, Reading War Hospital, Reading, Berkshire, England from Gas shell poisoning (Mustard), Influenza & Pneumonia.

A death for Edgar Stephenson, aged 25, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Reading, Berkshire, England.

Private Edgar Stephenson was buried on 26th October, 1918 in Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire – Screen Wall. 72. 16493. Those buried in Plot 72 & buried in other parts of the cemetery that do not have headstones marking their graves are named on the Memorial Screen Wall located near the Cross of Sacrifice. Their deaths are still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. From the burial report of Pte Stephenson - *Coffin was polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military funeral, Bugler and Bearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and surmounted by beautiful flowers sent from the Matron of Reading War Hospital. The Last Post was sounded at the graveside and the Rev. F. J. C. Gillmore officiated. 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.*

Pte Edgar Stephenson requested in his Will, dated 8th June, 1917 that the whole of his real & personal Estate be given to his sister – Mrs Maud McGrath, Robinson Street, Crookwell.

Pte Edgar Stephenson was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Stephenson's father – Mr B. Stephenson, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent December, 1922 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Edgar Stephenson – service number 685, aged 25, of 38th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Benjamin and Rebecca Stephenson of Currans Creek, Crookwell, New South Wales.

Private E. Stephenson is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 130.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

E. Stephenson is remembered on the Crookwell War Memorial located in Memorial Park, Spring & Marsden Streets, Crookwell, NSW.

Crookwell War Memorial commemorates those who have served in conflicts in which Australia has been involved.

The Memorial comprises of several structures developed over a period of time. The main structure, built in 1967, consists of a concrete shell sheltering a central Cross of Sacrifice. On either side stand two granite columns, commemorating World War One veterans. These columns were originally part of the Memorial Gate which was situated at the entrance to the Park. This Gate was installed in 1925.

In front is the new memorial which was unveiled on the 29th March 2003. This is of sandstone block construction with bronze honour rolls attached. These plaques list all local servicemen who served from the Boer War to the Vietnam War and also contains a plaque dedicated to those who served in Korea.

(Information & Photos from Monument Australia – Roger Johnson)



Crookwell War Memorial



Crookwell War Memorial - Granite Columns



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P05487.002

Private Edgar Stephenson



Newspaper Notices

Official news has been received that Bombardier Edgar Stephenson died from the effects of gas on October 23. The deceased soldier was the son of Mr B. Stephenson, of Curran's Creek, Crookwell.

(Sunday Times, Sydney, NSW – 3 November, 1918)

DOUBLE CASUALTY LIST

NEW SOUTH WALES

DIED OF WOUNDS

Pte EDGAR STEPHENSON, Crookwell

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 26 November, 1918)

Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire, England

Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire contains 248 War Graves, 17 of those being from Australian Forces – World War 1.

The War Graves Plot is situated at the back of the cemetery, in the right hand corner from the entrance. A Screen Wall Memorial commemorates those buried in Plot 72 and those buried in other parts of the cemetery whose graves are not marked by headstones. There are 207 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war and 41 of the 1939-1945 war. There is also 1 Serbian burial.

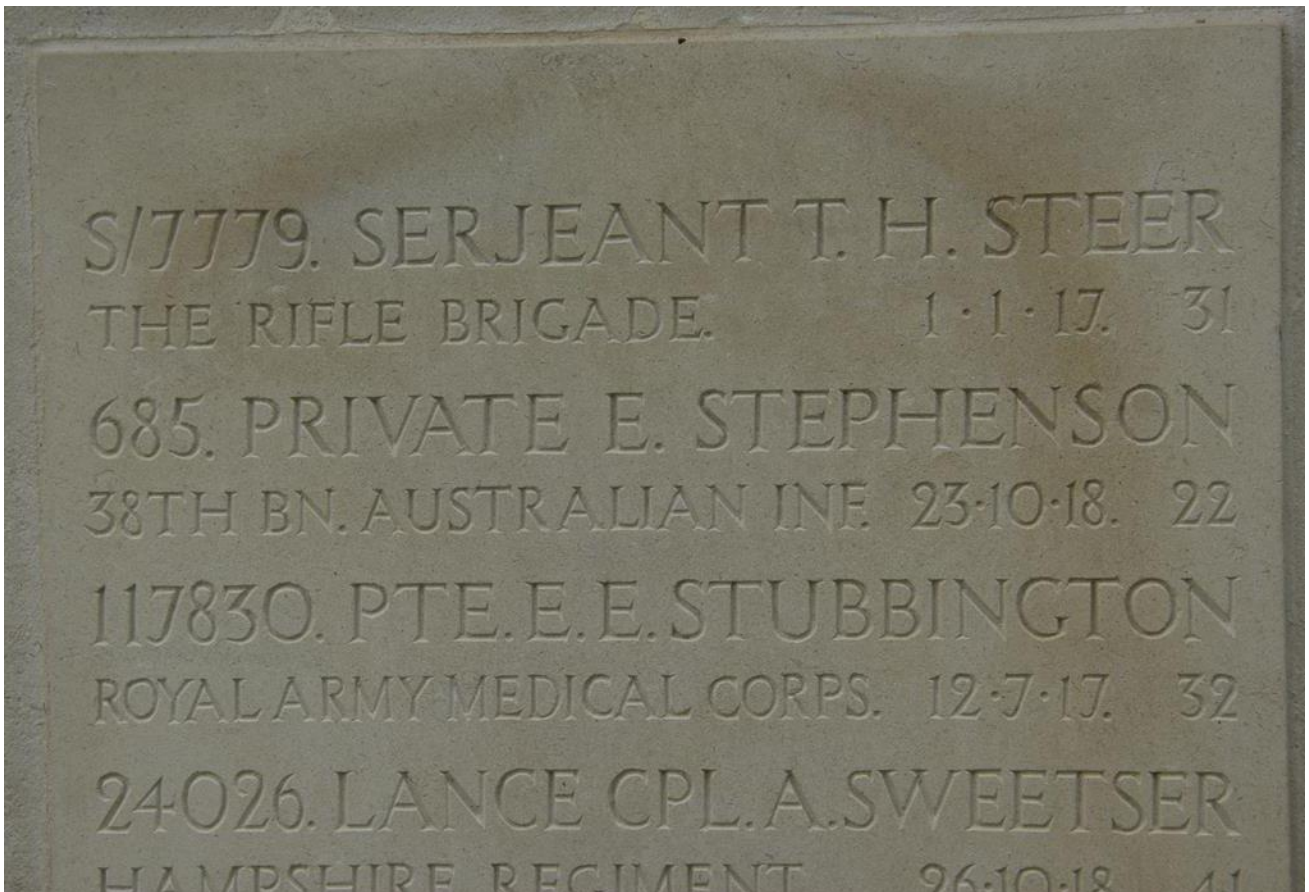
(Information & photos from CWGC)



Cross of Sacrifice & Memorial Screen Wall, Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire *(Photos from CWGC)*



Photo of Pte E. Stephenson's name on the Screen Wall Memorial in Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of Phil Wood)