

**Christ Church Military Cemetery,
Portsdown, Hampshire
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



3924 PRIVATE

E. STEWART

51ST BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

12TH MAY, 1918 Age 28

Death Is The Gate Of Life

Ernest STEWART

Ernest Stewart was born at King William Street, Fremantle, Western Australia on 26th January, 1890 to parents Thomas & Phoebe Stewart (nee Place).

Thomas Stewart, father of Ernest Stewart, died on 2nd July, 1903 in West Perth, Western Australia.

Ernest Stewart worked for the Western Australian Railway in the Traffic Branch. He was a Casual Goods Porter at Perth from 6th October, 1910. Ernest Stewart was promoted to Goods Porter on 1st January, 1912 & a Checker from 2nd September, 1912. Ernest Stewart was granted leave from Western Australian Railway on 23rd April, 1917 to serve with Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force.

The 1913 & 1914 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Perth, subdivision of West Perth, Western Australia listed Ernest Stewart, married, Railway Employee, of 184 Sutherland Street. Eva Stewart, married was also listed at that address. Ernest's mother – Phoebe Stewart was listed as a widow at 186 Sutherland Street.

The 1917 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Perth, subdivision of Subiaco listed Ernest Stewart, Checker, of 33 Rowland Street. His mother – Phoebe Stewart, widow, was also listed at the same address.

Ernest Stewart was a 27 year old, single, Railway Employee from 33 Rowland Street, Subiaco, Western Australia when he enlisted on 29th June, 1917 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 3924 & his religion was Congregational. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs P. Stewart of 33 Rowland Street, Subiaco, Western Australia. Ernest Stewart stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service but was "made fit by operation".

Private Ernest Stewart was posted to No. 3 Depot on 29th June, 1917 for recruit training. He was transferred to 11th Reinforcements of the 51st Infantry Battalion on 15th August, 1917.

Private Ernest Stewart embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Aeneas (A60)* on 30th October, 1917 with the 11th Reinforcements of the 51st Infantry Battalion & disembarked at Devonport, England on 27th December, 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 Ernest Stewart was marched in from Australia to 13th Training Battalion at Codford, Wiltshire on 27th December, 1917.

Private Ernest Stewart proceeded overseas to France via Dover from Codford on 1st April, 1918. He was marched in to 4th M.D.B.D. (Medical Base Depot) at Calais, France on 1st April, 1918 & proceeded to join his Unit on 4th April, 1918. Private Stewart was taken on strength of 51st Battalion in the Field on 6th April, 1918.

Private Ernest Stewart was wounded in action on 25th April, 1918. He was admitted to 25th Field Ambulance on 26th April, 1918 with shrapnel wounds to face, arm & back. Private Stewart was transferred the same day to 55th Casualty Clearing Station then transferred & admitted to 9th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 28th April, 1918. He embarked for England on Hospital Ship *Grantully Castle* on 30th April, 1918.

51st Battalion

With the collapse of Russia in October 1917, a major German offensive on the Western Front was expected in early 1918. This occurred in France in late March and the 4th Division moved to defend positions around Dernancourt on the River Ancre. The 51st Battalion assisted in the repulse of a large German attack on 5 April, launching a critical counter-attack late in the day. The German threat remained until late April, and in the early hours of ANZAC Day 1918 the 51st participated in the now legendary attack to dislodge the enemy from Villers-Bretonneux.

(Extract of Battalion information from The Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 51st Battalion

Cachy (Switch Trench) 25th April, 1918

Heavy shelling of Bn area by enemy artillery, during morning 2 German non Commissioned Officers came in under flag of truce & with a verbal message from their Commander, stating that as our troops were surrounded on three sides he asked that we should surrender, this request as refused & the N.C.O.'s concerned were sent back under escort to the H.Q. of 24th Inf Bde. Enemy snipers & machine gun fire very active on our front line trenches, causing casualties. Reconnaissance of our front made by Officers of 8th Zouaves Regt. (French). Weather fine & clear.

(War Diary information from The Australian War Memorial)

Private Ernest Stewart was admitted to Alexandra Hospital, Cosham, Hampshire, England on 1st May, 1918 with multiple gunshot wounds & was listed as dangerously ill.

Private Ernest Stewart died at 8.10 pm on 12th May, 1918 at Alexandra Hospital, Cosham, Hampshire, England from wounds received in action in France & Septicaemia.

A death for Ernest Stewart, aged 29, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Fareham, Hampshire, England.

Private Ernest Stewart was buried at 2pm on 15th May, 1918 in Christ Church Military Cemetery, Portsdown, Hampshire, England – Plot number B. 13A and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private Stewart - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military Funeral., The coffin was draped with the Union Jack Flag. Gun Carriage, Firing Party, Buglers and Pallbearers were present. Prior to the interment a service was held by the Rev. Bruce Pearson in the Parish Church, Portsdown. The grave will be turfed immediately and an oak cross will be erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Private Ernest Stewart requested in his Will dated 20th August, 1917 that in the event of his death his mother – Phoebe Stewart be appointed Executor if his Will & the whole of his real and personal estate be bequeathed to his mother.

Base Records contacted Mrs P. Stewart, mother of the late Private Ernest Stewart, in June, 1921 asking if there were any nearer blood relatives than herself due to the “Deceased Soldiers Estates Act 1918” which stated that the War Medals & Mementoes of a deceased soldier were to be handed in the following order of relationship – Widow, eldest surviving son, eldest surviving daughter, father, mother, eldest surviving brother, eldest surviving sister etc. The letter was returned unclaimed & investigations sent to 5th Military District who advised in August, 1921 that the father of the late Private Ernest Stewart was deceased & his mother was now residing at Kalamunda, Western Australia.

Private Ernest Stewart was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Stewart's mother – Mrs Phoebe Stewart, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent October, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Ernest Stewart – service number 3924, aged 28, of 51st Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Thomas and Phoebe Stewart, of 31 Rowland St, Subiaco, Western Australia.

Private E. Stewart is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 154.



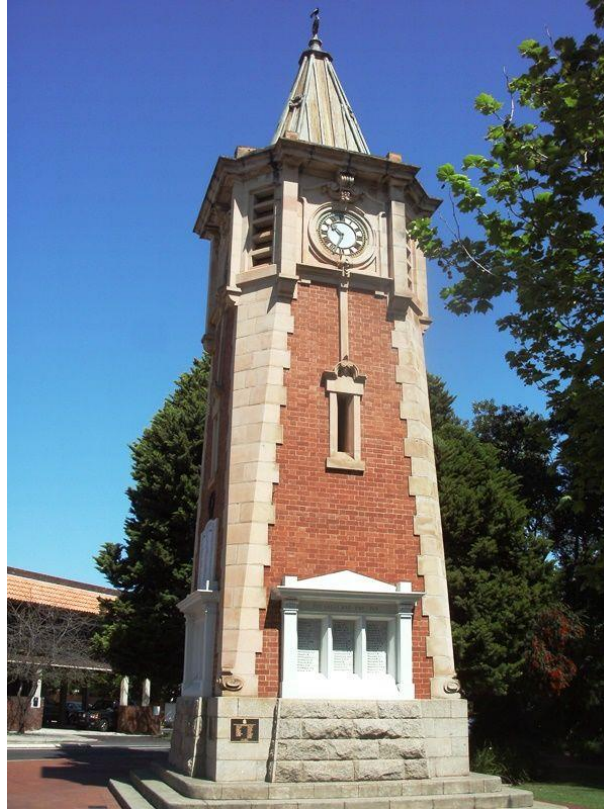
Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Private Ernest Stewart is remembered with a Memorial Plaque (M443) on the Kings Park Honour Avenues. At the base of each commemorative tree is a plaque inscribed with details of the deceased: name, age, unit in which they served, nature of death, place of death, and who dedicated the plaque. Honour Avenue memorials commemorate service personnel who are listed at the State War Memorial, Kings Park. These soldiers enlisted in Western Australia, died overseas on active service, and were either buried overseas or have no known graves.



(Photos from Kings Park Botanic Gardens & Parks Authority)

E. Stewart is remembered on Subiaco Fallen Soldiers Memorial, located in Rankin Gardens, Rokeby & Hamersley Roads, Subiaco, Western Australia.



Subiaco Fallen Soldiers Memorial (Photos from Monument Australia)



E. Stewart is remembered on Subiaco Municipal Honour Roll, located in Community Centre, 203 Bagot Road, Subiaco, Western Australia.



Subiaco Municipal Honour Roll (Photo from Monument Australia)

E. Stewart 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.

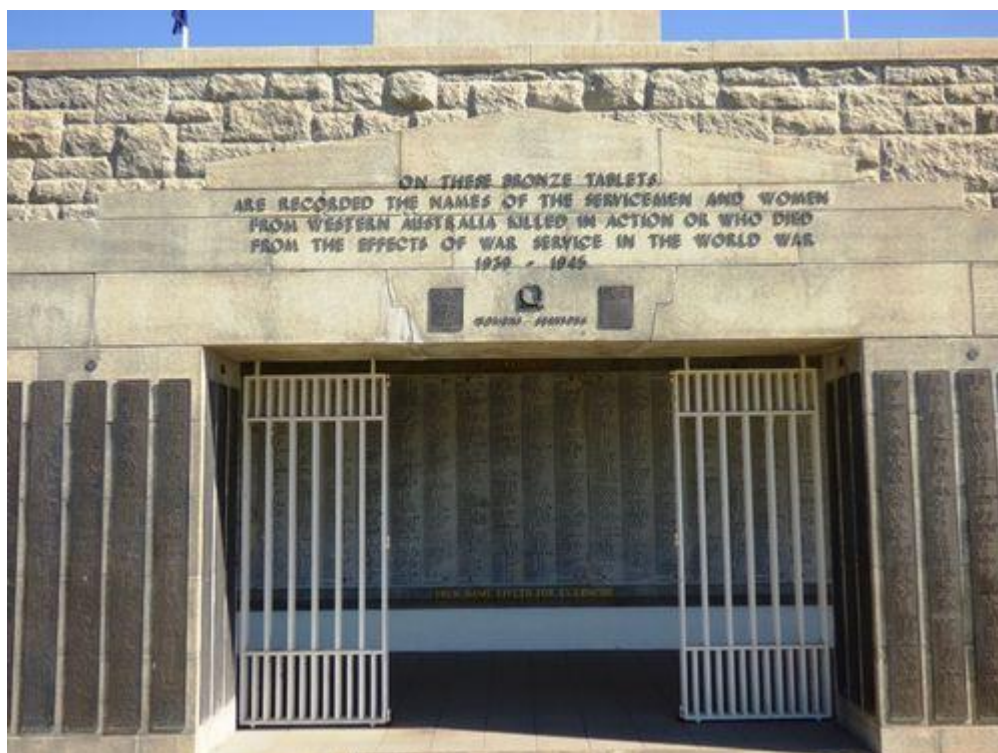
The heavy concrete foundations are supplemented by heavy brick walls which enclose an inner chamber or crypt. The walls surrounding the crypt are covered with The Roll of Honour; marble tablets which list under their units the names of more than 7,000 members of the services killed in action or as a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

(60 pages of Private Ernest Stewart'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

WAR CASUALTIES

Mrs P. Stewart, of 31 Rowland-street, Subiaco, has been notified that her son, Private Ernest Stewart, died of wounds received in France on May 12.

(The West Australian, Perth, Western Australia – 24 May, 1918)

AUSTRALIANS IN ACTION

W.A. ROLL OF HONOUR

DIED OF WOUNDS

Ernest Stewart, Subiaco, previously reported missing.

(Kalgoorlie Miner, Western Australia – 1 June, 1918)

MEMORIAM

Anzac Heroes

STEWART – In proud and loving memory of our son and brother, Ernest Stewart, Private 51st Battalion, who, from wounds received at Villers Bretonneux, France, died at Alexander Hospital, Cosham, England, on May 12, 1918.

His duty done.

Inserted by his mother and brother, 31 Rowland-street, Subiaco.

STEWART – In loving memory of Ernest Stewart, died of wounds May 12, 1918.

Inserted by his brother & sister-in-law, Will and Phyllis.

STEWART – In loving memory of my dear brother Ernie, who died of wounds, Cosham Hospital, England, May 12, 1918.

And when you hear of brave boys dying,

You may not care, they're not your own,

But just suppose you lose a loved one,

That's the time when it strikes home.

Inserted by Mrs F. Simmons and niece Doris.

STEWART – In memory of our sincere friend, Pte Ernie Stewart, who died of wounds on May 12, 1918.

A soldier and a man.

Inserted by his friends, Crouch family,

(The West Australian, Perth, Western Australia – 12 May, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Heroes

STEWART – In loving memory of our dear son and brother who died of wounds received at Villers-Bretonneux, May 12, 1918.

We cannot read God's purpose,
Yet there will come a day
When He will show each other
Why her boy was _____ away.

Inserted by his loving mother and family.

STEWART – In memory of our dear friend Private Ernie Stewart who died of wounds on May 12, 1918.

Ever remembered.

Inserted by Fred Crouch and family.

(The West Australian, Perth, Western Australia – 12 May, 1920)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Heroes

STEWART – In loving memory of Private Ernest Stewart, who died in May 12, 1918, of wounds, received at Villers Bretonneux.

Inserted by his loving mother and brothers, Viv and Tom.

STEWART – In loving memory of our dear son and brother Ernest, who died on May 12, 1918 of wounds received at Villers Bretonneux. His duty nobly done.

Inserted by his loving mother and family.

(The West Australian, Perth, Western Australia – 12 May, 1921)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Heroes

STEWART – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Private Ernest Stewart, died of wounds received at Villers Bretonneux May 12, 1918. Aged 28 years.

Ever remembered.

Inserted by his loving mother and brothers Viv and Tom.

STEWART – In loving memory of our dear brother and uncle, Ernie, who died of wounds, on May 12, 1918, at Cosham, England. Lest we Forget.

Inserted by his loving sister, brother-in-law, T. and B. Proud, niece and nephews.

(The West Australian, Perth, Western Australia – 12 May, 1922)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Heroes

STEWART – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Private Ernest Stewart, who died of wounds received at Villers Bretonneux May 12, 1918.

Ever remembered.

Inserted by his loving mother and brothers Viv and Tom.

STEWART – In loving memory of our dear brother and uncle, Ernie, who died of wounds received at Villers Bretonneux on April 25, 1918.

Ever remembered.

Inserted by his sister and brother-in-law and family.

(The West Australian, Perth, Western Australia – 12 May, 1923)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Heroes

STEWART – In proud and loving memory of our dear brother and uncle, Ernie, who died at Cosham, England, on May 12, 1918, of wounds received at Villers Bretonneux on April 25, 1918.

Lest we forget.

Inserted by his sister and brother and family.

(The West Australian, Perth, Western Australia – 12 May, 1924)

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 E. Stewart does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Death Is The Gate Of Life

Christ Church Military Cemetery, Portsdown, Hampshire, England

Christ Church Military Cemetery, Portsdown contains 167 Commonwealth War Graves - 133 from World War 1, including 2 from Belgian Army & 34 relating to World War 2. There are 6 Australian World War 1 War Graves.



Christ Church Military Cemetery, Portsdown (Photo above from CWGC & below from Peter Bennett)



Photo of Private E. Stewart's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Christ Church Military Cemetery, Portsdown, Hampshire, England.



(Photo by FrankGrant – Find a Grave)



(Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)