

**Chichester Cemetery,  
Chichester, West Sussex  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**28327 BOMBARDIER**

**R. E. TAIT**

**AUST. FIELD ARTILLERY**

**4TH NOVEMBER, 1918    Age 26**

*A Good Soldier*

*Of Jesus Christ*

## Robert Edmund (Bert) TAIT

Robert Edmund Tait was born at Geelong, Victoria in 1892 to parents Lawrence & Ann Elizabeth Tait (nee Lyons).

Robert Edmund Tait attended State School at Horsham, Victoria.

Robert Edmund Tait had been apprenticed with Mr W. Sack of Horsham for 6 years.

Robert Edmund Tait was a 24 year old, single, Watchmaker & Jeweller from 22 Fairbairn Road, Toorak, Victoria when he enlisted in Melbourne, Victoria on 24th May, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 28327 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his father – L. Tait, of 17 Barkly Street, Ballarat, Victoria.

Gunner Robert Edmund Tait was posted to Field Artillery Brigade Reinforcements at Maribyrnong, Victoria on 7th June, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 10th Reinforcements of 4th Field Artillery Brigade on 12th October, 1916.

Gunner Robert Edmund Tait embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Ulysses* (A38) on 25th October, 1916 with the 4th Field Artillery Brigade, 10th Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 28th December, 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.

Gunner Robert Edmund Tait was marched in to R.B.A.A. (Reserve Brigade Australian Artillery), No. 4 Camp at Larkhill, Wiltshire, England on 29th December, 1916.

Gunner Robert Edmund Tait proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 22nd May, 1917 from R.B.A.A. (Reserve Brigade Australian Artillery) at Larkhill. He was marched in to A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot) at Rouelles, France on 23rd May, 1917 from England. He was marched out to 12th F.A.B. (Field Artillery Brigade) on 2nd June, 1917 & was taken on strength and posted to 47th Battery in Belgium on 5th June, 1917.

Gunner Robert Edmund Tait was written up for an Offence in the Field on 24th June, 1917 – *“Neglect to the prejudice of good order & Military discipline in that he in the field on 24.6.17 being a member of a day stable piquet did allow a horse to stray from the lines during his tour of duty.”* He was awarded 3 days Field Punishment No. 2.

Gunner Robert Edmund Tait was on leave to UK from 4th November, 1917 & rejoined from leave on 20th November, 1917.

Gunner Robert Edmund Tait was appointed as Acting Bombardier to complete Establishment in France on 23rd May, 1918.

Acting Bombardier Robert Edmund Tait was reported to be with his Unit in France on 23rd June, 1918.

Acting Bombardier Robert Edmund Tait was promoted to Temporary Bombardier on 15th August, 1918 vice A. J. Elliott evacuated.

Temporary Bombardier Robert Edmund Tait was wounded in action on 22nd October, 1918. He was admitted to 58th Casualty Clearing Station on 22nd October, 1918 having been Gassed. His rank reverted to Acting Bombardier on being evacuated wounded on 22nd October, 1918. Acting Bombardier Tait was transferred & admitted to 5th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 26th October, 1918. He was transferred & embarked for England on 29th October, 1918.

Acting Bombardier Robert Edmund Tait was admitted to Graylingwell War Hospital, Chichester, England on 30th October, 1918 gas poisoning. He was later developed Influenza & Pneumonia.

Bombardier Robert Edmund Tait died at 7.15 am on 4th November, 1918 at Graylingwell War Hospital, Chichester, Sussex, England from wounds – gas poisoning then pneumonia following influenza & cardiac failure.

A death for Robert E. Tait, aged 27, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Chichester, Sussex, England.



Bombardier Robert Edmund Tait was buried on 8th November, 1918 in Chichester Cemetery, Chichester, West Sussex, England – Plot number 134.79 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Bombardier Robert Edmund Tait - *Coffin was Elm, brass mounts. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military funeral. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and surmounted by wreaths sent from:- Australian patients in hospital. A party of R.A.M.C. men from hospital acted as pallbearers and the "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside. The burial service was conducted by the Rev: H. Rundle, of Chichester, and many Australian patients and nurses from the Greylingwell Military Hospital were present. The grave will be turfed and an oak cross erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Names of Relatives or Friends present at the Funeral – Nurse Gordon Baker, Sister Dow, A.I.F., C.S.M. F. R. Castlemaine 22Bn i/c of 40 Australians from hospital.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Bombardier Robert Edmund Tait contains a letter from Sister Mabel Dow, Graylingwell War Hospital, Chichester which reads: *"The matron gave me your letter to answer as Pte R. G. Tait was in my Ward. I have already written full particulars to his Mother enclosing a few photographs of his funeral and the wreaths on his coffin. Being an Australian myself, I know how much she will be grieving. Pte Tait came over on a convoy on the 30th October, 1918. He was gassed in France and on arrival here was suffering from Influenza. He had a high temperature for eight days. Everything that it was possible to do was done for him. On the afternoon of the 8th November, he rapidly became worse and partly delirious, developed acute double pneumonia during the night and was unconscious, He died very suddenly at 7 am on the 9th November, 1918. He was buried in the Soldiers Plot, in the Chichester Cemetery. His funeral was attended by a Clergy of his own Church and he was followed to his grave by forty-five Australian Soldiers. I have written all I could think of to his mother. Perhaps some*



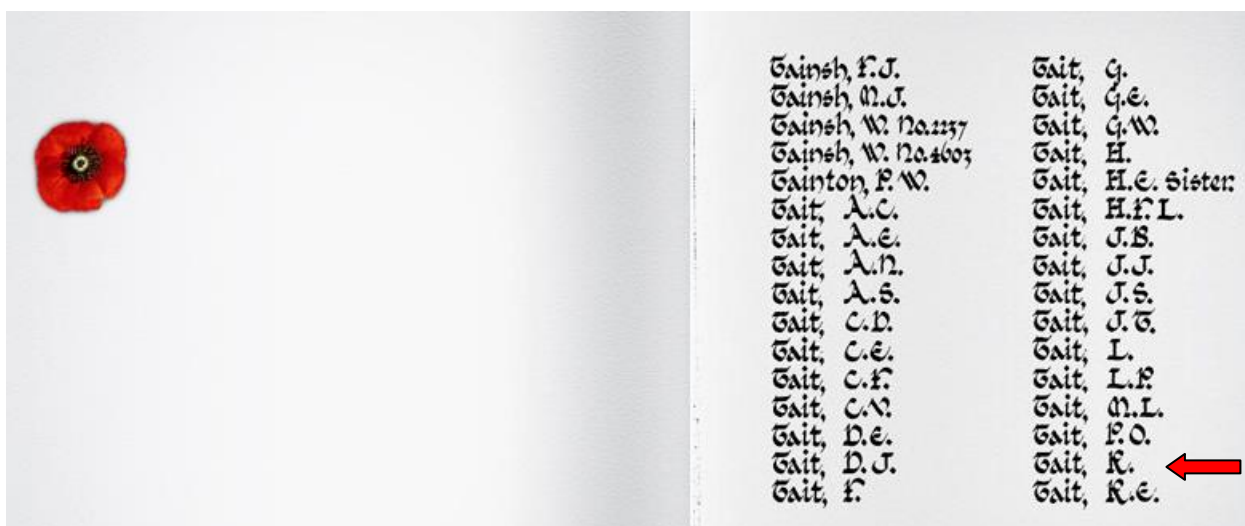
day, later on, I may be able to see her myself. The patient's Pay-book and letters were sent to the A.I.F. Headquarters."

Robert Edmund Tait, of Marybyrnong, requested in his Will that Lawrence Tait, Methodist Minister, of 17 Barkly Street, Ballarat East, Victoria was bequeathed all his real and personal estate to be disposed of as he thinks best. William Sack, Jeweller of Horsham, Victoria was appointed as Executor of the Will.

Bombardier Robert Edmund Tait was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Bombardier Tait's father - Rev. L. Tait, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent December, 1921 & Plaque sent September, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Bombardier Robert Edmund Tait – service number 28327, aged 26, of 47th Bty., 12th Australian Field Artillery. He was the son of the Rev. Lawrence Tait and Ann E. Tait, of Ballarat, Victoria, Australia.

R. E. Tait is remembered in the Book of Remembrance at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, Victoria.



Book of Remembrance at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne



R. E. Tait & his brother L. Tait are remembered on the Melbourne Wesley Ministers and Sons Stained Glass Window at Wesley Uniting (formerly Methodist) Church, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

*Faithful Unto Death:*

*Inscription -To the Glory of God and in memory of the Methodist Ministers' Sons of this Conference who in response to the call of God and duty laid down their lives in the Great War 1914-1918. Erected by their parents. [21 names listed]*

*Description & History- At a ceremony on 1 March 1920, the Reverend A McCallum, representing the Wesley Church trustees, presented the window on behalf of the parents who suffered the loss of their sons in the First World War. The President of the Methodist Conference, the Reverend R. Ditterich, noted at the unveiling 'that no class had given more to the defence of Australia than the manses of the Methodist Church'.*



**Melbourne Wesley Ministers and Sons Stained Glass Window  
at Wesley Uniting (formerly Methodist) Church, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne**

*(Photo from Victorian Heritage Database)*

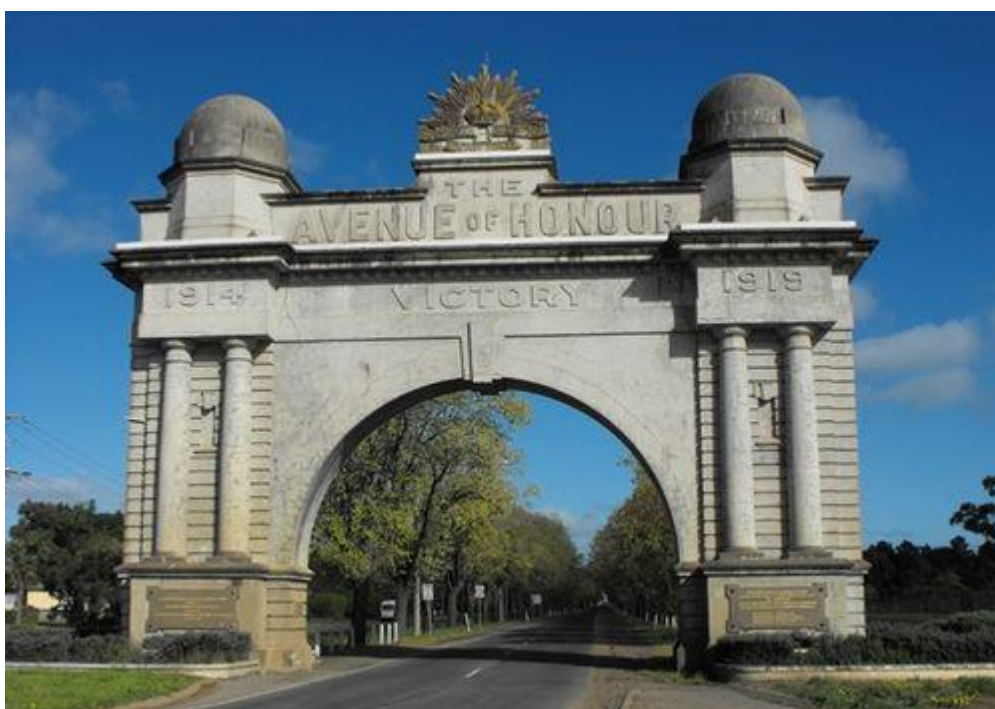


R. E. Tait & his brother L. Tait, are both remembered on the Ballarat Memorial Wall & Rotunda located at Sturt Street and Learmonth Avenue, Ballarat, Victoria.



**Ballarat Memorial Wall & Rotunda** (Photo from Carol's Headstone Photos)

Robert E. Tait is also remembered on the Ballarat Avenue of Honour (1917-1919) where almost 4,000 trees were planted to represent the number of men and women from the Ballarat district who served in World War 1. The trees were planted at intervals of 12 metres along 22 kms of the Ballarat-Burrembeet Road. The Ballarat Avenue of Honour is famous for being the first avenue of its kind in Australia. Tree number 3629. His brother Lawrence Tait is remembered with Tree No. 3631.



**The Arch of Victory was built as an entrance to the Avenue of Honour** (Photo from Monument Australia)





**Ballarat Avenue of Honour** (Photo from *Victorian War Heritage Inventory*)

R. E. Tait & his brother Laurie Tait, are both remembered on the Stained Glass window in Barkly Street Uniting Church, Ballarat East, Victoria.



**Stained Glass window in Barkly Street Uniting Church, Ballarat East**

(Photo from *Virtual War Memorial, Australia*)





**Stained Glass window in Barkly Street Uniting Church, Ballarat East**

*(Photos from Virtual War Memorial, Australia)*

Bombardier R. E. Tait is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 17.



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



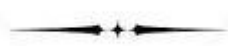
(49 pages of Bombardier Robert Edmund Tait's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

*Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives*



### Connected to Bombardier Robert Edmund Tait:

Younger brother – Lawrence Tait – Private 61006. Enlisted 4th May, 1918, Bank Clerk, aged 20. Embarked 31st August, 1918 from Melbourne on HMAT Barambah (A37) with 9th Victorian Reinforcements. Died at Sea 18th October, 1918. Commemorated Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England.



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **AUSTRALIA'S HONOR ROLL**

#### **KILLED AND WOUNDED**

The many friends of the Rev. L. Tait and Mrs. Tait will regret to learn that their second son, Lance-Corporal Lawrence Tait, died of illness (at sea) while on active service, on October 18th. Another son, Gunner R. E. Tait, is at the front. Deceased was a fine lad, and was well known to the people of Warracknabeal. Prior to enlisting he was a prominent member of the Nicholson street Methodist Sunday school, Ballarat, and was also an officer of the Mutual Improvement Association and Christian Endeavor Society. General sympathy will be felt for Mr. and Mrs. Tait and the members of the family in their severe bereavement.

*(Warracknabeal Herald, Victoria – 1 November, 1918)*

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### **PERSONAL**

Word had been received by the Rev. L. Tai that his son, Bombardier R. E. Tait, of the Field Artillery Brigade, has been reported wounded. He is the eldest son of Mr Tait, who only a fortnight ago received word of the death at sea of his second son, Private L. Tait.

*(The Ballarat Star, Victoria- 9 November, 1918)*

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### **AUSTRALIANS ON SERVICE**

#### **FATAL GAS-POISONING**

TAIT – The Rev. L. Tait (superintendent of the Ballarat East Methodist circuit) has been notified that his son, Gunner R. E. Tait, died on November 4, of gas-poisoning. A few days previously it had been reported that Gunner Tait had been wounded. It was only about a week ago that Mr Tait was informed that another son, Lance-Corporal L. Tait, had died at sea.

*(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 11 November, 1918) & (The Horsham Times, Victoria – 15 November, 1918) &*

*(Casterton Free Press and Glenelg Shire Advertiser, Vic – 18 November, 1918)*

## **NEWS OF SOLDIERS**

The Rev. L. Tait, president of the Ballarat East Methodist circuit, on Sunday learned that his second son, Gunner R. E. Tait, had died from gas poisoning. A week ago Mr Tait learnt that his first son, L. Tait, had been killed in action.

*(Bendigo Advertiser, Bendigo, Victoria – 11 November, 1918) & (Bendigonian, Bendigo, Victoria – 14 November, 1918)*

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## **ROLL OF HONOUR**

Lance-Corporal (Lol) Tait died at sea on October 18th, 1918, while his brother, Gunner R. E. Tait died of gas poisoning in France on 4th November, 1918. Both these are sons of the Rev. Laurence Tait, Ballarat, and nephews of Cr. T. F. Lyons, of Essendon.

*(The Essendon Gazette and Keilor, Bulla and Broadmeadows Reporter, Moonee Ponds, Victoria – 21 November, 1918)*

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## **BEREAVEMENT CARDS**

TAIT – The Rev. L. Tait, Mrs Tait, and family return sincere thanks to their many friend for letters, &c., of sympathy in the time of deep sorrow caused by the death on active service of their two sons and brothers, Bombr. R. E. Tait, and L. Cpl. L. Tait.

*(The Ballarat Courier, Ballarat, Victoria – 30 November, 1918)*

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## **CASUALTY LISTS**

### **451 AND 451 A**

#### **DIED FROM OTHER CAUSES**

A-Bomb R. E Tait, Ballarat East (illness)

*(The Evening Echo, Ballarat, Victoria – 16 December, 1918)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

TAIT – A tribute of love to the memory of our dear nephews, Bombardier Robert Edmund (Bert), died in England, November 4, 1918, aged 26 years; also Lance-Corporal Lawrence, died at sea, October 18, 1918, aged 21 years; the brave sons of the Rev. Lawrence Tait, Methodist minister, Ballarat East.

United in higher service.

Where evening shadows never fall,

Where Thou, eternal Light of Light, art Lord of all.

-(Aunties, Toorak).

*(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 4 November, 1919)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

TAIT – In fond memory of our brave nephews, Bombardier Robert Edmund (Bert), who died at Greylingwell War Hospital, England, November 4, 1918, aged 26 years; also Lance-Corporal Lawrence, who died on board the Barambah, October 18, 1918, aged 21 years; the much loved sons of Rev. L. Tait, Methodist minister, Geelong.

“Behind all shadows standeth God.”

-(Aunties, Toorak).

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 4 November, 1921)

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

TAIT – In proud and loving memory of our brave nephews, Robert Edmund (Bert), who died in England, November 4, 1918; also Lawrence, who died at sea, October 18, 1918; dearly loved sons of Rev. L. and Mrs Tait, Geelong.

-(Aunties, Toorak).

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 4 November, 1922)

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

TAIT – In proud and loving memory of our dear nephews, Bombardier Robert Edmund (Bert), died in England on November 4, 1918, aged 26 years; also Lance-Corporal Lawrence, died at sea on October 18, 1918, aged 21 years. The beloved sons of Rev. L. and Mrs Tait, Geelong.

Two of the best.

The price of peace.

-(Aunties, Toorak).

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 3 November, 1923)

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

TAIT – In proud memory of our brave nephews, Bombardier Robert Edmund (Bert), died in England 4th November, 1918, aged 26 years; also Lance-Corporal Lawrence, died at sea, 18th October, 1918, aged 21 years; beloved sons of Rev. L. and Mrs Tait, Methodist Parsonage, Geelong.

Father, in Thy gracious keeping

Leave we now Thy servants sleeping

-(Aunties, Toorak).

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 4 November, 1924)

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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. 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)*

Bombardier R. E. Tait does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*A Good Soldier Of Jesus Christ*

### **Chichester Cemetery, Chichester, West Sussex, England**

Chichester Cemetery has 174 Commonwealth War Graves. Also known as Portfield Cemetery.

Of the 89 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war, the majority are in a War Graves Plot in Squares 121 and 126 bordering a path on the far right hand side of the cemetery. This was constructed by the City Corporation, who also erected the War Cross at the eastern end of the enclosed plot especially designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield and closely resembling the Commission's own Cross of Sacrifice. The names of the 1914-1918 war dead in the cemetery are engraved on the base of the Cross. There are also 75 Commonwealth burials of the 1939-1945 war here, mainly in two adjoining Church of England dedicated Squares, Nos. 115 and 159, in the south-western portion of the cemetery enclosed by a hedgerow on three sides, on the fourth side a wall bearing the inscription 1939-1945 THE MEN AND WOMEN BURIED IN THIS PLOT DIED IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE. In the northern section a further Square, No. 42, is dedicated to Roman Catholic burials, there is a metal plaque bearing a similar inscription. There are also 7 non-Commonwealth war burials and 4 non World War burials in the care of C.W.G.C. within the cemetery. *(Information from CWGC)*



**Chichester Cemetery** *(Photo by Adrienne – Find a Grave)*





**Some War Graves in Chichester Cemetery** (Photo above by Basher Eyre; below from CWGC)





Photo of Bombardier R. E. Tait's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Chichester Cemetery, Chichester, West Sussex, England.



*(Photo courtesy of Allan Noble)*





**Chichester Cemetery** (Photo by Adrienne – Find a Grave)