

**Brookwood Military Cemetery,
Brookwood, Surrey
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



21 PRIVATE

W. G. THOMAS

AUST. ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS

14TH APRIL, 1918 Age 33

William George THOMAS

William George Thomas was born at Port Lincoln, South Australia on 30th March, 1885 to parents Isaac and Martha Thomas (nee Snellgrove).

According to information supplied by his wife for the Roll of Honour - William George Thomas attended school at Willington (Note – should be Wilmington), South Australia.

William George Thomas married Ruby Myrtle Shrowder on 15th November, 1910 at Tarcowie, South Australia.

Newspaper Notice – *The Advertiser*, South Australia – 7 December, 1910:

MARRIAGES

THOMAS – SHROWDER – ON the 15th November, at the Methodist Church, Tarcowie, by Rev. J. Martin, William George Thomas son of I. Thomas, Hyde Park, to Ruby Myrtle, only daughter of Mr A. Shrowder, Tarcowie.

William George Thomas was a 31 year old, married (no children), Electrical Fitter from Hyde Park, South Australia when he enlisted at Adelaide, South Australia on 27th December, 1917 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 21 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Ruby Myrtle Thomas, 9 Fashoda Street, Hyde Park, South Australia. William's younger brother, 28 year old, Electrical Engineer Ronald Victor Thomas had enlisted on 19th September, 1916. William Thomas stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served as an Apprentice for 3 years with Adelaide University.

The Medical History Report for William George Thomas recorded that he had a history of pleurisy 12 years ago.

Private William George Thomas was posted to "B" Company at Mitcham on 7th February, 1917 for recruit training. He was transferred to 13th Reinforcements of 32nd Battalion on 1st March, 1917 then transferred to Reinforcements Artillery on 16th March, 1917.

Private William George Thomas was transferred to Field Artillery Reinforcements at Maribyrnong on 11th April, 1917. He was admitted to Clearing Hospital at Maribyrnong on 25th April, 1917 with Rheumatic pains & discharged to duty on 26th April, 1917. Private Thomas was transferred to I. O. M. Section (Inspector of Ordnance Machinery), A.A.O.C. (Australian Army Ordnance Corps) on 5th November, 1917.

Australian Army Ordnance Corps (A.A.O.C.)

The task of providing Ordnance support to the front line soldier was the responsibility of this Corps. Logistical movement of ammunition, weapons, clothing, medical considerations, vehicles and salvage of battlefield equipment.

Fitter William George Thomas & his younger brother Corporal Ronald Victor Thomas, both embarked from Adelaide, South Australia on HMAT *Borda* (A30) on 5th January, 1918 with the Army Ordnance Corps (I.O.M. Section) & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 4th March, 1918.

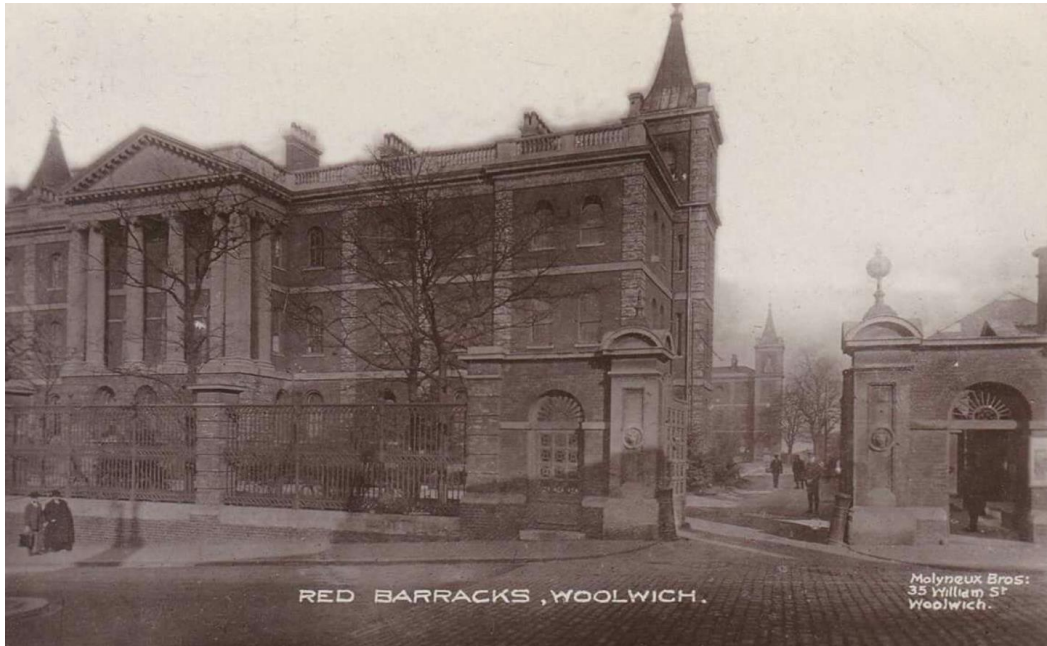
Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England.

[Note- Rank listed as Fitter on Embarkation Roll but listed as Private or Fitter throughout his Service Record file.]

Private William George Thomas reported at Administrative Headquarters, London, England on 4th March, 1918 on disembarking from Australia.

Private William George Thomas was granted Leave from 4th March, 1918 until 11th March, 1918.

Private William George Thomas was marched in to Army Ordnance Corps, Red Barracks at Woolwich, England for special duty on 11th March, 1918.



Private William George Thomas was sent sick to Brook Hospital on 4th April, 1918. He was admitted the same day & was reported to be seriously ill with Pneumonia. The Hospital Admissions for recorded that he had Nephritis also.

Private William George Thomas died at 9.40 am on 14th April, 1918 at Brook War Hospital, Woolwich, England from Pneumonia. A Telegram from War Hospital to Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London stated “21 Private Thomas William, Australian Army Ordnance Corps attached AOC Woolwich died here today AAA Brother attached same Corps as deceased present.”

A death for William G. Thomas, aged 33, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Woolwich, London, England.

Private William George Thomas was buried at 1.30 pm on 18th April, 1918 in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England – Australian Military Burial Ground Grave No. 180, 850.

From the burial report of Private William George Thomas - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military Funeral. The coffin was draped with the Australian Flag and surmounted by several beautiful wreaths. Firing Party and Bugler were supplied by the Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London, and Pallbearers by the A.A.O.C. . A representative party of members of the I. O. M. Section A.A.O.C. under the command of Capt Henderson followed the remains to the Cemetery. The grave will be turfed immediately 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 of friends present at the Funeral – BROTHER No. 15 Cpl THOMAS, R.B. Red Barracks, Woolwich, A.A.O.C. and FRIEND No. 17 Cpl TOOHEY, J. A.A.O.C. Red Barracks, Woolwich.

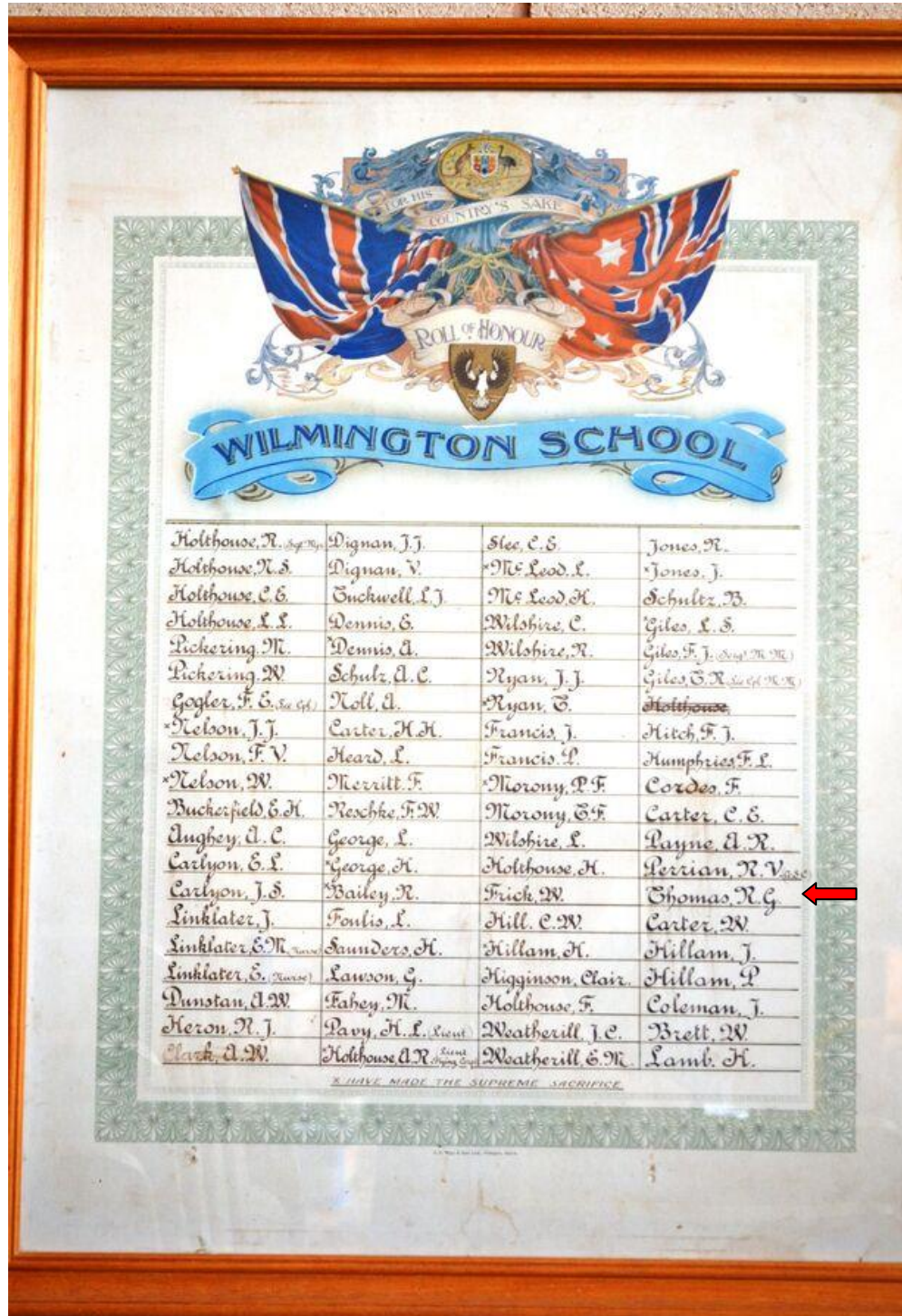
A War Pension was granted to Ruby Myrtle Thomas, 9 Fashoda St, Hyde Park, widow of the late Private William George Thomas, in the sum of £2/6/- per fortnight from 17th June, 1918.

Base Records wrote to Mrs R. M. Thomas, 9 Fashoda Street, Hyde Park, South Australia on 19th April, 1923 stating that the site of No. 21 Private W. G. Thomas’ grave in Brookwood Military Cemetery had been officially registered as Plot 11 Row A Grave 8. “While the actual place of burial remains unchanged the previous registration allotted thereto has been altered to conform with the uniform layout of this Cemetery.” This is now recorded by CWGC as Memorial reference - XI.A.8. Private William George Thomas has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Private William George Thomas 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 Private Thomas' widow – Mrs R. M. Thomas, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent October, 1922).

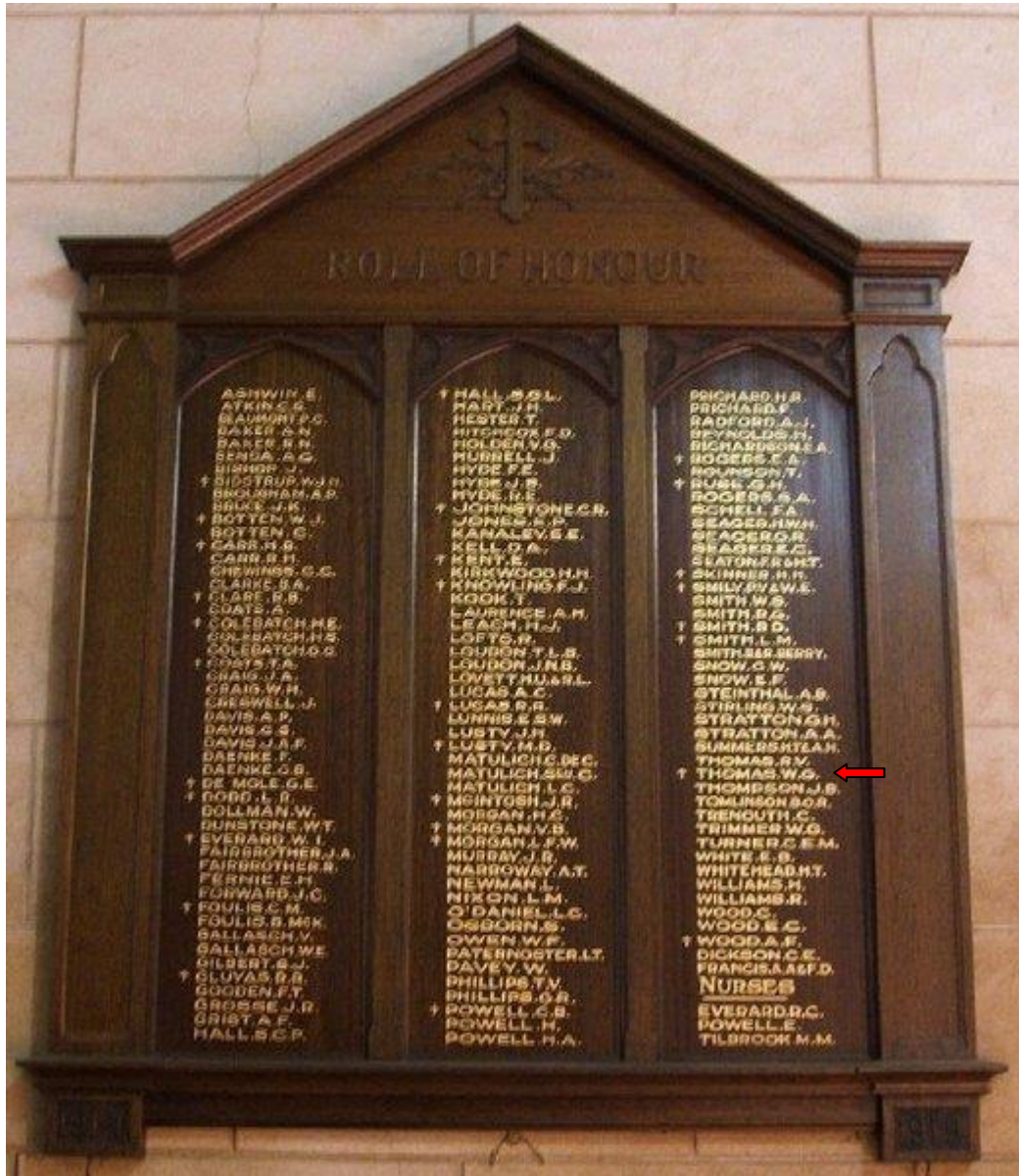
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private William George Thomas – service number 21, aged 33, of I.O.M. Sect., Australian Army Ordnance Corps. He was the son of Isaac and Martha Thomas.

W. G. Thomas is remembered on the Wilmington School Roll of Honour, located in Memorial Hall, Main North Road & Angas Terrace, Wilmington, South Australia.



Wilmington School Roll of Honour (Photo from Monument Australia – Rosalie Noll)

W. G. Thomas is remembered on the St. Augustine's Church Roll of Honour, located in St. Augustine Anglican Church, 183 Unley Road, Unley, South Australia.



St. Augustine's Church Roll of Honour (Photo from Monument Australia – Roger Johnson)

W. G. Thomas is remembered on the Unley City Honour Roll, located at Town Hall, Unley Road & Oxford Terrace, Unley, South Australia.



Unley City Honour Roll (Photo from Monument Australia)

W. G. Thomas is remembered on the Unley Memorial Arch, located in Memorial Gardens, Unley Road & Thomas Street, Unley, South Australia.



Unley Memorial Arch (Photo from Monument Australia)



W. G. Thomas 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)

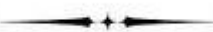
Private W. G. Thomas is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 184.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(50 pages of Private William George Thomas' 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



Connected to Private William George Thomas:

Younger brother Corporal Ronald Victor Thomas – enlisted 19th September, 1916 as a 28 year old Electrical Engineer. Embarked 5th January, 1918 from Adelaide – Service number 15 with Army Ordnance Corps (I.O.M. Section). Returned to Australia 28th July, 1919.





Private William George Thomas



Newspaper Notices

AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS

DIED FOR THEIR COUNTRY

Gunner WILLIAM GEORGE THOMAS was the second son of Mr I. Thomas (late 11th Hussars) and Mrs M. Thomas, Fashoda-street, Unley. He leaves a widow, but no children. He was an electrician, and worked for the Adelaide Electric Light Company, but later managed his brother's business when the latter enlisted. A few months later he enlisted himself. He was captain of the Hyde Park Tennis Club, and was very popular. When he enlisted the club refused to appoint another captain, elected him to that office for life, and presented him with a watch. On Saturday the members refrained from playing, but hoisted half-mast high the pennant their late captain had helped win. Another brother (R. V. Thomas) is serving at the front.

(Chronicle, South Australia – 27 April, 1918)

HEROES OF THE GREAT WAR

THOMAS – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Private William George Thomas, who died on active service, 14th April, 1918. –Inserted by his loving father, mother, brothers, and sisters.

(Chronicle, South Australia – 19 April, 1919)

CASUALTY LISTS

ISSUED TO-DAY

THE 395TH

DIED (CAUSE NOT STATED)

21. Fitter W. G. THOMAS, Hyde Park, 14/4/18

(The Mail, Adelaide, South Australia – 4 May, 1918)

THE ROLL OF HONOR

397th CASUALTY LIST

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Died of Illness

21. Fitter W. G. THOMAS, Hyde Park, (now rep. died of illness, 14/4/18, p.r. died cause not stated).

(The Advertiser, Adelaide, South Australia – 9 May, 1918)

IN MEMORY OF THE BRAVE

THOMAS – In loving memory of my dear husband, William, who died on the 14th April, 1918, in Brook War Hospital, England.

A precious one from me is gone,
A voice I loved is stilled;
A vacant place is in my home,
Which never can be filled.

-Inserted by his loving wife.

THOMAS – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Pte William George Thomas, who died on active service on the 14th April, 1918.

Inserted by his loving father mother, brothers, and sisters.

THOMAS – In loving memory of our dear brother-in-law, Will, who died in Brook War Hospital, England, on the 14th April, 1918.

Loved in life,
Honoured in death,
Cherished in memory.

-Inserted by O. and S. Shrowder

(The Register, Adelaide, South Australia – 19 April, 1919)

IN MEMORY OF THE BRAVE

THOMAS – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Gunner William George Thomas, who died on active service on the 14th April, 1918.

(The Register, Adelaide, South Australia – 14 April, 1920)

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)

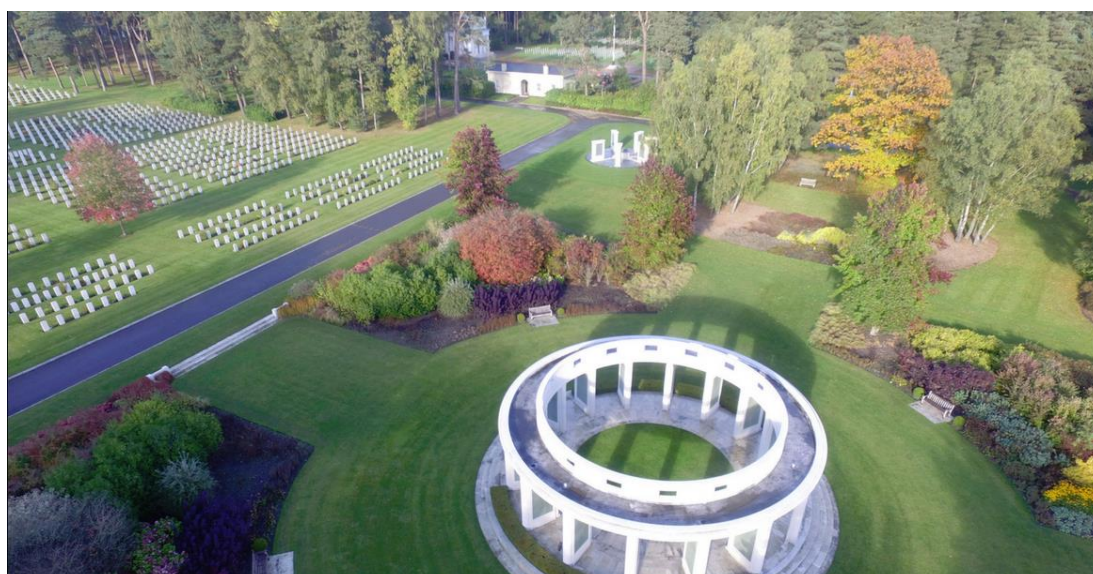
Private W. G. Thomas does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England

Located 30 miles from London in Surrey, Brookwood Military Cemetery is the largest CWGC cemetery in the United Kingdom. The cemetery contains the graves of more than 1,600 servicemen of the British Empire in the First World War and over 3,470 from the Second World War.

Brookwood Military Cemetery lies adjacent to Brookwood Cemetery (The London Necropolis), a vast space which covers 500 acres. In 1917, an area to the north of the cemetery was set aside as Brookwood Military Cemetery for men and women of Commonwealth forces who died, many of battle wounds, in the London district. This site was further extended to accommodate Commonwealth casualties of the Second World War. *(Information from CWGC)*

There are 446 Australian War Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery – 351 from World War 1 & 95 from World War 2.



Brookwood Military Cemetery *(Photo from CWGC)*



Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photos by Magicfingers)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00185

A large crowd attends an A.I.F. military funeral at Brookwood Cemetery. In the foreground wooden crosses mark rows of graves. (Photo c1919)

Identified: Front row, left to right: Second Lieutenant Douglas Abbott Ferguson, Australian Flying Corps, died of accidental injuries 18 August 1918; Lieutenant (Lt) Francis John Smedley MC, 7th Battalion, died of wounds 20 August 1918.

Second row: 6860 Private (Pte) James Alexander McKeown, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 20 June 1918; 3622 Pte S T Wilson, 2nd Australian Pioneers, died of wounds 4 July 1918; 2390 Sergeant Frederick Charles Stronell, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 9 July 1918; Lt Arthur Melville Lilburne MC, 6th Brigade Australian Field Artillery, died of disease 11 July 1918.



Australian Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photos by Magicfingers)





(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher)



Australian War Graves *(Photo courtesy of Neil Bright 2020)*

Photo of Private W. G. Thomas's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England.



(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher)



(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher – Jan 2021)

