

**Clacton Cemetery,
Clacton-On-Sea, Essex
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



206 LANCE CPL.

A. J. THOMSON

15TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

14TH AUGUST, 1916 Age 34

Albert James (Bert) THOMSON

Albert James Thomson was born in Sydney, NSW in 1882 to parents Robert A. & Janet Thomson (nee Turnbull). His birth was registered in the district of Balmain, Sydney, NSW.

Janet Thomson, mother of Albert James Thomson died in 1886.

Albert James Thomson attended school at Burrawang, NSW.

Albert James Thomson was a 33 year old, single, Labourer from 9 Beach Street, Dulwich Hill, Sydney, NSW when he enlisted on 8th October, 1914 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 206 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his uncle – John Turnbull, of 9 Beach Street, Dulwich Hill, Sydney, NSW & Robert Turnbull, Nambucca River. Albert Thomson stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served for 18 month with Rifle Club, Byron Bay and holds Marksman certificate.

Private Albert James Thomson was posted to 15th Battalion on 15th October, 1914 for recruit training.

Private Albert James Thomson was absent without leave from 9pm Roll Call on 28th November, 1914 while posted at Broadmeadows Camp, Victoria He was admonished & forfeited 1 days' pay.

Private Albert James Thomson embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Ceramic* (A40) on 22nd December, 1914 with the 15th Infantry Battalion "A" Company.

Private Albert James Thomson proceeded to join M.E.F. at Gallipoli Peninsula on 12th April, 1915.

Private Albert James Thomson was wounded in the neck at Gallipoli (no date listed). He was transferred to Hospital Ship *Gloucester Castle* then admitted to Kasr-el-Ani Hospital at Cairo on 10th May, 1915. Private Thomson was then admitted to Convalescent Depot at Helouan on 16th May, 1915 & discharged on 21st May, 1915. He was taken on strength of 15th Battalion at Gallipoli on 4th June, 1915.

Private Albert James Thomson was wounded in action at Gallipoli on 8th August, 1915. He embarked for England from Lemnos on the Hospital Ship *Aquitania* (no date).

From the War Diary – 15th Battalion: Casualties in this operation were Killed - Officers 0, Others 100; Wounded & Missing - Officers 7, Others 95; Wounded - Officers 3, Others 185.

Private Albert James Thomson was admitted to 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth on 23rd August, 1915 with GSW (Gunshot wound/s) to right arm & right thigh & pelvis. He was discharged on 14th September, 1915 & rejoined his Unit from Base Details at Mudros on 15th September, 1915.

Private Albert James Thomson disembarked at Alexandria from *Kingstonian* on 5th March, 1916 with No. 22 Draft returning to M.E.F. (Mediterranean Expeditionary Force) from Weymouth, England. He rejoined his Battalion at Tel-el-Kebir on 9th March, 1916.

Private Albert James Thomson was sent sick to Hospital on 19th March, 1916. He was sent to 4th Field Ambulance then transferred & admitted to No. 2 A.S.H. (Australian Stationary Hospital) at Tel-el-Kebir on 19th March, 1916 with Scabies. Private Thomson was transferred on 20th March, 1916 to No. 4 Base Hospital Train then admitted to 4th Auxiliary Hospital at Ghezireh on 28th March, 1916. He was discharged to rejoin his Unit on 31st March, 1916 & rejoined his Battalion at Serapeum on 2nd April, 1916.

Private Albert James Thomson proceeded to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) from Alexandria on 1st June, 1916 & disembarked from H.M.T. *Transylvania* at Marseilles, France on 8th June, 1916.

Private Albert James Thomson was to be Lance Corporal from 21st June 1916 while posted in France.

Lance Corporal Albert James Thomson was wounded in action in France on 8th August, 1916. He was admitted to 4th Field Ambulance on 8th August, 1916 with GSW to right leg. Private Thomson was transferred to 44th Casualty

Clearing Station on 9th August, 1916 then transferred & admitted on 10th August, 1916 to 2nd Australian General Hospital at Wimereux, France with shrapnel wounds to buttock & fractured fumer. Private Thomson was transferred to Boulogne on 12th August, 1916 for England on Hospital Ship Cambria on 12th August, 1916 with compound fracture to right thigh.

15th Battalion

The 15th Battalion AIF was raised from late September 1914, six weeks after the outbreak of the First World War. Three-quarters of the battalion were recruited as volunteers from Queensland, and the rest from Tasmania. With the 13th, 14th and 16th Battalions it formed the 4th Brigade, commanded by Colonel John Monash.

The Queensland and Tasmanian recruits were united when the battalion trained together in Victoria. They embarked for overseas just before Christmas. After a brief stop in Albany, Western Australia, the battalion proceeded to Egypt, arriving in early February 1915. Australia already had an AIF division there, the 1st. When the 4th Brigade arrived in Egypt, it became part of the New Zealand and Australian Division. The 4th Brigade landed at ANZAC late in the afternoon of 25 April 1915.

From May to August, the battalion was heavily involved in establishing and defending the front line of the ANZAC beachhead. In August, the 4th Brigade attacked Hill 971. The hill was taken at great cost although Turkish reinforcements forced the Australians to withdraw. At the end of the month, a detachment from A Company reinforced the 14th Battalion's unsuccessful attack on Hill 60. The 15th Battalion served at ANZAC until the evacuation in December.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the battalion returned to Egypt. While there, the AIF was expanded and was reorganised. The 15th Battalion was split and provided experienced soldiers for the 47th Battalion. The 4th Brigade was combined with the 12th and 13th Brigades to form the 4th Australian Division.

In June 1916 they sailed for France and the Western Front. From then until 1918, the battalion took part in bloody trench warfare. Its first major action in France was at Pozieres in August 1916.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Lance Corporal Albert James Thomson was admitted to Middlesex Hospital at Clacton-on-Sea with GSW fractured thigh – severe.

Lance Corporal Albert James Thomson died at 2.45 am on 14th August, 1916 at Middlesex Hospital, Clacton-on-Sea, England from wounds received in action in France – Gas, gangrene & shock.

A death for Albert J. Thomson, aged 35, was registered in the September quarter, 1916 in the district of Tendring, Essex, England.

Lance Corporal Albert James Thomson was buried on 16th August, 1916 in Clacton Cemetery, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, England – Plot number C. 252 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

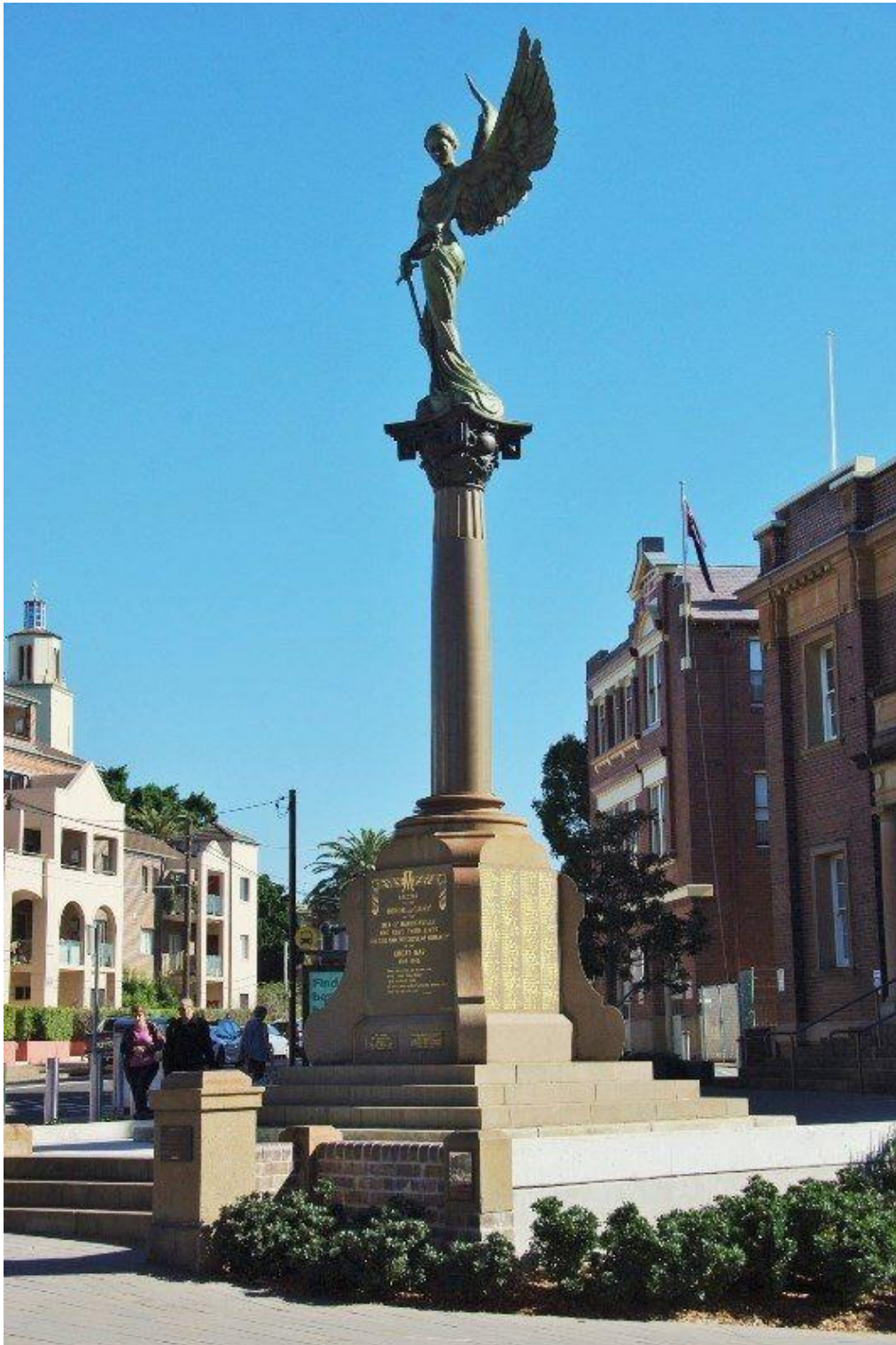
Base Records contacted Mr R. Turnbull, Macksville, Nambucca River, NSW in September, 1920 stating that he was listed on the records of the late Lance Corporal A. J. Thomson, 15th Battalion as the next of kin & in order to dispose of the War Medals they asked several questions regarding any closer relatives as it was understood that the parents of the late Lance Corporal Thomson were deceased. Medals were award to relative sin the following order after spouses &parents - eldest surviving brother, eldest surviving sister, half –brothers or half-sisters, paternal grandfather, paternal grandmother, maternal grandfather, maternal grandmother, nephews, nieces, then uncles etc. Robert Turnbull was listed as the eldest uncle.

The personal effects of the late Lance Corporal A. J. Thomson had previously been sent to Mr John Turnbull, 9 Beach Street, Dulwich Hill, NSW in February, 1917.

Lance Corporal Albert James Thomson was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Lance Corporal Thomson's uncle - Robert Turnbull, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent March, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Lance Corporal Albert James Thomson – service number 206, aged 34, of 15th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Robert and Janet Thomson.

A. J. Thomson is remembered on the Marrickville Soldiers' Memorial located outside the Town Hall, Marrickville Road, Marrickville, NSW.

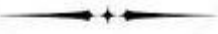


Marrickville Soldiers' Memorial (Photos from Monument Australia)

Information from the Roll of Honour, completed by R. Turnbull, of Macksville, Uncle to the late Lance Corporal Albert James Thomson states that he was chiefly connected to Moss Vale, NSW. It does not appear that Albert James Thomson is remembered on any Memorial in the Moss Vale area.

(44 pages of Lance Corporal Albert James Thomson'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



Newspaper Notices

AUSTRALIAN LOSSES

CASUALTIES AT GALLIPOLI

81ST OFFICIAL LIST

New South Wales

Wounded

Pte A. J. THOMSON, 15th (Dulwich Hill), second occasion

(Evening News, Sydney, NSW – 23 September, 1915)

DOUBLE AUSTRALIAN FUNERAL

Two wounded soldiers of the Australian Contingent died at the Middlesex Red Cross Hospital, Clacton, on Monday—Pt. Walter Ernest Herriott and Pt. Albert Jas. Thomson. They were buried with military honours on Wednesday, the Durham L. I. providing escort, band, and firing party. There was a large attendance at the cemetery. The service was conducted by the Rev. J. Silvester, vicar of Great Clacton, and the Rev. Walter J. Elvy, Wesleyan minister at Clacton. The floral emblems included tokens from the local wounded soldiers' fund and the Red Cross Society.

(*Essex Newsman*, Essex, England – 19 August, 1916)

ROLL OF HONOUR

THOMSON – 14th August, at Middlesex Hospital, Clacton Thomson, Lance-Corporal A. J. (Bert), late of Burrawang and Lismore, died of wounds in the service of his King and country, beloved nephew of Mr and Mrs J. Turnbull, Beach St., Dulwich Hill, aged 35 years.

(*The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, NSW – 26 August, 1916) & (*Robertson Advocate*, NSW – 1 September, 1916)

CASUALTIES

The 206th casualty list.....

DIED OF ILLNESS

Cpl A. J. THOMSON, Dulwich Hill

(*Daily Advertiser*, Wagga Wagga, NSW – 7 September, 1916)

The War

AUSTRALIANS HONORED IN DEATH

We make the following extract from an English newspaper, which shows the honor accorded there to our soldier heroes:

"An impressive scene was witnessed by a large concourse of people, who gathered in the Clacton Cemetery on Wednesday after noon, on the occasion of the interment of two heroes who have left their home shores in the early stages of the war to help the old Motherland in her fight in the cause of right against might. The deceased soldiers were Ptes. Walter Ernest Herriot, aged 21, of Glen Waverley, Victoria, and Albert James Thomson, aged 35, of Sydney, New South Wales, and they both passed away at Middlesex Red Cross Hospital on Monday, their deaths being due to the terrible injuries they had received from shrapnel during the recent fighting in France. Herriot had also seen service in Egypt before being transferred to the western theatre of war. The two oak coffins, covered with Union Jacks, were borne in two hearses, preceded by a firing party of 14 men, under the command of Sergeant Bickerton, the band and buglers, and a carriage conveying Mr and Mrs Frederick Geyton, who followed as friends of Pte Herriot. There also followed a large contingent of men, and by the sides of the hearses marched twelve bearers – all of the soldiers being of the Durham Light Infantry. Many people gathered at the Cemetery, where two clergymen officiated, the firing party fired the customary three volleys, and the Last Post was sounded by the buglers. The floral tributes included a wreath inscribed 'In loving memory of W. Herriot, from his mother and sisters, Glen Waverley, Australia, per Mr and Mrs Geyton, Mildmay Park, London,' also a cross from the local branch of the Red Cross Society."

(Oakleigh and Caulfield Times Mulgrave and Ferntree Gully Guardian, Victoria – 2 December, 1916)

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)

Lance Corporal Albert James Thomson does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Clacton Cemetery, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, England

Clacton Cemetery, Clacton-on-Sea contains 65 Commonwealth War Graves – 30 from World War 1 & 35 from World War 2. Also known as Burrs Road Municipal Cemetery.



Photo of Lance Corporal A. J. Thomson's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Clacton Cemetery, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, England.

(Note: the surname on the CWGC Headstone has been spelt incorrectly. CWGC were advised in 2014 & an amendment was carried out mid 2016 – see next photo)



(Photo by darealjolo – Find a Grave from 2008)

Updated photo of Lance Corporal A. J. Thomson's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Clacton Cemetery, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, England with amendment to surname completed.



(Photo supplied by Martin Skelly - Records Administrator Headstones – CWGC - 2019)