

**Melcombe Regis Cemetery,
Weymouth, Dorset, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



5917 PRIVATE

E. A. THORNELL

22ND BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

9TH AUGUST, 1918 Age 22

Faithful Unto Death

Edgar Allan THORNELL

Edgar Allan Thornell was born at Somerville, Victoria in 1896 to parents Alfred and Elizabeth Thornell (nee Mentiplay).

Edgar Allan Thornell attended Melbourne High School. The School started in 1905 as the Melbourne Continuation School, the first State Secondary School in Victoria & was renamed as Melbourne High School in 1912. He also attended Teachers Training College, Victoria.

Edgar Allan Thornell was a 20 year old, single, State School Teacher from Somerville, Victoria when he enlisted in Melbourne, Victoria on 22nd March, 1916 (as per Embarkation Roll, however the Attestation Papers have the date as 29th February, 1916) with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 5917 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his father – Alfred Thornell, Somerville, Victoria. Edgar Thornell stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served for 3 years with Senior Cadets & also served with Citizen Forces.

As Edgar Thornell was under the age of 21, his parents were required to sign their consent for their son to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force for active service abroad. Alfred Thornell & Elizabeth Thornell both signed their consent.

Private Edgar Allan Thornell was sent to A.M.C. (Army Medical Corps) at Ascot Vale on 22nd March, 1916 then transferred to No. 5 Australian General Hospital on 28th March, 1916 then transferred back to A.M.C. at Ascot Vale on 1st April, 1916. He was transferred on 25th April, 1916 to Clifton Springs then transferred to A.M.C. at Royal Park on 6th July, 1916. Private Thornell was on Loan to No. 5 A.S.H. (Australian Stationary Hospital) from 12th July to 10th August, 1916. He was transferred back to No. 5 Australian General Hospital on 10th August, 1916 then transferred again to A.M.C. at Royal Park from 2nd September, 1916.

Private Edgar Allan Thornell was transferred on 6th September, 1916 to 16th Reinforcements of 22nd Battalion at Royal Park, Victoria.

Private Edgar Allan Thornell embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Nestor* (A71) on 2nd October, 1916 with the 6th Infantry Brigade, 22nd Infantry Battalion, 16th Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 16th November, 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.

Private Edgar Allan Thornell was admitted to Fovant Military Hospital, Wiltshire on 30th November, 1916 with Influenza. He was discharged on 6th December, 1916.

Private Edgar Allan Thornell proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 4th February, 1917 per S.S. *Arundel* from 6th Training Battalion. He was marched in to 2nd A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 4th February, 1917 & marched out to his Unit on 8th February, 1917. Private Thornell was taken on strength of 22nd Battalion in France on 23rd March, 1917.

Private Edgar Allan Thornell was admitted to 6th Australian Field Ambulance on 6th September, 1917 with Appendicitis and transferred & admitted to 58th General Hospital at St. Omer on the same day. Private Thornell was marked for transfer to England on 17th September, 1917 & was transferred to Hospital Ship *St. Denis* where he embarked for England on 18th September, 1917. (Statement of Service form recorded the hospital ship as St David)

22nd Battalion

The 22nd Battalion AIF was formed on 26 March 1915 at Broadmeadows Camp in Victoria. The battalion became part of the 6th Brigade of the 2nd Division.

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The battalion spent most of 1917 bogged in bloody trench warfare from Bullecourt to Broodseinde in Flanders.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Edgar Allan Thornell was admitted to Norfolk War Hospital, Thorpe, Norwich, England on 18th September, 1917 with Appendicitis. He was transferred to 3rd Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford on 26th October, 1917 then discharged for furlo from 29th October, 1917 & was to report to Depot at Weymouth on 12th November, 1917.

Mr A. Thornell, Somerville, Victoria, father of Private Edgar Allan Thornell, was advised on 28th September, 1917 by Base Records that Private E. A. Thornell had been admitted to Norfolk War Hospital, Thorpe, Norwich, England on 18th September, 1917 suffering from appendicitis.

Private Edgar Allan Thornell was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, Dorset on 12th November, 1917 from furlo. He was transferred to No. 4 Command Depot at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 24th November, 1917.

Private Edgar Allan Thornell was sent sick to Military Hospital at Fovant on 3rd February, 1918 from No. 4 Command Depot, Hurdcott – cause P.U.O. (Pyrexia (fever) of unknown origin) & was admitted to Fovant Military Hospital the same day – cause N.Y.D. (not yet determined). He was discharged to training Depot on 9th March, 1918. The Hospital Admissions form reported he had Trench Fever.

Private Edgar Allan Thornell was marched in to No. 4 Command Depot at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 9th March, 1918 from Hospital.

Private Edgar Allan Thornell tested positive to a T.B. sputum test on 14th May, 1918 at No. 4 Command Depot.

A Medical Report was completed on Private Edgar Allan Thornell on 17th May, 1918 at No. 4 Command Depot, Hurdcott, Wiltshire. His disability was listed as Pulmonary Fibrosis (Tubercular) which has originated in England in December, 1917. *“Was subject to colds in England 1916-17 winter cough got quite well last summer & remained so while he was in France. Was evacuated in Sept 1917 with appendicitis & successfully operated on developed a cold in England in Decr 1917 which he never got rid of & cough became same & continuous.... & noticed he sweated at nights in February.”* The Medical Officer in charge of the case recommended that Private Thornell be classified as C3 – discharged as permanently unfit. The Medical Board agreed that Private Edgar Allan Thornell be discharged as permanently unfit for General Service & unfit for Home service.

Private Edgar Allan Thornell was transferred to No. 2 Command Depot on 18th May, 1918 & was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, Dorset on the same day from No. 4 Command Depot at Hurdcott.

Mr A. Thornell, Somerville, Victoria, father of Private Edgar Allan Thornell, was advised on 29th July, 1918 by Base Records that Private E. A. Thornell had been admitted to Camp Hospital, Weymouth, England on 18th May, 1918 suffering from tuberculosis & was seriously ill as at 4th July, 1918.

Miss M. McCarthy-Clerke, of 309 Beaconsfield Parade, Middle Park, Victoria, wrote to Base Records on 31st July, 1918 stating she had *“received word by the last English mail to the effect that No. 5917 Private E. A. Thornell, 22nd Battalion, was returning to Australia, Could you kindly let me know if he is on his way and about what date he would arrive.”*

Base Records replied on 2nd August, 1918 to state *“no advice has been received that No. 5917, Private E. A. Thornell, 22nd Battalion is returning to Australia. Should such information come to hand his name will be duly published in the Press and next-of-kin notified.”*

Mr A. Thornell, Somerville, Victoria was advised on 6th August, 1918 by Base Records that Private E. A. Thornell was reported to be *“suffering from pulmonary Laryngal abdominal Tuberculosis, hectic virulent type”* & was dangerously ill as at 20th July, 1918.

Private Edgar Allan Thornell died at 5.45 am on 9th August, 1918 at Hut 31A, Monte Video Camp Hospital, Weymouth, Dorset, England from Pulmonary Tuberculosis, Peritonitis & Exhaustion.

A death for Edgar A. Thornell, aged 22, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of Weymouth, Dorset, England.

Private Edgar Allan Thornell was buried on 12th August, 1918 in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England – Plot number II. C. 3048 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial

report of Private Edgar Allan Thornell - *Coffin was good. Polished Elm with brass mountings. Deceased was buried with full Military Honours, the body being conveyed to the graveside on a Gun Carriage drawn by comrades of the deceased and preceded by a Firing Party and Band. Six of deceased's comrades acted as Pallbearers, four Officers and 100 N.C.O.'s and men of No. 2 Command Depot attended the funeral. Deceased was attended by the Rev. H. Pyke whilst in Hospital.*

Private Edgar Allan Thornell requested in his Will, dated 10th June, 1917, that all his real and personal estate be bequeathed to Dorothy Margaret Thornell, "Hazelmere", Somerville, Victoria, Australia (his sister).

Private Edgar Allan Thornell was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Thornell's father - Mr A. Thornell, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent August, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Edgar Allan Thornell – service number 5917, aged 22, of 22nd Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Alfred and Elizabeth Thornell, of "Hazelmere," Somerville, Victoria, Australia.

Edgar A. Thornell is remembered in the Melbourne High School Honour Roll book which is on display in the foyer of the school. The Memorial Hall is behind & is a Memorial to the Old Boys and Staff who served in WWI (the school moved in 1927 to a new site).

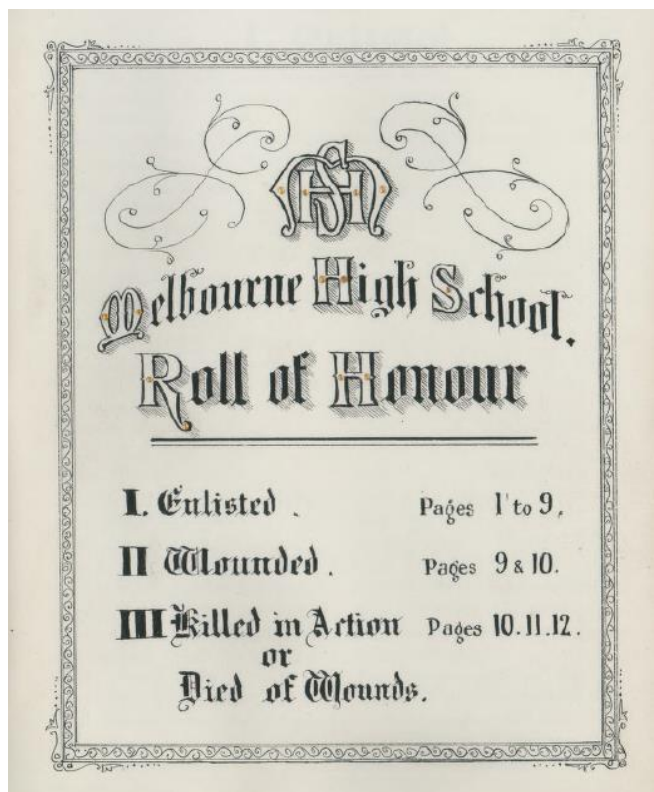
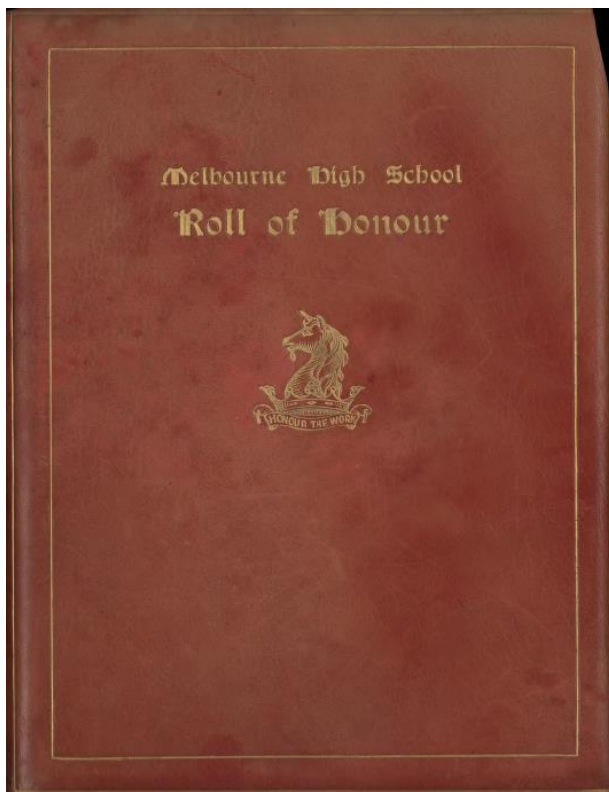
There are 9 former Students of Melbourne High School who served in World War 1 & who are buried in the UK.



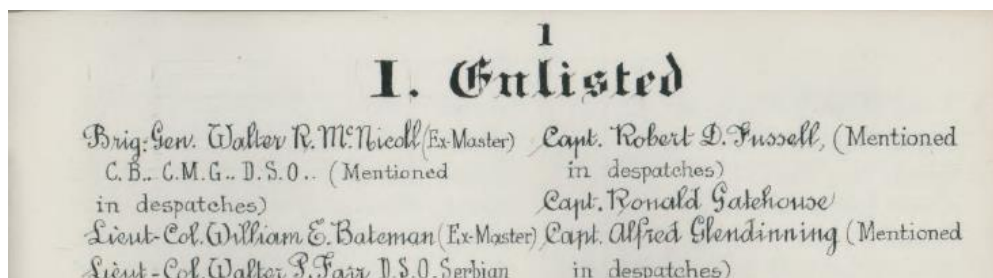
Melbourne High School Honour Roll Book



Melbourne High School Memorial Hall



Edgar A. Thornell is named on the Melbourne High School Honour Roll Book – under those who I. Enlisted (page 9) & under those III. Killed in Action or Died of Wounds (page 12).



9

Pte. J. Thomas	Pte. Frank Henderson Watts
Gunner George T. Thompson	Pte. Ernest Wearne
→ Pte. Edgar A. Thornell	Pte. Eric Welch
Pte. Charles Lidd (Ex-Gardener)	Gunner Daniel Whannell
Pte. James Peter Todd	Pte. Reginald White
Pte. Kenneth H. Trend	Pte. Robert C.S. White

12

Pte. Alexander McClure	Pte. Stanley Robinson
Gunner Thomas M. McIntosh	Pte. A. F. B. Stephens
Pte. Claude Membrey	Pte. Edgar A. Thornell ←
Pte. Frank O'Hara	Pte. Percy Watson
Pte. William Opie	Pte. Percy Whitfield
Pte. James Powell	

(Melbourne High School information & photos courtesy of Luke Savage, Honorary School Archivist, Melbourne High School)

E. A. Thornell is remembered on the Somerville War Memorial, located at Somerville Fruitgrowers Reserve, Jones Road, Somerville, Victoria.



Somerville War Memorial (Photo from AWM – Places of Pride – Cally McNulty)



Somerville War Memorial

Private E. A. Thornell is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 97.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(70 pages of Private Edgar Allan Thornell'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





AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P05248.138

Private Edgar Allan Thornell - 1916

Studio portrait of 5917 Private (Pte) Edgar Allen Thornell, 22nd Battalion of Somerville, Victoria. A school teacher prior to enlisting, he embarked from Melbourne aboard HMAT Nestor (A71) on 2 October 1916. On 9 August 1918, he died in the Monte Video Camp Hospital, Weymouth, Dorset, United Kingdom from Pulmonary Tuberculosis, aged 22. Pte Thornell is buried in the Melcombe Regis Cemetery, United Kingdom.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P05248.138

Newspaper Notices

ROLL OF HONOR

VICTORIAN LIST

ILLNESS

Pte E. A. Thornell, Somerville (ser.)

(The Weekly Times, Melbourne, Victoria – 17 August, 1918)

DIED ON SERVICE

THORNELL – On the 9th August, at Weymouth Hospital, England, Private E. A. Thornell, beloved only son of Mr and Mrs A. Thornell, and brother of Dorothy, "Hazelmere," Somerville, aged 22 years.

One of the best.

Dead, did you say? Nay, only heaven sped;
Just safe in God's home port. He is not dead.
Lost, did you think? How can such lives be lost?
Just gathered up, His jewels, rare if cost.
Gone? Nay, just waiting on God's wide shoreline.
The coming of life vessels – yours and mine.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 17 August, 1918)

SOMERVILLE

Word was received last week of the death of Private Edgar Thornell, the only son of Mr and Mrs Alfred Thornell, of Somerville, and general regret is expressed for the relatives. Deceased soldier had been on service for two years and was in France for seven months, but returned suffering from trench fever and appendicitis and was very ill for a considerable time before his death, which occurred at Weymouth Hospital, England, on the 7th of August. He was 22 years of age.

(Mornington Standard, Frankston, Victoria – 24 August, 1918)

ROLL OF HONOR

VICTORIAN LIST

DIED OTHER CAUSES

Pte E. A. THORNELL, Somerville, 9/8/18 (illness)

(The Weekly Times, Melbourne, Victoria – 7 September, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

THORNELL – In memory of my beloved nephew, Private Edgar Allan Thornell, who died in Weymouth Hospital, August 9, 1918, for his country.

Of the pain of the loss to sight of our human vision,

But the eyes of the soul beholds the dear one in the Father's Home in Glory.

For an Cor. 9 verse one hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

Blessed be the hope of reunion there.

Jane Shepherd.

THORNELL – In loving memory of our dear nephew, Edgar, who passed to the higher life at the Weymouth Military Hospital, England, August 9, 1918.

Duty, sacrifice, glory.

Inserted by his loving uncle and aunt, G. and T. Russ

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 9 August, 1919)

Edgar Thornell is named on his parents' headstone located in Frankston Cemetery, Frankston, Victoria.



(Photo from Find a Grave – Rebecca McIntosh)



Thornell Family Grave (Photo from Find a Grave – Bruce Kerr)



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. A. Thornell does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Faithful Unto Death

Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England

Weymouth became a depot for Australian forces in 1916 and 83 of the 147 First World War burials in Melcome Regis Cemetery are of Australian servicemen; most of these graves are scattered in the old part. The 36 Second World War burials are in the extension. The cemetery also contains seven war graves of other nationalities and one non-war burial.

(Information from CWGC)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00332

Some of the Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919

Identified, left to right: Captain Francis Arthur Deravin, Australian Army Medical Corps, died 8 July 1917 aged 41 years (large headstone); 138 Private Louis Nelson Matthews, 27th Battalion, 4 July 1917; 5082 Private Victor George Smith, 21st Battalion, died 13 November 1918.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00333

Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919

Identified, front row, left to right: unidentified; Butler; **5917 Private Edgar Allan Thornell, 22nd Battalion (Bn), died 9 August 1918**; 1207 Corporal Jesse Adams Davis, 12th Bn, died 15 November 1918.

Back row: 5329 Private Frederick Albert Archer, Anzac Provost Company, died 6 November 1918; 5990 Private Albert Robert Blackmore, 12th Bn, died 2 November 1918; 11099 Driver Matthew Charles Percival Nettle, 6th Australian Field Artillery Brigade, died 22 October 1918; 3942 Private Walter Alick Weckman, 51st Bn, died 9 November 1918.



Photo sent to the family after the War (Faithe Jones)



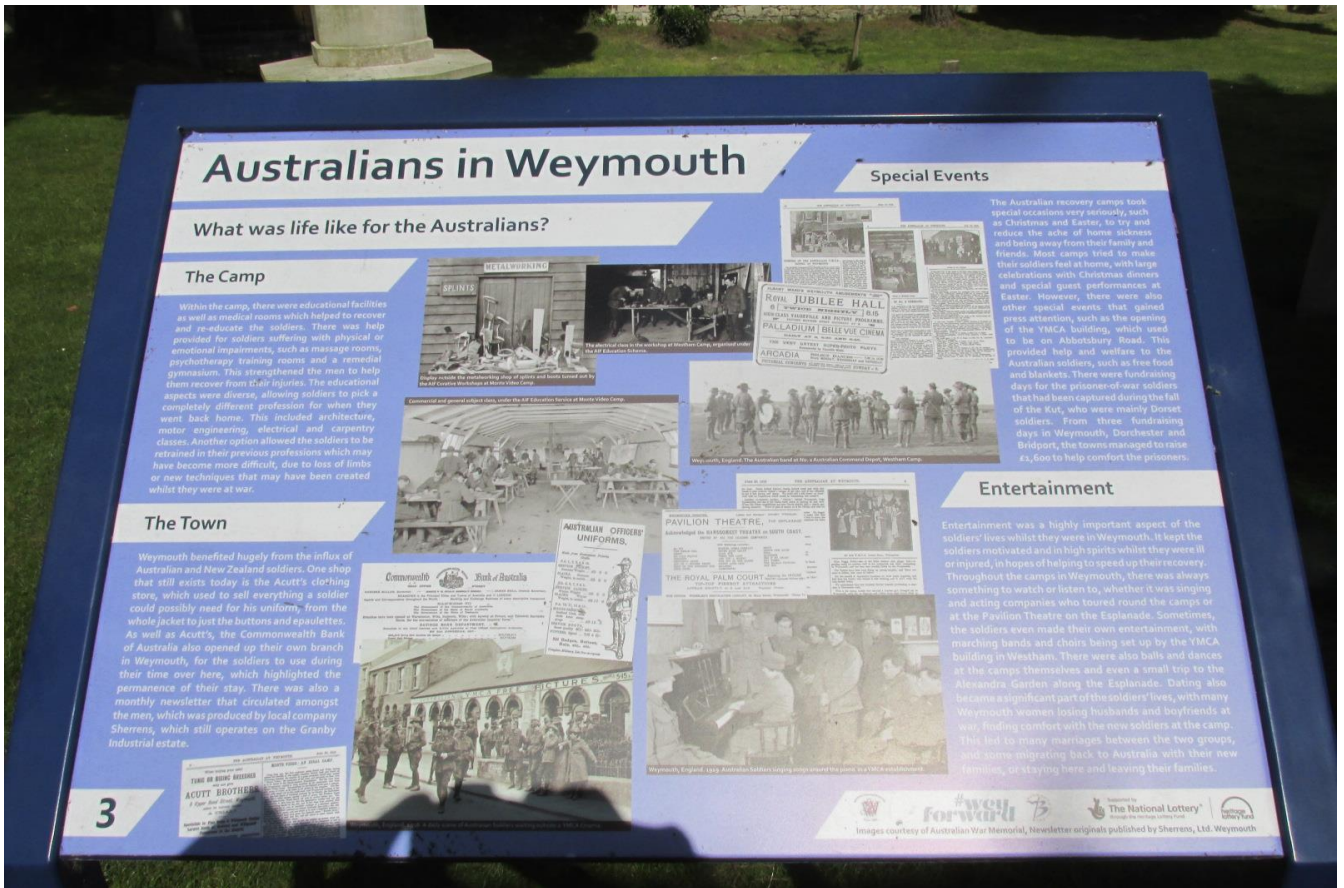
(Photo courtesy of Steve Stewart)



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

Photo of Private E. A. Thornell's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England.



(Photo courtesy of Allan Wood)

Australians in Weymouth

From Weymouth to Auswey - A Soldier's Récovery



Weymouth, England, 1918. Australian and New Zealand Barracks.

During the First World War between 1914 and 1918, many injured soldiers who were mainly from Australia and New Zealand, were brought to Weymouth. They were known as ANZACs (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps). They were placed in Regeneration and Recuperation camps in Westham, Lishemoor, Chickerell and Portland. This was in the hope of sending them back to the line of action in France or back home to Australia due to lack of fitness. Weymouth was picked as the place to set up camp, as it was seen as a relatively seaside location. This would help to heal the sick and injured Australians who had been fighting in major battles of the war or on the Western Front between France and Belgium.



Weymouth, England, 1918. Group photo of Australian soldiers at 4th A.I. Coy. photo.

Although thousands of ANZACs passed through Weymouth during the First World War, there are some soldiers who unfortunately did not make it home. These soldiers are proudly buried in the Melcombe Regis cemetery. This is only 500 metres away from one of the major camps in Westham, with 242 soldiers buried in the cemetery, 83 from Australia and 3 from New Zealand. These graves are similar to some of the war memorials and graves placed around Europe, much like the Somme in France. Unfortunately, there are too many grave names to be displayed on this board, but they can be found on the website link at the bottom of this board.



Weymouth, England, 1918. Hospital ward at the ANZAC camp, 4th Australian Trench Company, in the southern coast of England.

Past and Present Westham

As you can see on the map of the Westham camp, many of the street names have an Australian connection, highlighting the history of the area. Residents of the housing estates, which are now built where the camp once stood, are still digging up remains of the camp, such as bullets or cooking equipment.



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Weymouth, England, 1918. Group photo of Australian soldiers at 4th Australian Trench Company, in the southern coast of England.



- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Modern Day Street Names | Westham Camp - Derivative of |
| Desert Close | Soldiers Barracks |
| Swaine Road | Company Officers |
| Queensland Road | Regimental Postbox |
| Kitchener Road | Miscellaneous Rifle Range |
| Corporation Road | Officers Mess |
| Short Road | Soldiers Mess |
| Langcroft Road | Vehicle Shed, Mob Store |
| Wessex Road | Horse Shelter |
| North Street | Cook Yard |
| Melbourne Street | Cook House |
| Subside Crescent | YMCA |
| Abbotsbury Road | Dung Pit |
| Sydney Street | Fire Hydrant |
| Shirecroft Road | |

www.westhamcommunitygroup.co.uk
 The National Lottery
 Images courtesy of Australian War Memorial

(Photo courtesy of Steve Stewart)