

**Botley Cemetery,
Botley, Oxfordshire, England
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



5458 LANCE CPL.

J. TILL

54TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

22ND FEBRUARY, 1919

John TILL

John Till was born at Hay, New South Wales in 1895 to parents George & Mary Till (nee Haslam).

John Till was a 20 year old, single, Horse Breaker from Belmore Street, Hay, NSW when he enlisted at Cootamundra, NSW on 5th January, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 5458 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr G. Till, of Belmore Street, Hay, NSW. As John Till was under the age of 21 years – his parents were required to sign their consent for their son to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force for active service abroad. M. Till, mother of John Till, signed her consent. It was recorded that “father absent”.

Private John Till was posted to 17th Reinforcements of 2nd Battalion.

Private John Till embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Ceramic (A40)* on 14th April, 1916 with the 2nd Infantry Battalion, 17th Reinforcements & disembarked at Suez on 16th May, 1916.

Private John Till was transferred to 54th Battalion on 24th May, 1916.

Private John Till embarked from Alexandria from 5th Division Depot on H.M.T. *Ivernia* on 21st June, 1916 to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 29th June, 1916. He joined 54th Battalion in France on 3rd August, 1916.

Private John Till was appointed Lance Corporal on 12th June, 1917.

Lance Corporal John Till was wounded in action in France on 25th September, 1917. He was admitted to 6th Field Ambulance on 25th September, 1917 with shrapnel wounds to hand, leg & head. Lance Corporal Till was admitted to 2nd Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 24th September, 1917 (date as per Casualty Form – Active Service) with shrapnel wounds. He was transferred to Ambulance Train 2 on 26th September, 1917 then admitted to 12th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 27th September, 1917. Lance Corporal Till was transferred to England on 8th November, 1917 from 12th General Hospital at Rouen, France.

54th Battalion

The 54th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 16 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 2nd Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 2nd, the 54th was predominantly composed of men from New South Wales. The battalion became part of the 14th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

Moving to France in June 1916, the 54th fought its first major battle on the Western Front at Fromelles, on 19 July. It was a disaster. The 54th was part of the initial assault and suffered casualties equivalent to 65 per cent of its fighting strength. Casualty rates among the rest of the 5th Division were similarly high, but despite these losses it continued to man the front in the Fromelles sector for a further two months.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 54th Battalion

Bn Hqrtrs – Glencourse Wood – 25th September, 1917

The enemy showed extreme artillery activity during the day. The Glencourse Wood, Nollebosche Area received particular attention and all tracks leading from this position to the rear were very very heavily strafed. Two practice barrages were carried out. An Army practice barrage was put down at 6.30 am and a Corps barrage (practice) was put down at 8.30 am. Previous to this however, the enemy dropped a barrage at 5.50 am. This lasted intermittently during the whole day; periods of quiet not lasting more than half an hour. Operation Orders for tomorrow's attack were received from Brigade and Bn. Orders were issued consequent upon them. All that is now required is notification of ZERO hour. The 53rd Bn had established their Hqrtrs in the same strongpoint as the 54th Bn.

At 8-8 pm 53rd Bn moved forward to J.8.D.8.5.

Casualties for the 25th were 1 Officer 5 O.R. killed and 20 other ranks wounded. The Officer killed was Lieut, C. J. Bowran.

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Mr G. Till, of Belmore Street, Hay, NSW, father of Lance Corporal John Till, was advised on 12th October, 1917 that Private John Till had been dangerously wounded. A second notification on the same day advised that Private Till had been admitted to 12th General Hospital, Rouen, France on 27th September, with multiple gunshot wounds & his condition was listed as dangerous.

Lance Corporal John Till was admitted to 3rd Southern General Hospital, Oxford, England on 9th November, 1917 with G.S.W. hand & amputated left leg. His condition was reported as serious.

Newspaper item – *The Riverine Grazier*, Hay, NSW – 27 November, 1917:

OUR BOYS AT THE FRONT

Mr George Till has received a notification from Base Records that his son, Private John Till, is out of danger. By last mail he also received a letter from Nurse Taylor, of the 12th General Hospital, France, in which it was stated that Private Till was in a serious condition. He had shell wounds of the head, a fractured left arm and had had his left leg amputated. The nurse expressed hope the patient would recover, and stated that everything possible was being done for him. That the treatment was successful is shown by the satisfactory information from the Base Records.

Mr G. Till, of Belmore Street, Hay, NSW, father of Lance Corporal John Till, was advised on 17th November, 1917 that Private John Till's condition was improving. He was advised on 23rd November, 1917 that Private John Till was pronounced out of danger. Mr G. Till was advised on 27th November, 1917 that Private J. Till had been transferred to 3rd Southern General Hospital, Oxford England on 9th November, 1917 suffering from gunshot wound left hand & amputation of left leg.

Mr G. Till, of Belmore Street, Hay, NSW, father of Lance Corporal John Till, was advised on 3rd December, 1917 that Private Till had been removed from the seriously ill list. Mr G. Till was advised on 13th December, 1917 that Private John Till was improving. His father was notified again on 22nd January, 1918 stating that Private J. Till was progressing favourably.

John Till married Martha Matilda Dickins on 29th June, 1918 in St Mary and St John Church, Cowley, Oxford, Oxfordshire, England. John was recorded as a 22 year old from 54th Battalion, A.I.F., residing at 3rd Southern General Hospital. Martha was recorded as a 21 year old, residing at 27 Marston Street, Oxford.

Lance Corporal John Till was written up for an offence while in Cowley Section (3rd Southern General Hospital, Oxford) – A.W.L. (absent without leave) from 8.30 pm on 11th July, 1918 till 1 pm on 12th July, 1918. The offence was admonished by Officer Commanding, 3rd Southern General Hospital & Lance Corporal Till forfeited 2 days' pay.

Mr G. Till, of Belmore Street, Hay, NSW, father of Lance Corporal John Till, was advised on 31st July, 1918 that Private Till was convalescent.

The details of the next-of-kin for Lance Corporal John Till were changed on 9th August, 1918 from his father – Mr George Till, Hay, NSW to his wife – Mrs Martha Matilda Till, 27 Marston Street, Iffley Road, Oxford.

Lance Corporal John Till was transferred & admitted to 3rd Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford, Kent on 3rd October, 1918 with Shrapnel wounds left leg amputated. Lance Corporal Till was transferred to 2nd Auxiliary Hospital, Southall on 26th October, 1918.

Lance Corporal John Till was admitted to 2nd Auxiliary Hospital, Southall on 9th November, 1918 from furlo. The Hospital Admissions form has the following details: "*Amputation left leg – middle third – unhealed. 5-12-18 re-amputation. 20-12-18 healed on furlo.*" Lance Corporal Till was discharged on 21st December, 1918 & granted furlo & was then to report back to 2nd Auxiliary Hospital on 4th January, 1919.

A Medical Report had been completed on Lance Corporal Jack Till on 11th November, 1918 while a patient at 2nd Australian Auxiliary Hospital. His disability was recorded as Amputation of left leg – middle third. The injury had occurred on 25th September, 1917 at Ypres & he was wounded in left leg, left thumb, chest & head by shrapnel. Extensive injury occurred to his left leg which had been removed at Casualty Clearing Station on 27th September, 1917. The Medical Board recommended that Lance Corporal Till be permanently unfit for General Service & permanently unfit for Home Service & returned to Australia.

Lance Corporal John Till was granted furlough from 15th February, 1919 & was then to report back to 2nd Auxiliary Hospital on 1st March, 1919.

Lance Corporal John Till was admitted to 3rd Southern General Hospital, Oxford on 21st February, 1919 with Influenza.

Lance Corporal John Till died at 2.45 am on 22nd February, 1919 at 3rd Southern General Hospital, Oxford, Oxfordshire, England from Pneumococcal Meningitis.

A death for John Till, aged 23, was registered in the March quarter, 1919 in the district of Oxford, Oxfordshire, England.

Lance Corporal John Till was buried on 26th February, 1919 in Botley Cemetery, Botley, Oxfordshire, England – Plot number I1. 214 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Lance Corporal John Till - *Coffin was oak. The deceased soldier was accorded a full Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and conveyed to the graveside, surmounted by several beautiful wreaths sent from:- Father & Mother & family, Mrs Lindsay and neighbours, Mrs Wright, Nursing Staff and wounded comrades from Cowley Hospital. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside, and the burial service conducted by Chap Rev: A. B. Walton, of Oxford. 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 and friends present at the Funeral – Wife – Mrs Till; Father-in-Law – Mr Dickson, Miss Lindsay, Miss Dickson, Mrs Wright, Captain Symonds.

Lance Corporal John Till requested in his Will extracted from his Pay Book that in the event of his death half of his deferred pay be given to his mother – Mrs Mary Till, Belmore Street, Hay, NSW, Australia & the other half to his wife Martha Matilda Till, of 27 Marston Street, Oxford, England.

Lance Corporal John Till was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Lance Corporal Till's widow - Mrs M. M. Till, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque issued in England in November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Lance Corporal J. Till – service number 5458, of 54th Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Lance Corporal J. Till is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 160.

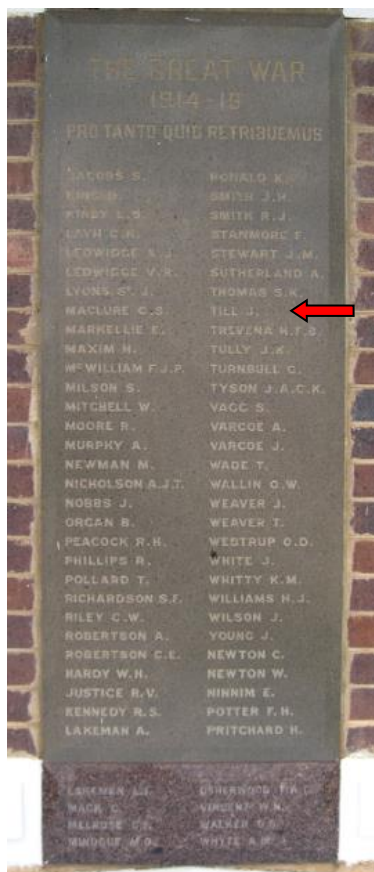


Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

J. Till is remembered on the Hay War Memorial High School Memorial Panels located either side of the main entrance to the High School, 216 Pine Street, Hay, NSW.



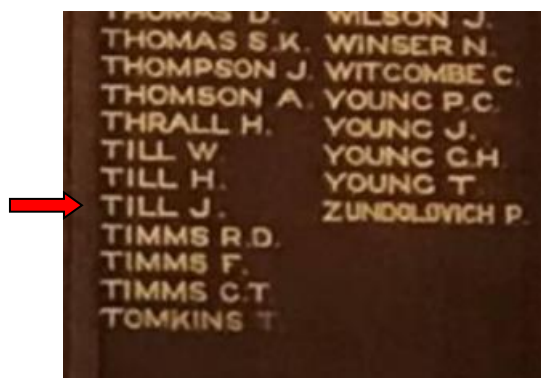
Hay War Memorial High School Memorial Panels (Photos from War Memorials Register of NSW)



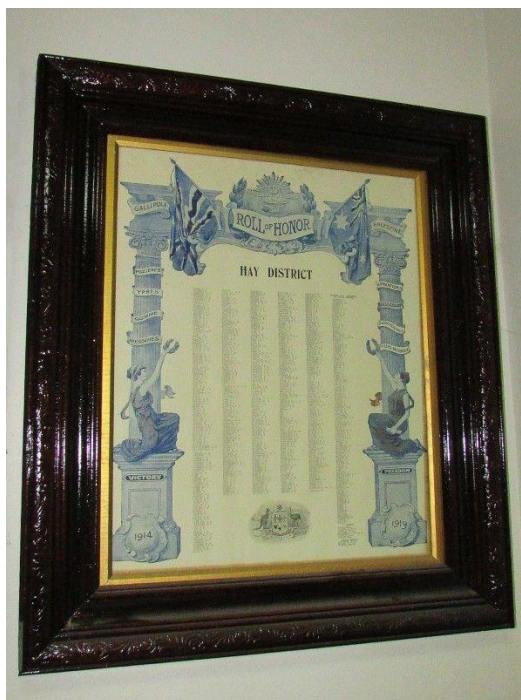
J. Till is remembered on the Hay District Volunteers Honour Roll, located in Hay War Memorial High School, Pine Street, Hay, NSW.



Hay District Volunteers Honour Roll (Photo from AWM – Places of Pride – Gillp)



J. Till would be remembered on the Hay District Roll of Honour. It is a framed honour roll which commemorates those who served in World War 1. A copy is held in the Hay Gaol Museum, 355 Church Street, Hay, NSW & another copy is held in Hay Services Club, 371 Murray Street, Hay, NSW.



Hay District Roll of Honour (Photo from Monument Australia)

(83 pages of Lance Corporal John Till'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

Mr George Till has been notified by the Base Records Office that his son Private John Till was admitted to the 12th General Hospital, Rouen, France on 27th September, suffering from multiple gunshot wounds, dangerous.

(*The Riverine Grazier*, Hay, NSW – 19 October, 1917)

NSW CASUALTIES

WOUNDED

Pte JOHN TILL, Hay (dangerously)

(*The Sun*, Sydney, NSW – 1 November, 1917)

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)

Mrs M. Todd (remarried widow of the late Lance Corporal John Till), of 5 Full Street, Norwood, Adelaide, South Australia, wrote to Base Records in early March, 1922 stating that similar papers had been sent to her 12 months ago & she *"did my best to answer your questions, I told you to write to his mother Mrs Mary Till, Belmore St, Hay, New South Wales, A. as I am an English girl & was only married a few months when he died.... can you give me any idea what is costs for this inscription.....He answered his call & did his best & after he had done it God call him to Rest inserted by his loving wife M.M.T. Please don't put it until I know what it will cost."*

Base Records replied to Mrs M. M. Todd, remarried widow of the late Lance Corporal John Todd, on 15th March, 1922 stating that the father of the late Lance Corporal John Todd had been requested to furnish the particulars required for the Roll of Honor. They continued stating that the inscription she had submitted exceeded the limit imposed by the War Graves Commission – namely 66 letters & based on the rate per letter being 3 ½ d the approximate price of the maximum inscription would be 17-. Mrs Tod was asked to advise Base Records of her wishes in the matter.

Base Records wrote to Mr George Till, Belmore Street, Hay, NSW on 11th March, 1922 requesting him to complete Memorial form "A" *"as the widow of the late No. 5458 Lance-Corporal J. Till, 54th Battalion, is unable to furnish the particulars required."*

The form "Particulars Required for the Roll of Honour of Australia in the Memorial War Museum" was completed by Mary Till, mother of the late Lance Corporal John Till.

Lance Corporal J. Till does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Botley Cemetery, Botley, Oxfordshire, England

During the two world wars, the United Kingdom became an island fortress used for training troops and launching land, sea and air operations around the globe. There are more than 170,000 Commonwealth war graves in the United Kingdom, many being those of servicemen and women killed on active service, or who later succumbed to wounds. Others died in training accidents, or because of sickness or disease. The graves, many of them privately owned and marked by private memorials, will be found in more than 12,000 cemeteries and churchyards.

During the First World War, the 3rd Southern General Hospital (an Oxfordshire Territorial Unit) was housed in the Examination Schools and a number of other buildings in Oxford. Oxford (Botley) Cemetery contains 156 burials from the First World War, all in the war graves plot in section I/1. The cemetery was designated a Royal Air Force regional cemetery during the Second World War and was used by RAF stations in Berkshire and neighbouring counties. Practically all of the 516 Second World War burials (one of them unidentified) are in the war graves plot, which was extended from the section used during the First World War. The architectural features of the plot were designed by Edward Maufe, ARA. In addition to the Commonwealth war graves, Oxford (Botley) Cemetery contains almost 70 war graves of other nationalities.

There are eight Australian World War 1 War Graves.

(Information from CWGC)



Botley Cemetery (Photos from CWGC)



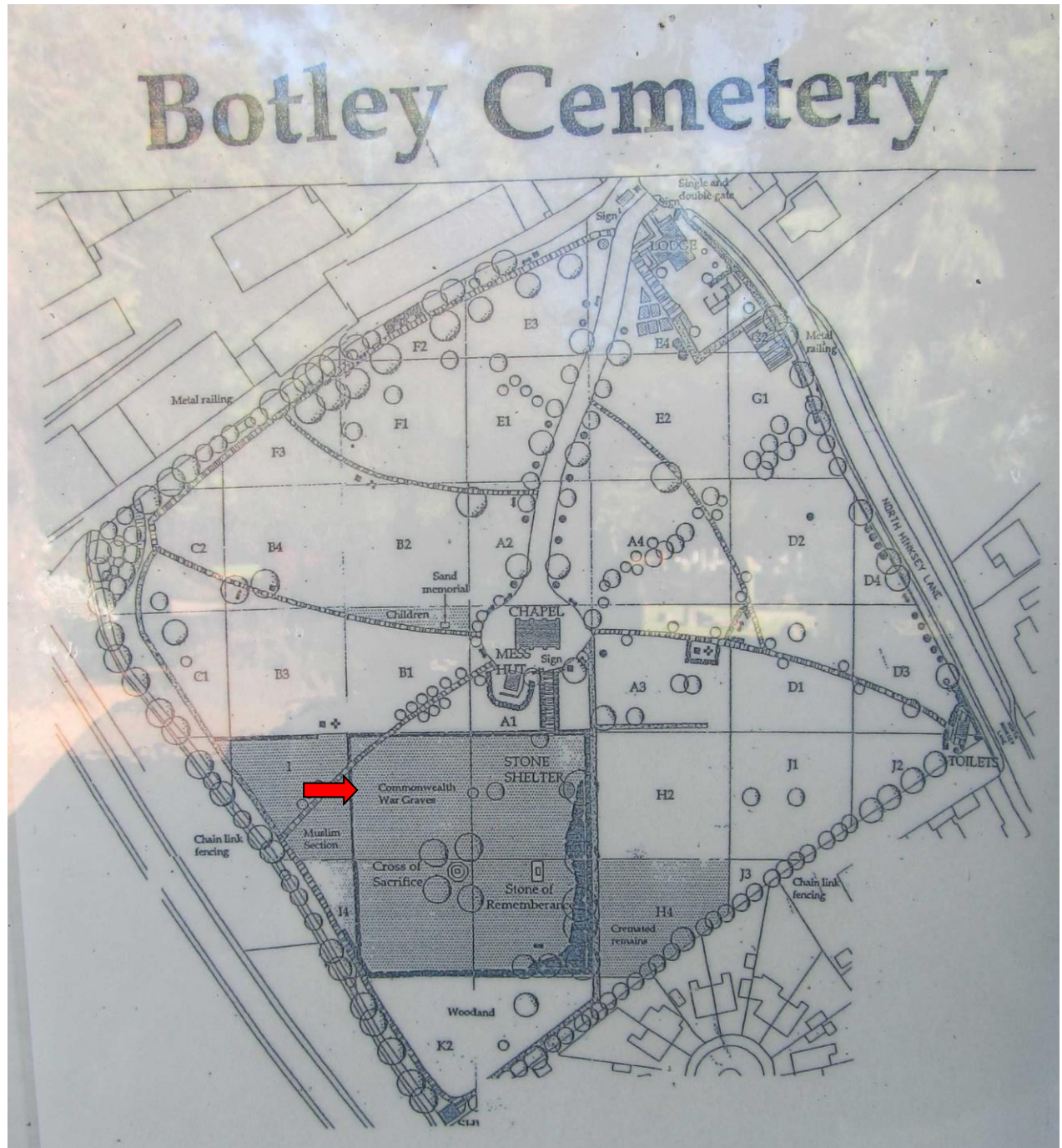
Photo of Lance Corporal J. Till's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Botley Cemetery, Botley, Oxfordshire, England.



(Photo by Stephen Potts – Find a Grave)



(Photo by Stephen Potts – Find a Grave)

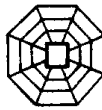


(Maps by Kevin Smith – Find a Grave)



STONE OF REMEMBRANCE

PLOT H. 3



CROSS OF SACRIFICE

PLOT I. 2



SHELTER

REGISTER BOX

PLOT H. 1

1914-1918
WAR
BURIALS

PLOT I.1

GERMAN
BURIALS

GERMAN
BURIALS

ITALIAN
BURIALS

E
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OXFORD (BOTLEY) CEMETERY

WAR GRAVES PLOT