

**Balgay Cemetery,
Dundee, Scotland
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



15249 SAPPER

A. B. TOWERS

AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS

2ND DECEMBER, 1917 Age 33

Peacefully Sleeping

Away From Home

And His Dear Ones

Arthur Benjamin TOWERS

Arthur Benjamin Towers was born on 4th February, 1884 at Gawler South, South Australia to parents of Benjamin and Edith Mary Lenora Towers (nee Peake).

RAILWAY STAFF CHANGES – Daily Herald, Adelaide, Sth Australia – 15 January, 1914:

Mr A. B. Towers, of the locomotive department, has been appointed fireman on the southern division, his home station at Bordertown.

RAILWAY APPOINTMENTS AND TRANSFERS – Daily Herald, Adelaide, Sth Australia – 10 April, 1914:

Mr A. B. Towers, of the locomotive department, has been appointed to the position of fireman on the southern division, his home station being at Murray Bridge.

Arthur Benjamin Towers was a 32 year old, single, Railway Engine Driver with South Australian Railways from Murray Bridge, South Australia when he enlisted at Adelaide on 6th March, 1916 with the Field Company Engineers – September Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 15249 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr Benjamin Towers, Vine Street, Prospect, South Australia.

Private Arthur Benjamin Towers was posted to “C” Company, 2nd Depot Battalion on 20th March, 1916. He was transferred to Base Engineers at Mitcham as a Sapper on 1st April, 1916. Sapper Towers was then transferred to Engineer Reinforcements 2nd M.D. on 16th May, 1916.

Sapper Arthur Benjamin Towers embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Ceramic (A40)* on 7th October, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 21st 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.

Sapper Arthur Towers was marched in to Australian Details No. 3 Camp at Parkhouse, Wiltshire on 22nd November, 1916.

Sapper Arthur Towers proceeded overseas via Folkestone on *Brightlingsea* on 20th March, 1917. He was marched in to A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 21st March, 1917 & marched out on 7th April, 1917 to join 2nd Division Engineering.

Australian Engineers in the First World War

Engineers, also known as sappers, were essential to the running of the war. Without them, other branches of the Allied Forces would have found it difficult to cross the muddy and shell-ravaged ground of the Western Front. Their responsibilities included constructing the lines of defence, temporary bridges, tunnels and trenches, observation posts, roads, railways, communication lines, buildings of all kinds, showers and bathing facilities, and other material and mechanical solutions to the problems associated with fighting in all theatres.

(Information from The Australian War Memorial)

Sapper Arthur Towers was taken on strength with 7th Field Company Engineers on 8th April, 1917 from A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot) at Etaples, France from Engineer Reinforcements.

Sapper Arthur Towers was wounded in action on 5th May, 1917. He was taken to 3rd Australian Casualty Clearing Station with Shrapnel wounds to his hands. Sapper Towers was transferred by Ambulance Train 31 & admitted to 11th Stationary Hospital at Rouen, France on 6th May, 1917. Sapper Towers was invalided to England on Hospital Ship *St David* from Rouen on 16th May, 1917 with gunshot wounds to both hands.

War Diary - 7th Field Company, Australian Engineers:

4th & 5th /5/17 – Works carried out as detailed in works report ending 5 pm

5th/5/17 – Casualties. 8 Sappers wounded.

(Information from The Australian War Memorial)

Sapper Arthur Towers was admitted to Lewisham Military Hospital, England on 17th May, 1917 with gunshot wounds to left hand - severe. He was transferred to 3rd Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford on 12th July, 1917.

Sapper Arthur Towers was on furlo from 14th July, 1917 to 28th July, 1917 & was then to report to Training Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire.

Sapper Arthur Towers was marched in from furlo at Perham Downs on 28th July, 1917 & medically classified as B1 A (Fit for light duty only – 4 weeks).

Sapper Arthur Towers proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on *Brightlingsea* on 25th August, 1917. He was marched in to A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot) at Rouelles, France on 26th August, 1917. Sapper Towers was marched out to 7th Field Company Engineers on 29th August, 1917 & rejoined his Unit in France on 1st September, 1917 from being wounded.

Sapper Arthur Towers was wounded in action (2nd occasion) on 20th September, 1917 but remained on duty. The War Diary states “wounded in head – slight, remained at duty.”

Sapper Arthur Towers was wounded in action (3rd occasion) in France on 4th October, 1917. He was admitted to 64th Field Ambulance with gunshot wounds to chin & chest wall. Sapper Towers was transferred to 41st Casualty Clearing Station on 4th October, 1917 then transferred to No. 6 Ambulance Train on 5th October, 1917. He was admitted to 1st South African General Hospital at Abbeville, France on 5th October, 1917 with gunshot wounds to chin & chest. Sapper Towers embarked on Hospital Ship *Essequibo* for England on 11th October, 1917 with gunshot wounds to chest.

Sapper Arthur Benjamin Towers was admitted to Reading War Hospital, Berkshire, England on 12th October, 1917 with gunshot wounds to chest - severe.

Sapper Arthur Benjamin Towers was transferred to 1st Auxiliary Hospital at Harefield, Middlesex, England on 2nd November, 1917. He was discharged from Hospital for furlo from 13th November to 27th November, 1917 & was to report to Depot at Hurdcott, Wiltshire.

Sapper Arthur Benjamin Towers was admitted to War Hospital, Dundee, Scotland on 21st November, 1917 with influenza whilst on leave from No. 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield.

Sapper Arthur Benjamin Towers died at 12.15 am on 2nd December, 1917 at War Hospital, Dundee, Scotland from Tuberculous Meningitis.

Sapper Arthur Benjamin Towers was buried at 2 pm on 5th December, 1917 in Western Necropolis Cemetery, Dundee, (now known as Balgay Cemetery, Dundee) Scotland – Plot number DD.4.115 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Sapper Towers - *Coffin was good. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military Funeral, Firing Party, Pipers and Bearers being supplied by Royal Defence Corps, stationed at Dundee. A service was conducted at the graveside by Rev. S. D. Morris (C. of E.) Acting Chaplain to the Hospital. The “Last Post” was sounded by a Bugler of the R.D.C. Four wreaths were placed on the grave by Mr & Mrs J. Towers. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral. Names of relatives and friends present at the funeral – Uncle and Aunt – Mr & Mrs J. Towers, Church Road, Pretoria Villa, Kirkby Muxloe, near Leicester.*

A War Pension was granted to Edith Mary Leonard Towers, of 4 Vine Street, Prospect, mother of the late Arthur Benjamin Towers, in the sum of 20/- per fortnight from 5th February, 1918.

Arthur Benjamin Towers requested in his Will dated 23rd August, 1917 that his will had been made out & was deposited with Mrs Benjamin Towers, Prospect, South Australia.

Sapper Arthur Benjamin Towers was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Sapper Arthur Towers' father - Mr Benjamin Towers, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent November, 1921 & Plaque sent October, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Sapper Arthur Benjamin Towers – service number 15249, aged 33, of 7th Field Coy., Australian Engineers. He was the son of Benjamin and Edith Mary Lenora Towers, of 4 Vine Street, Prospect, Adelaide, South Australia.

Sapper A. B. Towers is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 25.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

A. B. Towers is remembered on the National Soldiers Memorial in Adelaide, South Australia. 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)

A. B. Towers is remembered in the Memorial Arch Gates located at the Hospital Entrance, Swanport Road & Monash Terrace, Murray Bridge, South Australia.



Memorial Arch Gates, Murray Bridge (Photos from Monument Australia – Roger Johnson)



A. B. Towers is remembered on the Honour Board located in Prospect RSL Hall, Wilcox Ave & Menzies Crescent, Prospect, South Australia.



Prospect RSL Hall Honour Board WW1 (A – G)

A. B. Towers is remembered on the South Australian Railways Honour Board located at Adelaide Railway Station, concourse north end, North Terrace, Adelaide, South Australia.



(67 pages of Sapper Arthur Benjamin Towers' 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

THE CALL TO ARMS

Following is the list of men who have volunteered during the week at Murray Bridge:- Arthur Benjamin Towers.

(*The Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Guneracha Advertiser*, Sth Australia – 25 February, 1916)

312TH CASUALTY LIST

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

WOUNDED

15249 – Sap. A. B. TOWERS, Prospect

(*Observer*, Adelaide, South Australia – 23 June, 1917)

342ND CASUALTY LIST

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

WOUNDED

15249 – Sap. A. B. TOWERS, Prospect (2nd occ., remained on duty)

(*The Register*, Adelaide, South Australia – 19 October, 1917)

FOR KING AND COUNTRY

TOWERS – On the 2nd December, at Dundee War Hospital, Sapper Arthur Benjamin Towers, late 7th Field Company Engineers, A.I.F., dearly loved and only son of Benjamin and Edith Towers, Vine street, Prospect.

(*The Journal*, Adelaide, Sth Australia – 18 December, 1917) & (*The Advertiser*, Adelaide, Sth Australia – 18 December, 1917)

(*The Express and Telegraph*, Adelaide, Sth Australia – 18 December, 1917 (*Observer*, Adelaide, South Australia – 22 December, 1917)

376TH CASUALTY LIST

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Died of illness

15249 Spr. A. B. TOWERS, Prospect (1/12/17, pr. rep. wounded, third occ.)

(*The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia – 28 December, 1917)

AUSTRALIAN SOLDIERS

DIED FOR THEIR COUNTRY

Sapper A. B. TOWERS, of the 8th Field Company Engineers, only son of Mr and Mrs B. Towers, No. 4, Vine-street, Prospect, who was severely wounded for the third time, died from meningitis in the Dundee War Hospital on December 1. He was formerly employed on the South Australian Railways Department.

(Chronicle, Adelaide, South Australia – 29 December, 1917)

HEROES OF THE GREAT WAR: THEY GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR KING AND COUNTRY



Sapper A. B. TOWERS

(Chronicle, Adelaide, South Australia – 29 December, 1917)

HEROES OF THE GREAT WAR

TOWERS – In loving memory of Sapper A. B. Towers, who died of meningitis in Dundee Military Hospital, Scotland, on December 2, 1917. “At rest.” – Inserted by his loving friend B. Nicholls.

TOWERS – In loving memory of our dear and only son and brother, Sapper Arthur Towers, 7th Field Engineers, died in the Dundee War Hospital on December 2, 1917.

He sleeps not in his native land,
But under foreign skies,
Far away from those who loved him,
In a hero's grave he lies.

-Inserted by his loving mother and father and sisters, Prospect.

(*The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia – 2 December, 1918)

HEROES OF THE GREAT WAR

TOWERS – In fond and loving memory of our only dear son and brother, Arthur, Sapper A. B. Towers, who died at Dundee Hospital, Scotland, December 2, 1917.

We who loved you sadly miss you,
As it dawns just another years;
And in lonely hours of thinking,
Thoughts of you are ever dear.

-Inserted by his loving mother and father and sisters, Prospect.

(*The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia – 2 December, 1919) & (*Chronicle*, Adelaide, Sth Australia – 6 December, 1919)

HEROES OF THE GREAT WAR

TOWERS – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Sapper A. B. Towers, who died at Dundee, December 2nd, 1917.

All that is meant to lose him
Only our sad hearts know.

-Inserted by his loving mother and father and sisters.

(*The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia – 2 December, 1920) & (*Chronicle*, Adelaide, Sth Australia – 4 December, 1920)

HEROES OF THE GREAT WAR

TOWERS – In loving memory of Sapper A. B. Towers, who died in Dundee War Hospital on December 2, 1917.

A day to remember,
But sad to recall.

-Inserted by his loving mother and father and sisters.

Chronicle, Adelaide, Sth Australia – 10 December, 1921)

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)

A letter from Base Records, dated 6th September, 1921, to Mr B. Towers, father of the late Sapper A. B. Towers advised that the inscription chosen for the headstone of his son was far too long & it would be necessary to abbreviate the inscription or select a shorter one. Mr Towers replied on 12th September, 1921 stating "*if you think there is to many letters will be kind enough to fix it up*". Mr Towers had originally chosen "*Our dear son & brother is Peacefully Sleeping Away from Home And his dear ones.*" The first section – "*Our dear son & brother is*" had been crossed out in red pen on Mr Tower's letter to Base Records.

Sapper A. B. Towers does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Peacefully Sleeping Away From Home And His Dear Ones

Balgay Cemetery, Dundee, Scotland

Balgay Cemetery, Dundee, Scotland contains service plots of both wars. Most of the 1914-1918 burials are in a war plot in Section B. A Screen Wall memorial is erected by the Plot to name those whose graves are not marked by headstones. There is a Cross of Sacrifice in the Plot. The 1939-1945 burials are in various parts of the necropolis.

There are now nearly 150, 1914-1918 and nearly 130, 1939-1945 War casualties commemorated in this site. The Polish Group plot contains a special memorial, commemorating a Polish soldier buried elsewhere in the cemetery.
(Information & photo from CWGC)





The Cross of Sacrifice at Balgay Cemetery, Dundee *(Photo by Leslie)*



CWGC Headstones of the Three Australian Soldiers

Photo of Sapper A. B. Towers' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Balgay Cemetery, Dundee, Scotland.



(Photo from Find a Grave – John G Duffus)