

**St. George's Churchyard,  
Fovant, Wiltshire  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**773 PRIVATE**

**H. E. WEBB**

**AUST. MACHINE GUN CORPS**

**26TH OCTOBER, 1918 Age 28**

*Have Mercy Upon Him O Lord*

*And Let Thy Light*

*Shine Upon Him*

## Herbert Edward WEBB

Herbert Edward Webb was born in Brisbane, Queensland on 24th June, 1890 to parents Michael and Elizabeth Webb (nee Nuitt/Newitt).

Herbert Edward Webb attended State School at Bundaberg South, Queensland.

Herbert Edward Webb was a 27 year old, single, Brickmaker from Mary Street, South East Bundaberg, Queensland when he enlisted at Townsville, Queensland on 24th January, 1917 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 773 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs O. Webb, care of Mrs H. Stokes, Show Grounds, South Bundaberg, Queensland.

Herbert Edward Webb married Olive Stokes on 12th February, 1917 at Presbyterian Church, Bundaberg Queensland, after he enlisted. A birth was registered in 1911 for Thelma Eileen Stokes – daughter of Olive Stokes. A birth was registered in 1915 (born 12th July, 1915) for Phyllis Edna Stokes, daughter of Olive Stokes. A birth was registered in 1917 for Stanley Herbert Thomas Webb, son of Herbert & Olive Webb.

Private Herbert Edward Webb was posted to 11th Depot Battalion on 30th January, 1917 for recruit training. He was transferred to 25th Reinforcements of 15th Battalion on 27th February, 1917. Private Webb was transferred to Machine Gun Regiment on 22nd March, 1917 then transferred to Machine Gun Depot at Seymour on 25th April, 1917. Private Webb was transferred to Isolation Camp at Ascot Vale on 24th August, 1917 then transferred to Machine Gun Depot at Bendigo, Victoria on 15th October, 1917.

Private Herbert Edward Webb embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Nestor* (A71) on 21st November, 1917 with 14th Reinforcements of 7th Machine Gun Company. He disembarked at Suez on 15th December, 1917.

Private Herbert Edward Webb was then attached to Australian Camp at Suez from 15th December, 1917 to 30th December, 1917. He was then transferred to Alexandria, Egypt & on 24th January 1918 disembarked at Southampton, England.

Private Herbert Edward Webb was marched in to 1st Training Battalion at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 24th January, 1918 & transferred to 9th Battalion from 7th Machine Gun Company the same day.

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 Herbert Edward Webb proceeded overseas to France on 15th April, 1918 via Folkestone & was marched in to New Zealand Infantry & General Base Depot at Etaples, France. On 18th April, 1918 Private Webb was transferred to 1st Australian Machine Gun Corps.

Private Herbert Edward Webb was reallocated his Regimental Number as 773A.

Private Herbert Edward Webb was wounded in action in France on 26th August, 1918. He was admitted to 1st Australian Field Ambulance with shrapnel wounds to right knee then transferred to 55th Casualty Clearing Station. Private Webb was transferred to Ambulance Train 33 & was admitted to 12th General Hospital at Rouen, France with a shrapnel wounds to his right knee. He was invalided back to United Kingdom on 28th August, 1918 on Hospital Ship *St. Patrick*.

Private Herbert Edward Webb was admitted to 5th Southern General Hospital at Portsmouth, England on 29th August, 1918 with shrapnel wounds to right knee – severe. Private Webb was absent without leave from the 5th Southern General Hospital at Portsmouth, England from 7 p.m. on 3rd September, 1918 till 6 p.m. on 5th September, 1918 when he was handed over by the Civil Police. He was awarded a total of 4 days forfeiture of pay.

Private Herbert Edward Webb was transferred to 3rd Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford on 30th September, 1918 & on furlough from 1st October, 1918 to 15th October, 1918. He was then to report to No 4 Command Depot at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on his return.

Private Herbert Edward Webb was marched in to Hurdcott Camp on 15th October, 1918. A hospital report dated 16th October, 1918 reports that Private Webb "*Feels well, Knee wound negligible*".

A Court of Inquiry was held at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 26th October, 1918 for the purpose of "*investigating the circumstances under which a man (unidentified and dressed in the uniform of an Australian Soldier) met his death.*"

EVIDENCE.

No. 149. Cpl. KERR P. 25th. Battalion now attached to No.4. Command Depot, Hurdcott duly sworn states:-

I knew No. 773. Pte. WEBB H.E. 1st. M.G.B. I am Hut Corporal of No.3. Hut "B" Coy. of this Depot. Pte. Webb was on the strength of my Hut. He came into Camp on the 15.10.18 and was in my hut up till the time of his death. I had often called his name on parade and I knew him personally. On the morning of the 26.10.18. I saw his body in the R.C.Hut. No.6. Camp. 14th. T.B. I am sure that this was the body of No. 773. Pte. WEBB. I looked at it closely and I have no doubt in my mind. He seemed to me to be a peculiar man when he was in the Hut. He was very reserved and hardly ever spoke. I knew Webb about twelve months ago in No.2. Camp. Fovant. We were then in the 5th. T.B.

(Sgd) P. Kerr.

No. 3355. Pte. SHARP J.B. 44th. Bn. now of No.4. Command Depot, Hurdcott duly sworn states:

I knew No. 773. Pte. Webb. H.E. 1st. M.G.B. He was in my Hut and I had known him from the time he came into the Camp on the 15.10.18. I was Mess Orderly and often spoke to him. I saw his body on 26.10.18 at the R.C. Hut. No. 6 Camp. I looked at it closely and am sure that it was the body of Pte. Webb. I used to think that he was slightly off his head, as he was so silent and reserved.

(Sgd) J.B. Sharpe.

No. 3481. Pte. WEIR G. 54th. Bn. now of No.4. Command Depot, Hurdcott duly sworn states:-

I knew No. 773. Pte. WEBB H.E. 1st. M.G.B. He had the next bunk to me in Hut No.3. I have spoken to him but found him very silent and reserved. I thought that he was peculiar because when spoken to he would not answer but only give a bit of a grunt. I saw his body on 26.10.18. I examined it closely and I am quite certain that it was the body of Pte. Webb.

(Sgd) George Weir.

Frank Lever, Labourer, Barford St. Martin, duly sworn states:-

On 25.10.18 about 1 p.m. I was walking in Pond Copse when I noticed what appeared to be an Australian soldier leaning against a tree. I thought that he was resting and went up to him and found that he was hanging from a limb of the tree suspended by a puttee which was twisted round his neck. His toes were touching the ground. I did not touch him but could see that he was dead. I called for assistance and the Corporal in charge of the Incinerator sent for a Doctor. That is all I know about the matter.

(Sgd) Frank Lever.

Capt. Saxeby. G.J.M. A.A.M.C. attached to 3rd. Training Bde. duly sworn states:-

I am R.M.O. of 12th. T.B. About 1.45 p.m. on 25.10.18 I saw the body of Pte. WEBB H.E. 1st. M.C.B. lying on a stretcher. There was a puttee tied round the neck. I examined the body and found that life was extinct. In my opinion the man had been dead between one and two days. There were no marks of external violence and death apparently was due to hanging. There was no signs of venereal disease. I came to the conclusion that death was due from hanging from the puttee round the neck and the discoloration of the lower part of the face. There seemed no possibility of death from any other cause. He had between one and two pounds in his pocket. The body was in a wood about 100 yards from my Camp.

(Sgd) G.J.M. Saxeby. Capt.

The Court Finding was, on the evidence available, "that the man found dead is No. 773 Private Webb, H. E. of the 1st Battalion, Australian Imperial Force and that he met his death by hanging, attributable to his own hand." He had committed suicide by hanging himself on or about 25th October, 1918 in Pond Copse, Hurdcott.

A Coroner's Inquest was held on 26th October, 1918 at No. 7 Command Depot, Hurdcott, Wiltshire with Coroner Frank Henry Trethowan & 7 Jurors. The Verdict of the Inquest was "Herbert Edward Webb was found dead at Pond Copse, Baverstock on the 25th day of October, 1918 and that the cause of death was hanging and so do further say that the said Herbert Webb, whilst of unsound mind, did kill himself."

Private Herbert Edward Webb was found hanging in woods at Pond Copse, Baverstock, near No 7 Camp Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 26th October, 1918. Private Herbert Edward Webb died on or about 25th/26th October, 1918 from suicide. Some of the forms in Private Webb's Service Record file have the date of death as 25th October, 1918 & other forms have the date as 26th October, 1918.

A death for Herbert E. Webb, aged 28, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Wilton, Wiltshire, England.

Private Herbert Edward Webb was buried at 3 pm on 31st October, 1918 in St George's Churchyard, Fovant, Wiltshire, England— Plot number I. A. 4. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Pte H. E. Webb - Coffin was good, Polished Elm with Brass Mounts – Deceased was buried with full Military Honours. The funeral was preceded by a Firing Party and Band from No 4 Australian Command Depot. Six



*of deceased's late Comrades acted as Pall bearers. 3 Officers and about 80 N.C.O.'s and Men from No 4 Command Depot attended as mourners. Headquarters A.I.F. Depots in United Kingdom were represented at the funeral.*

Mrs Olive Webb, widow of late Private Webb, wrote to Base Records on 23rd December, 1918 requesting a date of death for her husband & how he died. A reply dated 31st December, 1918 was sent from Officer In Charge of Base Records to Mrs O. Webb, Franklin Estate, Bundaberg, Queensland informing her that her husband *"is reported as having committed suicide on 25.10.18, being found hanging in a wood near No. 7 Camp, Hurdcott, England."*

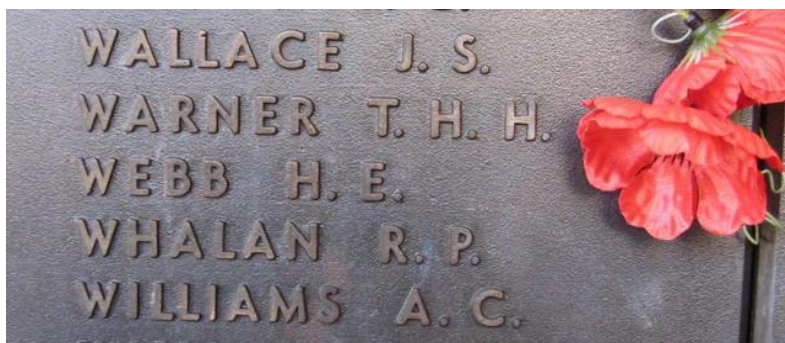
The Red Cross Wounded & Missing File on Private Herbert Edward Webb contains a letter dated 7th January, 1919 addressed to the O.C. No. 7 Camp, No. 4 Command Depot, Hurdcott from the Red Cross, on behalf of Pte Webb's relatives, asking for further information about his death. A reply from 12th Training Battalion A.I.F. states *"Died 25-10-18". "I am afraid that little information of the nature required can be supplied at this date. The facts are these:- Pte Webb's body was found hanging in Polygon Wood, near No 7 Camp on 25-10-18, and as he was never on the strength of this T.B., he was not identified for several days. At length three soldiers belonging to No 4 Command Depot (No 149. Cpl Keir. P. 25th Battalion. No 3355. Pte Sharpe. J.B. 44th Battalion and No 3481. Pte Weir. G. 54th Battalion) came forward and positively identified the body as that of Pte Webb. It is possible that further information may be obtained from No 4 Command Depot to which the above mentioned man belong, but it is doubtful whether they are still here. I might add that no documents of any kind were found on the deceased. The money coins etc. were forwarded to Headquarters through the usual channels – A. P. Imlay, 12th Training Battalion A.I.F."*

Private Herbert Edward Webb requested in his Will dated 10th July, 1917 that his whole property & effects be given to Olive Webb (wife) of South Bundaberg, Queensland.

Private Herbert Edward Webb was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Webb's widow - Mrs Olive Webb, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent December, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Herbert Edward Webb – service number 773, aged 28, of 1st Battalion, Australian Machine Gun Corps. He was the son of Michael and Elizabeth Webb; husband of Olive Webb, of Prospect St., Bundaberg, Queensland. Born at Brisbane.

Private H. E. Webb is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 175.



*(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)*



*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

H. E. Webb is remembered on the Bundaberg War Memorial located at Bourong & Barolin Streets, Bundaberg, Queensland.



**Bundaberg War Memorial** (Photos from Monument Australia – Fred Brunings)

(94 pages of Private Herbert Edward Webb'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**

### **ROLL OF HONOUR**

#### **Casualty List No. 434**

Wounded

Herbert Edw. Webb, S, Bundaberg

*(The Brisbane Courier, Qld, 15 October, 1918)*

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### **LOCAL AND GENERAL**

#### **The Roll of Honour**

The Mayor (Ald. W. Dunn) yesterday received a telegram from the Base Records, Melbourne, advising that Private Herbert Edward Webb, had died on active service. In the absence of Canon Beasley, the sad news was conveyed to the deceased's wife, Mrs Webb, who resides near the Showgrounds, by Mr F. W. Payne. Much sympathy will be extended to the widow and her three children in their hour of sorrow. The deceased was a brother of Mrs W. Brooks, North Bundaberg.

*(The Bundaberg Mail, Qld, 6 November, 1918)*

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### **ROLL OF HONOUR**

#### **Casualty List No. 448 - 449**

DIED OTHER CAUSES

Herbert Edward Webb, S, Bundaberg, 25/10/18 (prev. rep. w'ded, C.N.S)

*(The Brisbane Courier, Qld, 2 December, 1918)*

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#### **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 H. E. Webb does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*Have Mercy Upon Him O Lord And Let The Light Shine Upon Him*



## St George's Churchyard, Fovant, Wiltshire, England

There was a 600 bed hutted military hospital at Fovant during the First World War, and the concentration of Australian depots and training camps in the area is reflected in the 63 First World War burials in this churchyard. The war graves form two groups, one west of the church and the other at the east end. There is also one burial of the Second World War. There are 44 War Graves belonging to those who served with the Australian Imperial Force in World War 1.  
*(Information from CWGC)*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00 299

*(Photo c 1919)*







**St George's Churchyard, Fovant – War Graves at front & rear** (*Churchyard photos courtesy of Andrew Stacey*)





Photo of Private H. E. Webb's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St George's Churchyard, Fovant, Wiltshire, England.







**Cross of Sacrifice** (Photo courtesy of Andrew Stacey)