

**St. Lawrence Churchyard,
Stratford-sub-Castle, Wiltshire**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



1722 PRIVATE

F. A. WHITCHURCH

51ST BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

9TH APRIL, 1917

Frederick Alfred WHITCHURCH

Frederick Alfred Whitchurch was born at Pateena, Tasmania on 3rd March, 1886 to parents William Wickham Whitchurch & Harriett Whitchurch (nee White). His birth was registered at Longford, Tasmania.

Harriet Whitchurch, mother of Frederick Alfred Whitchurch, died on 12th January, 1903 at Launceston, Tasmania.

Frederick Alfred Whitchurch attended Miss Sh____'s Private School, Prospect.

The 1914 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Wimmera, subdivision of Kerang, Victoria listed Frederick Alfred Whitchurch, Labourer, of Koondrook. His brother Frank Stanley Whitchurch, Labourer was also listed at Koondrook.

Frederick Alfred Whitchurch was a 28 year old, single, Labourer from 15 Mary Street, Brunswick, Victoria when he enlisted at Bendigo, Victoria on 4th September, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 4222 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed (on Embarkation Roll) as his brother – Mr Frank Whitchurch, 15 Mary Street, Brunswick, Victoria. The Embarkation Roll has the following next to Frederick Alfred Whitchurch's name "*Previously No. 4222, 10th Rfts, 24th Btn. Failed to re-embark Fremantle.*" The Attestation Papers for Frederick Alfred Whitchurch recorded his next of kin as his father – Whiten (altered to Wickham on a later copy of Attestation Papers) Whitchurch, Turners March, Tasmania.

Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch was posted to 22nd Depot Battalion on 6th September, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to 24th Depot Battalion, A.I.F., Royal Park on 21st November, 1915. Private Whitchurch was transferred to Williamstown Reinforcements on 14th January, 1916 & posted with 10th Reinforcements of 24th Battalion. He was transferred to 2nd Reinforcements of 51st Battalion on 10th April, 1916 & re-allotted a service number of 1722.

Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch embarked from Fremantle, Western Australia on HMAT *Aeneas (A60)* on 17th April, 1916 with the 51st Infantry Battalion, 2nd Reinforcements & disembarked at Suez in May, 1916.

[Note: There is no record in the Service Record file of when or how Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch transferred from Suez in May, 1916 to being at Rollestone, Wiltshire, England in July, 1916]

Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch was marched out from 13th Training Battalion at Rollestone, Wiltshire, England on 21st July, 1916 to reinforce the 51st Battalion in France.

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 Frederick Alfred Whitchurch was marched in to 4th Divisional Base Depot at Etaples, France on 26th July, 1916.

Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch was sent to Hospital on 11th August, 1916 from 4th Divisional Base Depot. He was admitted to 26th General Hospital at Etaples, France on 13th August, 1916 with Influenza. Private Whitchurch embarked from Calais, France for England on 29th August, 1916 on Hospital Ship *Brighton* with Influenza - slight.

Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch was admitted to Edmonton Military Hospital, England on 29th August, 1916 with Influenza - slight. (Note: No further details shown in the Service Record file between 29th August, 1916 & 4th November, 1916)

Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch was discharged from 2nd Auxiliary Hospital to Weymouth on 4th November, 1916. He was marched out from No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, Dorset, England on 11th December, 1916 for Codford. (Note: No further details shown in the Service Record file between 11th December, 1916 & 6th January, 1917)

Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch was marched in to 13th Training Battalion at Codford, Wiltshire on 6th January, 1917 from Camp Hospital.

Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch was written up for an Offence while posted at Codford – A.W.L. (Absent without leave) from Reveille on 11th January, 1917 till 12.30 pm on 11th January, 1917. He was awarded 2 days confined to Barracks & forfeited 1 days' pay.

Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch was sent sick to Camp Isolation Hospital at Codford on 10th February, 1917 from 13th Training Battalion.

Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch died on 9th April, 1917 at Isolation Hospital, Salisbury, Wiltshire, England from Pneumonia & Cerebro Spinal Meningitis. (Note: some forms in the Service Record file of the late Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch have the date of death as 8th April, others have 9th April, 1917). The death certificate, located in the Service Record file of the late Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch, has the date of death as 8th April, 1917 at The Isolation Hospital, Stratford-sub-Castle of (1) Pneumonia Empyema (2) Pyaemia. The informant was listed as Mabel Winch, Acting Matron, The Isolation Hospital, Stratford-sub-Castle.

A death for Fred Whitchurch, aged 29, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Salisbury, Wiltshire, England.

Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch was buried on 12th April, 1917 in St Lawrence's Churchyard, Stratford-sub-Castle, Wiltshire, England – Plot number 116 (as referenced on CWGC website, however records in Service Record file state the Grave number as 111) and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Frederick Alfred Whitchurch - *Coffin was good, 1st Class. Military Funeral officiated by Rev Griffiths, 12th Training Battalion.*

The 3rd Military District Headquarters wrote to Base Records on 19th April, 1917 referring to their previous letter & stated "*Enquiries were made at the Office of the District Paymaster but no further particulars could be obtained in regard to the present whereabouts of the next-of-kin of the late Pte F. A. Whitchurch.*"

Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Whitchurch's father – Mr W. Whitchurch, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent December, 1921 & Plaque sent July, 1922). The Victory Medal & Memorial Plaque receipts, which are located in the Service Record file for Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch, were signed for by "Whickham Whitchurch".

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private F. A. Whitchurch – service number 1722, of 51st Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Private F. A. Whitchurch is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 154.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(57 pages of Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch'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

THE NEW SOLDIERS

The following men passed the doctor on Saturday in Bendigo:-..... Frederick Alfred Whitchurch, Launceston, labourer;.....

(Bendigo Advertiser, Victoria – 6 September, 1915)

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)

Mr W. Whitchurch, 33 Margaret St, Launceston, Tasmania, father of the late Private Frederick Alfred Whitchurch, wrote to Base Records on 4th November, 1921 to inform them that "*I am not in a position to have any verse or inscription in memory of my son the late Pte Frederick A. Whitchurch....*"

Base Records wrote to Mr W. Whitchurch, 33 Margaret St, Launceston, Tasmania on 8th November, 1921 stating that they were returning a portion of circular, form A. and "*should be glad if you would furnish the particulars marked thus (X) as same are required for record purposes.*" The letter continues "*It is noted you do not desire to add a personal inscription but in case you are not quite clear on the matter I would point out that the soldier's name, regiment particulars, and date of death, would be inscribed free, and that for the personal inscription there is only space reserved for a short verse or text containing not more than 66 letter.... It is no necessary to forward the remittance at once....*"

Private F. A. Whitchurch does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

St Lawrence's Churchyard, Stratford-sub-Castle, Wiltshire, 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. Most of the 47 First World War burials in Stratford-sub-Castle (St Lawrence) Churchyard were made from the local hospital and more than half of them are of Australian servicemen who were based at the many Australian depots and training camps in the area. There are also two burials of the Second World War in the cemetery. (*Information from CWGC*)



St. Lawrence Church, Stratford-sub-Castle



Churchyard of St. Lawrence, Stratford-sub-Castle with CWGC Cross of Sacrifice



(Photo courtesy of The Venerable Alan Jeans, Archdeacon of Sarum – 2020)



(Photo courtesy of The Venerable Alan Jeans, Archdeacon of Sarum – 2020)



(Photo courtesy of The Venerable Alan Jeans, Archdeacon of Sarum – 2020)

Photo of Private F. A. Whitchurch's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St Lawrence's Churchyard, Stratford-sub-Castle, Wiltshire, England.




(Photo courtesy of The Venerable Alan Jeans, Archdeacon of Sarum – 2020)



Original Grave Markers

Stratford-sub-Castle War Graves

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
A	RAF	British Army			NZ	NZ	Rogers 3 AIF		Robson Nurse	NZ	
B			Nicol AFC	Mason 5 Aus Pioneer	Dundas 29 AIF	Thorsby 20 AIF	Walpole (Wilson) 3 AIF	O'Grady 10 AIF	Kubank 40 AIF	NZ	
C	NZ	Jacob 31 AIF	Wood 9 AIF	Smith 55 AIF	British Army	British Army	Smith Aus ASC	O'Donnell 16 AIF	Knight 52 AIF	Lawrence 54 AIF	Edmonds 48 AIF
D		Lewis 30 AIF	British Army	Whitchurch 51 AIF 	British Army	Dee 52 AIF	Greenslade 17 AIF	British Army	Thorburn 13 AIF	Knight 13 AIF	Hannabry 16 AIF
E					Adams 13 AIF	Crow Aus FA	British Army	Bolton 40 AIF	British Army	British Army	
F		British Army		British Army	British Army	British Army		Canada		British Army	

(Information for layout of graves – courtesy of The Venerable Alan Jeans, Archdeacon of Sarum – 2020)