

# Nottingham General Cemetery, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire

## War Graves



*Lest We Forget*

## World War 1



15440 SAPPER

**C. B. WHITCOMBE**

AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS

17TH OCTOBER, 1917

## Charles Barry WHITCOMBE

Charles Barry Whitcombe was born at Woolwich, Kent, England around 1880 - 1884 to parents Charles & Caroline Whitcombe (nee Sullivan).

The Whitcombe family were in Dublin, Ireland around 1891 when John Frederick Whitcombe was born.

[The 1901 England Census recorded Charles' parents – Charles Whitcombe (Pensioner Recruiter (?), aged 48, born Monmouth, Monmouthshire) & Caroline Whitcombe (aged 42, born Dover, Kent) living with 2 children – Elizabeth Whitcombe (aged 18, born Marylebone. London) & John Frederick Whitcombe (aged 10, born Dublin, Ireland) living at 31 Marple Street, Nottingham, England.]

[The 1911 England Census recorded Charles' parents – Charles Whitcombe (Army Pensioner, aged 58) & Caroline Whitcombe (aged 51) and their son John Frederick Whitcombe (Out of work Bank Clerk, aged 20) living at 31 Marple Street, Nottingham, England in a 5 roomed dwelling.]

According to information provided for the Roll of Honour by his mother, Charles Barry Whitcombe came to Australia when he was 31 years old.

A "C. Barry Whitcombe", aged 35, Fireman, was listed as Crew on *El Lobo* which had sailed from Vancouver on 17th December, 1915 bound for San Francisco.

Charles Barry Whitcombe stated he was a 31 year old, single, Ship's Fireman from Melbourne, Victoria when he enlisted on 17th February, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 15440 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Caroline Whitcombe, of 31 Marple Street, Nottingham, England. Charles Barry Whitcombe stated on his Attestation Papers that he had been an apprentice to Smith Bros. Bradford, Yorkshire Engineers for 3 years.

Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe was posted to Engineers Reinforcements at Seymour, 3rd Military District on 19th February, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to Engineers Reinforcements at Moore Park, NSW, 2nd Military District on 24th March, 1916.

*Sapper - also called pioneer or combat engineer, is a combatant or soldier who performs a variety of military engineering duties such as bridge-building, laying or clearing minefields, demolitions, field defences and general construction, as well as road and airfield construction and repair. They are also trained to serve as infantry personnel in defensive and offensive operations. A sapper's duties are devoted to tasks involving facilitating movement, defence and survival of allied forces and impeding those of enemies.*

Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe was admitted to Milson Island Hospital on 18th April, 1916 with Syphilis. He was transferred on 2nd July, 1916 to Little Bay Hospital with Diphtheria & discharged to duty on 4th August, 1916.

Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe returned to Engineers Reinforcements at Moore Park, NSW on 8th August, 1916.

Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Ceramic (A40)* on 7th October, 1916 with the Field Company Engineers – September Reinforcements & 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 Charles Barry Whitcombe joined No. 3 Camp at Parkhouse, Wiltshire on 22nd November, 1916.

Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe was marched out from Engineers Training Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire to Brightlingsea on 4th January, 1917.

Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe was written up for an Offence at Brightlingsea E.T.D. (Engineers Training Depot) - A.W.L. (Absent without leave) from midnight 17th February, 1917 to 8 am on 22nd February, 1917. He was awarded 7 days Field Punishment No. 2 & forfeited 12 day's pay.

Brightlingsea, Essex became home to thousands of Australian Soldiers during WW1 as they trained for the frontline. It was the only Australian base or camp on the east coast of Britain. The area was selected for the Australian Field Company of Engineers due to its geography of tidal creeks which offered practice for bridge building for the Engineers & the soft soils & mud could be used for trench digging.

Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe was written up for an Offence at Brightlingsea E.T.D. (Engineers Training Depot) - A.W.L. (Absent without leave) from midnight 6th April, 1917 to 8.30 am on 7th April, 1917. He was awarded 7 days' Field Punishment No. 2 & forfeited 7 day's pay.

Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 13th April, 1917 from E.T.D. Brightlingsea.

Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe was marched in to Australian General Base Depot at Etpales, France on 14th April, 1917. He was marched out to 1st Field Company Engineers on 9th May, 1917 & was taken on strength with 1st Field Company Engineers on 11th May, 1917 from Reinforcements.

Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe was detached for duty at Bridging School, Aire on 3rd September, 1917 & rejoined from detachment on 16th September, 1917.

Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe was wounded in action in France on 4th October, 1917. He was admitted to 41st Casualty Clearing Station on 4th October, 1917 with gunshot wounds to face & arm. He was transferred & admitted to 32nd Stationary Hospital on 5th October, 1917. Sapper Whitcombe was transferred to 83rd General Hospital at Boulogne, France on 14th October, 1917. He was embarked from Boulogne for England on Hospital Ship *St. Denis* on 16th October, 1917.

#### War Diary – 1st Field Company Engineers

*Bellewarde – 4 October, 1917*

*Operations commenced. Company personnel engaged on construction of strong points. Special report of operations covering this period attached. Sapper relieved at 9pm and returned to Billets. Lieut. H. E. Lyddon was killed in action (sniped) at about 9 am. Lieut. S. McConnel wounded. Casualties as follows:*

*1 Officer K in A 1 Officer Wounded 6 O/R K in A 22 O/R Wounded 1 O/R Missing.*

(Extract of War Diary information from the Australian War Memorial)

Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe was admitted to 1st Eastern General Hospital, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England.





### 1st Eastern General Hospital, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire

Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe died on 17th October, 1917 at 1st Eastern General Hospital, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England. A Post Mortem was conducted on 18th October, 1917 & the cause of death was from wounds received in action – (1) gunshot wounds to face (2) oedema of glottis.

A death for Charles B. Whitcombe, aged 33, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England.

Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe was buried at 2 pm on 22nd October, 1917 in a private family grave in Nottingham General Cemetery, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, England – Plot number 2334. 112. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe - *Coffin was good, polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a full Military Funeral, Firing Party, Band, Bearers and Gun Carriage being supplied by the Sherwood Foresters stationed at Derby. The coffin was draped with the "Union Jack" and surmounted by several lovely floral tributes. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside. The service at the graveside was conducted by the Rev. Father White. An oak cross will be erected by the A.I.F. London.*

Relatives and friends present at the funeral – (Father and Mother) Mr and Mrs C. Whitcombe, 83 Woodborough Road, Nottingham; Mr J. F. Whitcome (Brother) and Miss Warring of Nottingham (friend).

A War Pension was granted to Caroline Whitcombe, of 83 Woodborough Rd, Nottingham, mother of the late Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe, in the sum of 40/- per fortnight from 23rd December, 1917.

Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Sapper Whitcombe's mother – Mrs C. Whitcombe. (Scroll & Plaque issued in England in September, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Sapper C. B. Whitcombe – service number 15440, of Australian Engineers. No family details are listed.

Sapper C. B. Whitcombe 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

C. B. Whitcombe is remembered on the St. Andrew's Church Roll of Honour, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, England.



St. Andrew's Church Roll of Honour, Nottingham

(45 pages of Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe'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**

### **352nd CASUALTY LIST**

Died of Wounds

Spr. C. B. WHITCOMBE, England, 17/10/17

*(The Herald, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia– 15 November, 1917)*

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### **IN MEMORIAM**

WHITCOMBE. – In loving memory of Spr. Charles Barry Whitcombe, A.I.F., died of wounds October 17th, 1917. Ever in our thoughts. – From mother and dad.

WHITCOMBE. – In affectionate remembrance of my dear brother, Spr. Charles Barry Whitcombe, A.I.F., died of wounds October 17th, 1917. – From Mrs. E. Coulby, B.E.F., France.

WHITCOMBE. – In loving memory of my dear brother Charles Barry Whitcombe, Australian Engineers, who died of wounds October 17th, 1917. R.I.P. – Fred.

*(Nottingham Evening Post, Nottinghamshire, England – 17 October, 1918)*

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### **IN MEMORIAM**

WHITCOMBE – In loving memory of my dear son, Charles Barry Whitcombe, Australian Engineers, died of wounds October 17th, 1917. Loved in life, fondly remembered in death. R.I.P. – Mother and father.

WHITCOMBE – In loving memory of my dear brother, Charles Barry Whitcombe, died of wounds October 17th, 1917. R.I.P. E. Coulby.

WHITCOMBE – In loving memory of my dear brother, Charles Barry Whitcombe, A.I.F., died of wounds October 17th, 1917. R.I.P. Fred.

*(Nottingham Evening Post, Nottinghamshire, England – 19 October, 1920)*

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### **IN MEMORIAM**

WHITCOMBE – In ever-loving memory of our dear son, Spr. Charles Barry Whitcombe, 1st Field Force Engineers, A.I.F., who died of wounds on arrival in England October 17th, 1917. R.I.P. He was dear to our hearts and died for our land. – 83 Woodborough-road.

WHITCOMBE – In proud and loving memory of my dear brother, Spr. Charles Barry Whitcombe, 1st Field Force Engineers, A.I.F., also his brave comrades. R.I.P. – E. Coulby.

*(Nottingham Evening Post, Nottinghamshire, England – 17 October, 1921)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

**1914-1918**

BARRY – In loving memory of Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe, Australian Imperial Forces, died of wounds October 17th, 1917. R.I.P. – Mother, sister and brother.

*(Nottingham Evening Post, Nottinghamshire, England – 17 October, 1924)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

**1914-1918**

WHITCOMBE – In loving memory of Charles Barry Whitcombe, Australian Imperial Force, died of wounds Oct. 17th, 1917. R.I.P. – Mother, Lizzie and Fred. 83 Woodborough-road, Nottingham.

*(Nottingham Evening Post, Nottinghamshire, England – 17 October, 1925)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

WHITCOMBE – Loving memories of my dear husband, Charles, died 14th October, 1926, also my dear son, Sapper Charles Barry Whitcombe, Australian Engineers, died of wounds, 17th October, 1917. – Elizabeth, Fred

*(Nottingham Evening Post, Nottinghamshire, England – 17 October, 1927)*

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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)*

Sapper C. B. Whitcombe does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

## Nottingham General Cemetery, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, England

Nottingham General Cemetery contains 349 Commonwealth War Graves – 339 from World War 1 & 10 from World War 2. Many of the World War 1 burials were made from the Bagthorpe War Hospital and other war hospitals in the city. More than 100 of these graves form a war plot, with the names of the dead inscribed on an adjoining Screen Wall.



**Nottingham General Cemetery** (Photo above from CWGC; below from Roy Hughes)







**Nottingham General Cemetery – above showing Cross of Sacrifice & Screen Wall** (Photos from CWGC)



Photo of Sapper C. B. Whitcombe's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Nottingham General Cemetery, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, England.

