

**Weston Mill Cemetery,
Plymouth, Devon, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



4240 PRIVATE

A. J. WILLIAMS

28TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

9TH JANUARY , 1917 Age 36

He Died For Us

Alfred James WILLIAMS

Alfred James Williams was born at Goornong, near Elmore, near Bendigo, Victoria in 1875 to parents William Henry and Catherine Jane Williams (nee Murphy).

Alfred James Williams attended Model School, Melbourne, Victoria.

William Henry Williams, father of Alfred James Williams, died on 8th October, 1911.

The 1912 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Coolgardie, subdivision on Mount Magnet, Western Australia listed Alfred James Williams, Station Hand, Wooleen Station via Yalgoo.

The 1913, 1914 & 1916 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Dampier, subdivision on Mount Magnet, Western Australia listed Alfred James Williams, Station Hand, Wooleen Station via Yalgoo.

Alfred James Williams stated he was a 36 year old, single, Station Hand (according to information provided by his sister for the Roll of Honour – Alfred was a Riveter & Boilermaker) from Cue, Western Australia when he enlisted on 10th February, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 4240 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Kate Williams, River Terrace, Abbotsford, Victoria.

Private Alfred James Williams was posted to 10th Reinforcements of 28th Battalion on 10th February, 1916 for recruit training.

Private Alfred James Williams embarked from Fremantle, Western Australia on HMAT *Ulysses* (A38) on 1st April, 1916 with the 7th Infantry Brigade, 28th Infantry Battalion, 10th Reinforcements.

Private Alfred James Williams embarked from Alexandria on 2nd June, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 12th June, 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.

Private Alfred James Williams proceeded overseas to France from 7th Training Battalion in England on 25th July, 1916. He was marched in to No. 2 A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 26th July, 1916. Private Williams proceeded to join his Unit from No. 2 A.D.B.D. on 4th August, 1916 & was taken on strength with 28th Battalion on 8th August, 1916 from 10th Reinforcements.

Private Alfred James Williams was sent sick to Hospital on 7th September, 1916. He was admitted to No. 3 Australian Field Ambulance with P.U.O. (Pyrexia (fever) of unknown origin) then transferred to 13th Field Ambulance on 9th September, 1916. Private Williams was discharged to duty on 10th September, 1916 in Belgium.

Private Alfred James Williams was admitted to 3rd Field Ambulance on 11th November, 1916 with bullet wounds to thigh. He was transferred to 38th Casualty Clearing Station with gunshot wounds to left side then transferred to Ambulance Train. Private Williams was admitted to No. 1 Australian General Hospital at Rouen, France on 12th November, 1916. He embarked for England on Hospital Ship *Formosa* from Havre, France on 16th November, 1916.

28th Battalion

The 28th Battalion was raised at Blackboy Camp in Western Australia on 16 April 1915 from recruits previously earmarked for the 24th Battalion, which was instead being raised in Victoria.....

After another stint in Egypt, the 7th Brigade proceeded to France and the Western Front, as part of the 2nd Australian Division. The 28th Battalion took part in its first major battle at Pozieres between 28 July and 6 August 1916. After a spell in a quieter sector of the front in Belgium, the 2nd Division returned to the south in October, where the 28th Battalion took part in confused and costly fighting to the east of Flers, in the Somme Valley.....

(Extract of Battalion information from Australian War Memorial)

Private Alfred James Williams was admitted to 4th Southern General Hospital, Plymouth on 18th November, 1916 with gunshot wounds to groin & head.

Private Alfred James Williams died at 6.45 am on 9th January, 1917 at Ford House Section, 4th Southern General Hospital, Devonport, England from wounds received in action in France – shrapnel wounds to pelvis, Septic arthritis of Hip (excised) & Pneumonia.

A death for Alfred Williams, aged 46, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Devonport, Devon, England. (*According to information provided by his sister, Miss Nellie Williams, for the Roll of Honour - Alfred James Williams was aged 40 years at the time of his death).

Private Alfred James Williams was buried on 11th January, 1917 in Weston Mill Cemetery, Plymouth, Devon, England – Plot number Mil. Con. C. 3513 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Alfred James Williams contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of the relatives to obtain the fullest details possible into his wounds, death and burial. A letter from the Matron, Ford House Hospital, Devonport reads: *"He was admitted into this Hospital on November the 18th, 1916, suffering from wounds to back side and leg. The femur was quite shattered. He also had very bad Rheumatism, with the exception of the leg, the wounds healed wonderfully. He had to have an operation on the leg, for the removal of the shattered bone. He went on very well for a short time, but Pneumonia set in and his Heart was of course affected by the Rheumatism. I think he must have suffered very much at times, but he never complained was always "not so bad." He was real grit all through, I think it was just marvellous for a man of his years to join up and go through all the hardships that he must have gone through, that younger men could not stand. Everybody, staff and patients were very fond of him and admired him immensely. Just before the end, which came rather suddenly the sister found he had a relative in England whom we sent for. She came just too late. I do not think he suffered at the last. He had a great funeral all the men of the A.I.F. that could possibly go attended, our Colonel and his wife who had a great admiration for him also attended and the men had his grave marked with a special emblem subscribed for at the Hospital. He is buried in the Military ground at the Cemetery quite close to the Hospital."*

Base Records contacted Miss N. Williams, in Essendon on 7th December, 1921 stating that she was marked on the records of the late Private Alfred James Williams as the next-of-kin. Base Records asked if there were any nearer blood relatives than herself due to the "Deceased Soldiers Estates Act 1918" which stated that the War Medals & Mementoes of a deceased soldier were to be handed in the following order of relationship – Widow, eldest surviving son, eldest surviving daughter, father, mother, eldest surviving brother, eldest surviving sister etc. Miss N. Williams replied to Base Records that she was the only single one in the family & had the care & responsibility of her mother & home for many years previous to her death. Miss N. Williams advised that she would "very much like to have my dear brother's medals" but also advised the address of her older sister & eldest brother.

Base Records contacted Mr J. G. Williams on December, 1921 stating that they understood that he was the eldest surviving brother of the late Private Alfred James Williams & were asking if he desired to have his brother's War Medals or in view of the fact that he would be receiving his own similar items that they could be handed to his sister Miss N. Williams who desired to obtain the mementos. Ex Sgt John G. Williams advised Base Records in January, 1922 that he was the eldest surviving brother of the late Private Alfred James Williams & that the War Medals could be handed over to his sister – Miss N. Williams at Mole & Durrant Street, Brighton, Victoria.

Private Alfred James Williams was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Williams' sister - Miss N. Williams (as agreed by her eldest brother – John G. Williams. Their mother Catherine Williams had died on 19th April, 1917) (Scroll sent March, 1922 & Plaque sent June, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Alfred James Williams – service number 4240, aged 36, of 28th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of the late William Henry and Catherine Jane Williams. Native of Goornong, Victoria, Australia.

Private A. J. Williams is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 115.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

A. J. Williams is remembered on the Western Australia State War Memorial which is located at the top of Kings Park and Botanic Garden escarpment, ANZAC Bluff, Fraser Avenue, Perth, Western Australia. The memorial was developed around an 18 metre tall obelisk as the principal feature, which is almost a replica of the Australian Imperial Force Memorials erected in France and Belgium. The heavy concrete foundations are supplemented by heavy brick walls which enclose an inner chamber or crypt. The walls surrounding the crypt are covered with The Roll of Honour; marble tablets which list under their units the names of more than 7,000 members of the services killed in action or as a result of World War One.



Western Australia State War Memorial Cenotaph, Kings Park (above) & (below) The Crypt with the Roll of Honour names *(Photo above from Monument Australia; below by Gordon Stuart)*



28th Battalion Panel (Photo courtesy of Gordon Stuart)

A. Williams is remembered on the Cue-Day Dawn District Road Board Honour Roll, located in Cue Community Centre (former Municipal Chambers), 33 Robinson Street, Cue, Western Australia.



Cue-Day Dawn District Road Board Honour

(Photo from Monument Australia – Erich Nussbaumer – with thanks to Tim Fitzgerald)

(80 pages of Private Alfred James Williams' Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

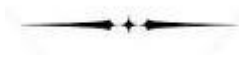
Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H05510

Private Alfred James Williams



Newspaper Notices

AUSTRALIANS IN ACTION

ROLL OF HONOUR

WEST AUSTRALIA

DEATHS

A. J. Williams, Ascot Vale (V.), died of wounds.

(Western Argus, Kalgoorlie, Western Australia – 30 January, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

WILLIAMS – In loving memory of our dear brother, Private A. J. Williams, who died in England of wounds received in France on the 9th January, 1916, beloved son of the late W. H. and Catherine Williams, brother of Mrs W. Cariss, Miss N. Williams, Mrs Tinniswood, Sergeant J. G. and Trooper Syd. A. (both on active service).

Although you now have fallen and lie in a hero's grave,
Your name will live for ever with the bravest of the brave;
Fight on, brave boys and avenge him in the trenches far away,
Our thoughts and prayers are with you through every fleeting day.

-Inserted by his sorrowing sisters and brothers.

(The Age, Melbourne, Victoria – 9 January, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

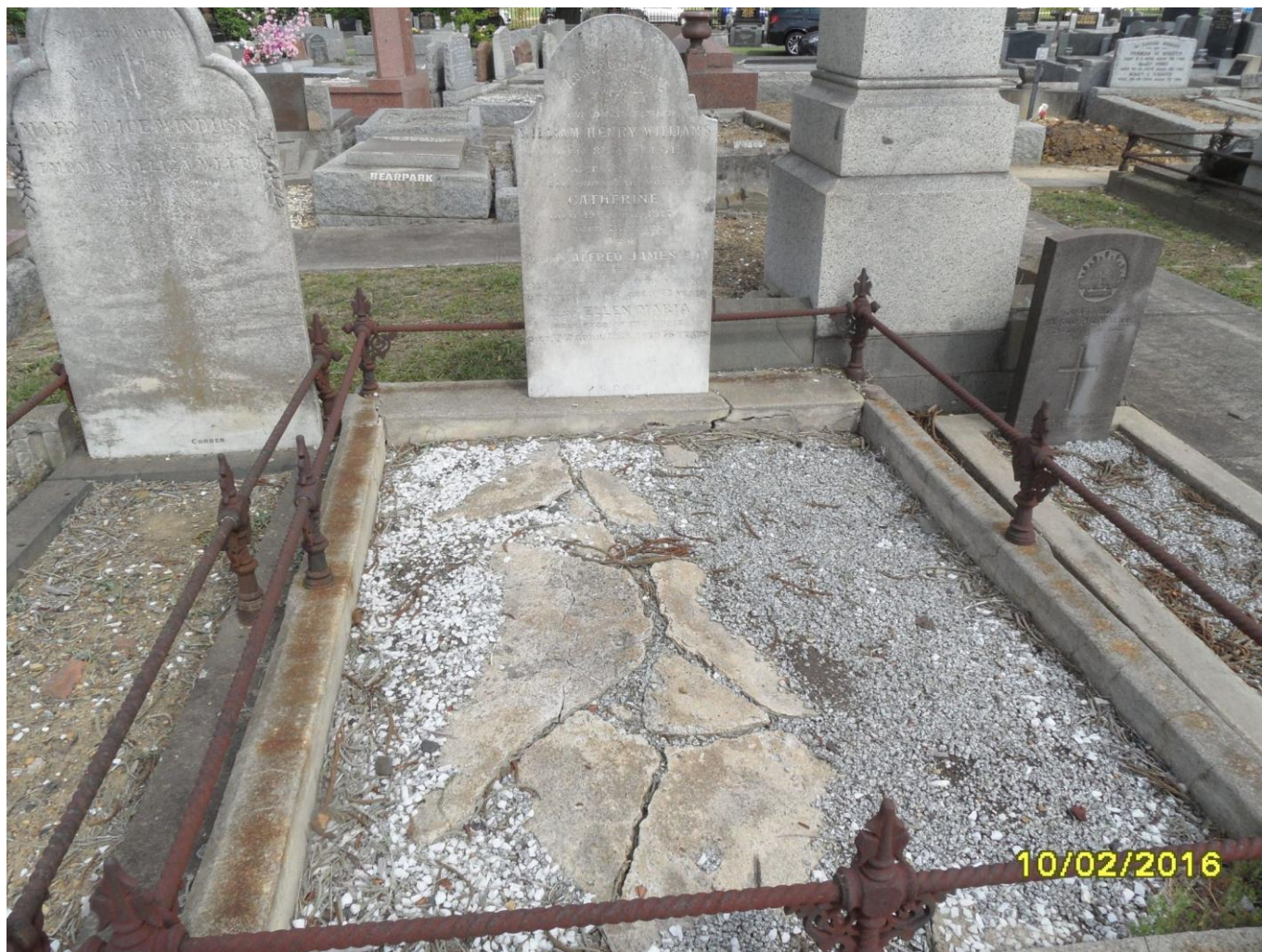
WILLIAMS – In loving memory of our dear brother, Alfred James, who died of wound received in France 9th January, 1917, late of Abbotsford.

The hardest part is yet to come,
When the other boys return;
For we'll miss among the happy throng
Dear Alf, who will never return.
His sacrifice has not been in vain.

-Inserted by his loving sisters and brothers, Sergt. Jack and Trooper Syd. (on active service).

(The Age, Melbourne, Victoria – 9 January, 1919)

Alfred James Williams is also remembered on the family headstone in Melbourne General Cemetery, Carlton, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.



(Photo by Tony M. Find a Grave)

In Loving Memory
of
Our Dear Father
WILLIAM HENRY WILLIAMS
Died 8 Oct. 1911,
Age 78 Yrs
And Our Dear Mother
CATHERINE
Died 19 April, 1917,
Aged 78 Years

Also

Private ALFRED JAMES, A.I.F.,

Son Of The Above

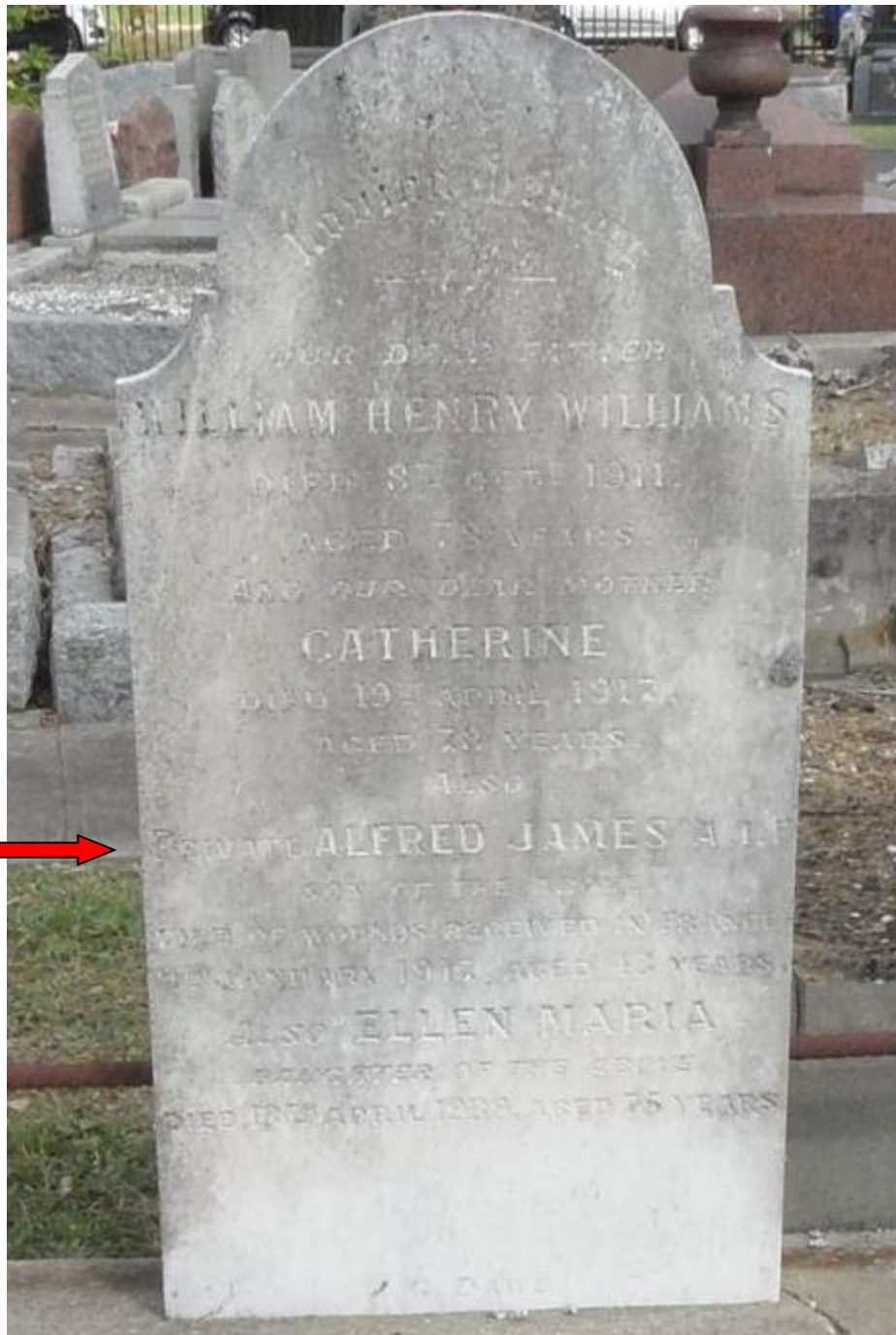
Died Of Wounds Received In France,

9TH Jan 1917, Aged 43 Years

Also ELLEN MARIA

Daughter Of The Above

Died 18TH April, 1939, Aged 75 Years.



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 A. J. Williams does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

He Died For Us

Weston Mill Cemetery, Plymouth, Devon, England

During the First World War, Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse contained between them the Royal Dockyard, Royal Naval Barracks (known as H.M.S. Vivid), the Royal Marine Barracks of the Plymouth Division, and naval and military hospitals. For the duration of the war, Devonport was made headquarters of the Auxiliary Patrol Area.

Plymouth was a naval station second only to Portsmouth during the Second World War. Devonport was also an important military station and there was a R.A.F station at Mount Batten, opposite Plymouth.

Plymouth (Weston Mill) Cemetery contains 401 burials of the First World War, 1 being unidentified. Approximately half are in the naval and military war graves plots north-east of the chapel, the rest are scattered.

Second World War burials in the cemetery number 556, 11 of which are unidentified. Of these, 111 of the earlier graves filled the existing naval and military plots. A further plot was then set aside for service graves and 317 of the burials were made there. The rest of the war graves are scattered. The cemetery also contains 14 non-war service burials and 36 war graves of other nationalities, 25 of them Polish.

There are six Australians buried in this cemetery – five from World War 1 & one from World War 2.

(Information & photos from CWGC)



Photo of Private A. J. Williams' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Weston Mill Cemetery, Plymouth, Devon, England.



(Photo courtesy of Julia & keld)



Weston Mill Cemetery, Plymouth, Devon

