

Exeter Higher Cemetery, Devon

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



30953 GUNNER

W. F. WILSON

AUSTRALIAN TRENCH MORTAR BATTERY

3RD OCTOBER, 1918 Age 21

William Francis (Frank) WILSON

William Francis Wilson was born at Canning, London, Essex around 1896 to parents James Lloyd Wilson & Harriet Kate Wilson (nee Parker). His birth was registered as William Frank Wilson in the December quarter, 1896 in the district of West Ham, Essex.

The 1901 England Census recorded William F. Wilson as a 4 year old, living with his family at 80 Mary Street, Canning Town, West Ham, Essex in a 2 roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as James Wilson (Firewood Cutter, aged 30, born Stepney, London) & Harriet K. Wilson (aged 28, born West Ham, Essex). William was one of three sons listed on this Census – James Wilson (aged 6, born West Ham, Essex), then William & Joseph W. Wilson (aged 1, born West Ham, Essex).

The 1911 England Census recorded William Frank Wilson as a 14 year old Assisting in Iron ___ living with his family in a 3 roomed dwelling at 11 Emily Street, Canning Town, West Ham, Essex. His parents were listed as James Wilson (Wood Cutter, aged 40) & Harriet Kate Wilson (aged 39). James & Harriet had been married for 20 years & had a total of 10 children, 3 having died. William was the eldest of 6 children listed on this Census (all born West Ham, Essex) – William then Joseph Walter Wilson (aged 12), Kate Wilson (aged 8), Alice Emma Wilson (aged 6), Henry Wilson (aged 3) and George Wm. Wilson (aged 1 ½ years). Also living with the family was James Wilson's widower Grandfather – James Lloyd Wilson (Wood Cutter, aged 70).

William Francis Wilson was a 20 year old, single, Labourer from 29 Mallett Street, Camperdown, Sydney, NSW when he enlisted on 4th September, 1916 with the Medium Trench Mortar Batteries, 4th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 1619 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr J. L. Wilson of 8 Arkwright Street, Canning Town, London, England.

Gunner William Francis Wilson embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Suevic* (A29) on 11th November, 1916 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 30th January, 1917.

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.

Gunner William Francis Wilson was marched in from Australia on 30th January, 1917 to Australian Details at Perham Downs, Wiltshire.

Gunner William Francis Wilson's regimental number was changed to 30953 on 13th February, 1917.

Gunner William Francis Wilson proceeded Overseas to France from Camps 6 & 7, Perham Downs via Folkestone on 15th March, 1917. He was marched in the A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 16th March, 1917.

Gunner William Francis Wilson was transferred to 5th Division Artillery on 23rd March, 1917. He was taken on strength with 5th Divisional Trench Mortar Brigade from 4th Reinforcements on 27th March, 1917.

Gunner William Francis Wilson was posted to V. 5. A. Battery in France on 15th April, 1917.

Gunner William Francis Wilson was sent to 1st Anzac Trench Mortar School on 2nd May, 1917 & rejoined his Unit on 16th May, 1917.

Gunner William Francis Wilson was marched out to 2nd Army Trench Mortar School on 15th October, 1917 & rejoined his Unit on 29th October, 1917.

Gunner William Francis Wilson was detached to 13th Field Artillery Brigade on 10th November, 1917 & attached for duty. He ceased to be attached on 23rd November, 1917.

Gunner William Francis Wilson rejoined his Unit from detachment to 5th D.A.C. on 4th December, 1917.

Gunner William Francis Wilson was sent to Trench Mortar School on 6th January, 1918 & rejoined his Unit on 20th January, 1918.

Gunner William Francis Wilson was posted to 9th Battery on 28th January, 1918.

Gunner William Francis Wilson was on leave to UK from 7th March, 1918.

Gunner William Francis Wilson was taken to 14th Field Ambulance on 28th April, 1918 with Gastritis. He was transferred to 20th Casualty Clearing Station then to Ambulance Train on 29th April, 1918. Gunner Wilson was admitted to 24th General Hospital at Etaples on 30th April, 1918. He was transferred to No. 6 Convalescent Depot on 3rd May, 1918 & transferred to A. Convalescent Depot on 8th May, 1918. Gunner Wilson was admitted to No. 1 Australian Convalescent Depot at Havre on 9th May, 1918.

Gunner William Francis Wilson was marched in to A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot) at Havre on 8th June, 1918 & marched out to his Unit on 12th June, 1918.

Gunner William Francis Wilson was transferred to Australian Corps Heavy Trench Mortar Battery on 12th June, 1918.

Gunner William Francis Wilson was sent to 4th Australian Field Ambulance on 2nd July, 1918. He was transferred to 47th Casualty Clearing Station with Haemorrhoids the same day. Gunner Wilson was transferred to Ambulance Train 25 on 3rd July, 1918 & admitted to 55th General Hospital at Boulogne on 4th July, 1918. He was transferred & admitted to 7th Convalescent Depot at Boulogne on 5th July, 1918 & transferred to No. 1 Convalescent Depot on 6th July, 1918. Gunner Wilson was transferred to 74th General Hospital at Trouville on 9th July, 1918 & admitted on 10th July, 1918. Gunner Wilson was transferred to Australian Convalescent Depot at Havre on 19th August, 1918. He was transferred to 2nd General Hospital on 20th August, 1918. Gunner Wilson was transferred to England on 30th August, 1918.

Gunner William Francis Wilson was admitted to Exeter War Hospital with Piles on 31st August, 1918 for an operation. He developed influenza which prevented the operation taking place. According to the Hospital report Gunner Wilson had previously been gassed and suffered from trench nephritis. Acute nephritis supervened as a complication of the influenza. Gunner Wilson then developed Broncho pneumonia.

Gunner William Francis Wilson died at 9 pm on 3rd October, 1918 in Section 5 War Hospital, Exeter, Devon, England from Nephritis, post Influenza & Broncho Pneumonia.

A death for William F. Wilson, aged 21, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Exeter, Devon, England.

Gunner William Francis Wilson was buried on 7th October, 1918 in Exeter Higher Cemetery, Devon, England – Plot number 96 and has a simple granite marker headstone. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. From the burial report of Gunner Wilson - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military funeral. The coffin, draped with the "Union Jack", and surmounted by several beautiful wreaths sent from relatives of deceased, was borne to the graveside on a Gun-carriage. A considerable number of deceased's comrades from the local hospitals, followed the remains to the graveside, where the burial service was conducted by the Rev. Bishop. The grave will be turfed, and an oak cross will be erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral. Relatives who attended the funeral – Father & Mother – Mr & Mrs J. L. Wilson & Sister – Miss K. Wilson.*

Gunner William Francis Wilson requested in his Will, dated 29th April, 1917, that "in the event of my death I give all everything to my Mother – Mrs K. Wilson, 18 Arkright St, Canning Town, London."

Gunner William Francis Wilson was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Gunner Wilson's father – Mr J. L. Wilson, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque both sent to England in November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Gunner William Francis Wilson – service number 30953, aged 21, of Australian Trench Mortar Battery. He was the son of James Lloyd Wilson, of 13 Arkwright St., Canning Town, London, England

Gunner W. F. Wilson is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 21.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(56 pages of Gunner William Francis Wilson'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

438th CASUALTY LIST

NEW SOUTH WALES

DIED, OTHER CAUSES

Gnr. WM. FRANCIS WILSON, England (Illness)

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 31 October, 1918)

Exeter Higher Cemetery, Devon

Exeter Higher Cemetery, Devon contains 340 War Graves. Of the 219 First World War burials in Exeter Higher Cemetery, more than 180 form two war graves plots near the entrance. The Second World War plot contains most of the 121 Second World War burials. The rest of the graves are scattered throughout the cemetery. The Second World War plot also contains 62 war graves of other nationalities, most of them Polish and German.

(Information & photos from CWGC).

There are 9 War Graves which belong to the Australian Forces – Army, Air & Navy. Six are from World War 1 & three are from World War 2, from Royal Australian Air Force.

A Memorial, which is located near the two chapels, contains the names of those buried in the circular plot surrounding the Memorial. The plot of land in front of the chapel was set aside by the Council as a commemorative plot early in World War 1. The burials are marked by simple granite slabs listing only the soldier's name.

A letter was sent to Mrs Carter, mother of the late Private R.A.E. Carter, A.I.F., dated 11th October, 1922 which reads: *"With further reference to your letter of the 7th June, enquiry has been made with regard to the grave of Private R.A.E. Carter in Exeter Higher Cemetery with the result that it has been discovered that all the private memorials erected over the graves of soldiers, in the War Plot have been removed by the Exeter City Council, and that a granite block has been placed over each grave and the turf levelled. On these blocks have been engraved the particulars of the deceased, painted black. The private memorials themselves have been placed in the mortuary.*

This treatment has been carried out entirely by the City Council with a view to uniformity so that now all the graves in the War Plot in Exeter High Cemetery are exactly alike, but the burial place of each soldier is carefully distinguished by the granite blocks which have been placed level with the turf.



The Memorial (above) &

(below) an example of the plaques with the names of the soldiers buried in the World Ward 1 plot.



(Photos by Toltecia)



The World War 1 plots near the Memorial with plants & flowers between the named granite grave markers

(Photos with permission from Norman Cummings)



Exeter Higher Cemetery showing Cross of Sacrifice & World War 2 War Graves

(Photo courtesy of julia&keld)

Photo of Gunner W. F. Wilson's granite Grave marker in Exeter Higher Cemetery, Devon, England.



(Photo courtesy of Toltecia)

Section showing World War 1 War Graves Plot.



