

**Brookwood Military Cemetery,  
Brookwood, Surrey, England**

**War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**5109 PRIVATE**

**J. WILSON**

**22ND BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**25TH MAY, 1917 Age 32**

*Sunshine Passes Shadows Fall*

*Loving Memories Outlast All*

## John WILSON

John Wilson was born in 1884 at Corron North, Co. Cork, Ireland to parents John Charles & Ellen Wilson (nee Hawkins)

Ellen Wilson, mother of John Wilson (junior), died in 1888 at Corran Leap, County Cork, Ireland.

According to information supplied by his brother Frank Wilson for the Roll of Honour – John Wilson came to Australia when he was 8 years old. It was also stated that John Wilson had been in the Neerim Rifle Club for 3 years.

A “John Wilson”, aged 8, was a passenger on *Orotava* which departed from England on 24th March, 1894 bound for Melbourne, Australia. John Wilson was listed with his father – John Wilson (Labourer, aged 50) & brothers – Charles (aged 26), Robert (aged 14), William (aged 11), Franck (aged 5) & Allen (Labourer aged 27).

John Wilson attended Neerim State School, Victoria.

John Wilson was a 31 year old, single, Farmer from Neerim, Victoria when he enlisted on 17th February, 1916 at Warragul, Victoria with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his father – Mr John Wilson of Neerim, Victoria.

Private John Wilson was posted to “D” Company, 37th Battalion on 10th March, 1916 for recruit training. He had required dental treatment & was classed as medically fit at Seymour on 14th March, 1916. Private Wilson was transferred to No. 2 Company, 4th Depot Battalion on 5th April, 1916 then on 15th April, 1916 he was transferred to 13th Reinforcements of 22nd Battalion at Broadmeadows.

Private John Wilson, Service number 5109, embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Ayrshire* (A33) on 3rd July, 1916 with the 6th Infantry Brigade, 22nd Infantry Battalion, 13th Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 2nd September, 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 John Wilson was taken on strength of 6th Training Battalion in England on 3rd September, 1916. He proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 12th November, 1916 on S.S. *Victoria* from 6th Training Battalion in England. He was marched in to 2nd A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 13th November, 1916. Private Wilson proceeded from 2nd A.D.B.D. on 25th November, 1916 to join his Battalion & was taken on strength of 22nd Battalion in the Field on 11th December, 1916.

Private John Wilson reported sick on 19th December, 1916. He was admitted to 7th Field Ambulance on 19th December, 1916 with Pyrexia (fever). (Note: no record of when he was discharged & returned to his Battalion).

Private John Wilson was wounded in action on 3rd May, 1917. He was admitted to 6th Australian Field Ambulance on 3rd May, 1917 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to Thigh then transferred & admitted to 1st Australian General Hospital at Rouen, France on 6th May, 1917. Private Wilson embarked for England on 19th May, 1917 on Hospital Ship “*West Australia*.”

### **22nd Battalion**

The 22nd Battalion AIF was formed on 26 March 1915 at Broadmeadows Camp in Victoria. The battalion became part of the 6th Brigade of the 2nd Division.

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The battalion's first major action was at Pozieres, part of the massive British offensive on the Somme. In September/October they were moved to the Ypres sector then back to the Somme for the winter. The battalion spent most of 1917 bogged in bloody trench warfare from Bullecourt to Broodseinde in Flanders.

*(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

War Diary – 22nd Battalion

3rd May, 1917

....At 1.30 am the battalion advanced in waves in file to RAILWAY EMBANKMENT.

3am – At 3 am the waves commenced to leave there and march on to their markers in No Mans Land on the J.O.T. At 3.25 am the Battalion was in position ready to jump off, the men lying down. Evidently the movement was unobserved by the enemy but several chance shells caused a few casualties before the attack commenced.

3.45 am – ZERO. Under cover of the barrage the attack commenced – the 24th Battn cooperating on the right and the 185th Brigade (British) at an interval on the left. The enemy barrage opened at 3.19 am and a concentration of their shelling in that spot and very heavy machine gun fire kept the extreme left flank from reaching its objectives. After establishing posts and receiving severe casualties they were compelled to retire about 4.30 pm.

Capt J. H. SLATER and Lieut S. SCAMMELL were killed hereabouts.

4.1 am – First trench (O.G. 1) carried by remainder by 1st wave. The wire was found to be well destroyed. Considerable opposition was encountered, and enemy bombing attacks at once developed from the left flank where no support was forthcoming from the British.

4.18 am – Support trench (O.G. 2) carried by 2nd & 3rd waves. The enemy was observed retiring via SUNKEN RAOD through U23C and took up a defensive position there. 18 prisoners taken and passed to 24th Battalion. Attempts to establish strong posts 150 yards in advance (towards U 22 Central) were not successful owing to severe m.g. fire from left flank which was in the air.

5.25 am – Small parties in all about 20 strong, reached 2nd objective in conjunction with 24th Battn and held in until forced to retire, by reason of the British failure on the left flank, after fighting for an hour.

The consolidation of O.G.'s 1 & 2 was meantime being carried on with and bombing parties organised working to the left flank and the bombing fight fluctuated for hours. Blocks and strong posts were established at U28b3.9 in O.G. 1 and at U 22 d3.4 in O.G. 2. Endeavour was made to connect these points by a sap but the work was not completed.

Battn HQ remained at U28D4.0 throughout. The whole railway embankment was subjected to very severe shelling from the direction of QUEANT. Communication with captured trenches was through the SUNKEN RAOD through U 29 central. 6th L.T.M. operated from U28 central against left flank enemy attacked.

Battalion relieved by 3rd Battalion and returned in support to RAILWAY EMBANKMENT.

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

[According to information supplied by his brother Frank Wilson for the Roll of Honour – Private John Wilson was wounded at Bullecourt.]

Private John Wilson was admitted to 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth, England on 20th May, 1917 with G.S.W & fractured right Thigh.

Private John Wilson died at 11.45 pm on 25th May, 1917 at 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth, England from wounds received in action in France – G.S.W right Thigh & (secondary) Haemorrhage.

Base Records advised Mr J. C. Wilson, Neerim, Victoria, father of Private John Wilson, on 28th May, 1917 that No. 5109 Private J. Wilson, 22nd Battalion, had been reported wounded.

A death for John Wilson, aged 32, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Wandsworth, Greater London, England.

Private John Wilson was buried on 29th May, 1917 in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England – Australian Military Burial Ground - Plot number 179,331.

From the burial report of Private John Wilson - *Coffin was good. Polished Elm. The deceased soldier was buried with Military Honours. Firing party comprising members attached to the Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London, were in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Australian Flag. Prior to the interment a service was held by Chaplain Richards, A.I.F. in the Chapel at the Cemetery. No relatives were present at the funeral. Temporary Oak memorial to be erected by the Commonwealth Military Authorities.*

Base Records wrote to Mr J. C. Wilson, Neerim, Victoria on 17th April, 1923 stating that the site of his son's grave in Brookwood Military Cemetery had been officially registered as Plot 11 Row E Grave 6. "*While the actual place of burial remains unchanged the previous registration allotted thereto has been altered to conform with the uniform layout of this Cemetery.*"

This is now recorded by CWGC as Memorial reference – XI. E. 6. Private John Wilson now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

M. Davine, Barrister & Solicitor, Warragul, Victoria, wrote to Base Records on 27th July, 1917 requesting two certificates of death for the Probate Office & one for the Insurance Office as he was applying for Probate of the Will of the late John Wilson, 22nd Battalion.

Base Records replied to M. Davone, Esq. Warragul, Victoria on 3rd August, 1917 enclosing as requested Certificate of report of death (in duplicate) for the late No. 5109 Private J. Wilson, 22nd Battalion.

The Mutual Life and Citizens' Assurance Co. Ltd, Sydney, NSW, wrote to Base Records on 10th August, 1917 requesting the certificate of death with identification for four members of the A.I.F. – one of them being "*John Wilson – Victoria.*"

Base Records replied to The Mutual Life & Citizens Assurance Co, Ltd on 17th August, 1917 enclosing a Certificate of report of death of the late No. 5109 Private J. Wilson, 22nd Battalion, together with Identification particulars.

Private John Wilson was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Wilson's father - Mr J. C. Wilson, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent May, 1922 & Plaque sent July, 1922).



**Memorial Plaque** (also referred to as Death Penny or Dead Man's Penny)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John Wilson – service number 5109, aged 32, of 22nd Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of John Charles & Ellen Wilson.



Private J. 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 98.



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

John Wilson is remembered on the Neerim War Memorial, located outside the Cemetery, 2626 Main Neerim Road, Neerim, Victoria.



**Neerim War Memorial** (Photos from Monument Australia)

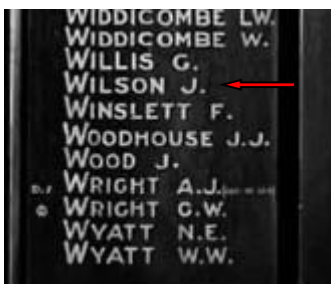




J. Wilson is remembered on the Warragul Roll of Honour, located in Warragul Shire Offices, Warragul, Victoria.



Warragul Roll of Honour (Photo from Warragul RSL Facebook page)



J. Wilson is remembered on the Neerim East Pictorial Honour Roll, located in Warragul RSL Sub Branch, 94 Albert Street, Warragul, Victoria.



Warragul RSL Sub Branch (Photos from Warragul RSL)





Neerim East Pictorial Honour Roll





**Neerim East Pictorial Honour Roll** (Photo from Monument Australia – Sandra Brown)

(48 pages of Private John 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, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives





**Private John Wilson** (*Photo from Find a Grave*)



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **THE 308th CASUALTY LIST**

The Victorian names are :-

WOUNDED

Private J. Wilson, Neerim

(*The Mildura Cultivator*, Victoria – 13 June, 1917)

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### **THE 312th CASUALTY LIST**

The Victorian names are :-

DIED OF WOUNDS

Private J. Wilson, Neerim

(*The Mildura Cultivator*, Victoria – 20 June, 1917)

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The Gippsland Independent, Friday, June 22, 1917

CASUALTIES – In a recent casualty list appears the name of J. Wilson, Neerim, who died of wounds.

*(Gippsland Independent, Buln Buln, Warragul, Berwick, Poowong and Jeetho Shire Advocate, Victoria – 22 June, 1917)*

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## **DIED ON SERVICE**

WILSON – In loving memory of our dear brother, Private John Wilson, of the 22nd Battalion, who died of wounds at the 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth, on the 25th May, 1917, beloved son of John C. Wilson, Neerim, and loved brother of Frank, Robert, Willie, Charlie, Kate, Jean, and Marie.

Our hero, so sadly missed.

God's will be done.

Far away in dear old England he is sleeping,

Far from Australia's land of gum and wattle trees:

And our hopes they are, dear brother, we will meet you,

In that home to part no more when there we meet.

Just when his life was brightest he was taken,

Just when his hopes were best he said, I'll go;

His duty and our honour were his motto,

When he left his home to fight the cruel foe.

-(Inserted by his sorrowing brothers and sisters, Neerim, Gippsland.)

WILSON – In loving memory of my dear brother, Jack, of the 22nd Battalion, who died of wounds at the 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth, on the 25th May, 1917.

No more, dear Jack, your step I'll hear,

No more your voice will call;

You spilt your blood to keep us free,

You gave your life for all.

*(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 25 August, 1917)*

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## **DEATHS**

### **On Active Service**

WILSON – In loving memory of our dear brother, Private John Wilson, of the 22nd Battalion, who died of wounds at the 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth, on the 25th May, 1917, beloved son of John C. Wilson, Neerim, and loved brother of Frank, Robert, Willie, Charlie, Kate, Jean, and Marie.

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WILSON – In loving memory of my dear brother, Jack, of the 22nd Battalion, who died of wounds at the 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth, on the 25th May, 1917.

No more, dear Jack, your step I'll hear,  
No more your voice will call;  
You spilt your blood to keep us free,  
You gave your life for all.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 25 August, 1917)

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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 J. Wilson does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*Sunshine Passes Shadows Fall*

*Loving Memories Outlast All*

## Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England

Located 30 miles from London in Surrey, Brookwood Military Cemetery is the largest CWGC cemetery in the United Kingdom. The cemetery contains the graves of more than 1,600 servicemen of the British Empire in the First World War and over 3,470 from the Second World War.

Brookwood Military Cemetery lies adjacent to Brookwood Cemetery (The London Necropolis), a vast space which covers 500 acres. In 1917, an area to the north of the cemetery was set aside as Brookwood Military Cemetery for men and women of Commonwealth forces who died, many of battle wounds, in the London district. This site was further extended to accommodate Commonwealth casualties of the Second World War. *(Information from CWGC)*

There are 446 Australian War Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery – 351 from World War 1 & 95 from World War 2.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00185

*A large crowd attends an A.I.F. military funeral at Brookwood Cemetery. In the foreground wooden crosses mark rows of graves. (Photo c1919)*

*Identified: Front row, left to right: Second Lieutenant Douglas Abbott Ferguson, Australian Flying Corps, died of accidental injuries 18 August 1918; Lieutenant (Lt) Francis John Smedley MC, 7th Battalion, died of wounds 20 August 1918.*

*Second row: 6860 Private (Pte) James Alexander McKeown, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 20 June 1918; 3622 Pte S T Wilson, 2nd Australian Pioneers, died of wounds 4 July 1918; 2390 Sergeant Frederick Charles Stronell, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 9 July 1918; Lt Arthur Melville Lilburne MC, 6th Brigade Australian Field Artillery, died of disease 11 July 1918.*





**Brookwood Military Cemetery** (Photo from CWGC)



**Brookwood Military Cemetery** (Photos by Magicfingers)





**Australian Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery** (Photos by Magicfingers)







*(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher)*



**Australian War Graves** *(Photo courtesy of Neil Bright 2020)*



Photo of Private J. Wilson's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England.



*(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher)*





(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher – Jan 2021)

