

Durrington War Graves

World War 1



Lest We Forget



5706 PRIVATE

F. R. WREN

23RD BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

6TH JANUARY, 1917 Age 40

Sunshine Passes

Shadows Fall

Love And Remembrance

Outlast All

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte F. R. Wren is located in Grave Plot # 149
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

Francis Robert WREN

Francis Robert Wren was born at Geelong, Victoria in 1877 to parents Joseph Henry & Caroline Emma Wren (nee Crabb).

The 1909 Australian Electoral Roll recorded Francis Wren as a hairdresser living at Main Street, Bairnsdale, in the Electoral division of Gippsland, Victoria.

Francis Robert Wren married Mary Morrison in Victoria in 1912.

The 1914 Australian Electoral Roll recorded Francis Wren as a hairdresser living at Main Street, Bairnsdale, in the Electoral division of Gippsland with his wife Mary Wren.

Francis Robert Wren was a 31 year old, married, Hairdresser from Bairnsdale, Victoria when he enlisted on 29th February, 1916 with the 6th Infantry Brigade, 23rd Infantry Battalion, 15th Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 5706 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Mary Wren, Mitchell Street, Bairnsdale, Victoria.

Pte Francis Robert Wren embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Shropshire (A9)* on 25th September, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 11th 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.

Pte Francis Robert Wren was admitted to Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire on 1st January, 1917, seriously ill.

Private Francis Robert Wren died on 6th January, 1917 at Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire from Acute Bronchitis.

A death for Francis R. Wren, aged 39, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

Private Francis Robert Wren was buried on 9th January, 1917 at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire – Plot number 149 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Pte Francis Robert Wren was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Wren's widow – Mrs M. Wren (sent July, 1921 & May, 1922)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Francis Robert Wren – service number 5706 as being 40 years old & served with 23rd Battalion Australian Infantry. Son of Joseph and Caroline Emma Wren; husband of M. Wren, of Mitchell St, Bairnsdale, Victoria. Born at Geelong.

A War Pension was granted to Mary Wren, widow of the late Pte Francis Robert Wren, in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 12th March, 1917. War Pensions were also granted to Pte Wren's two children – Francis S. Wren, son, £1 per fortnight & Norman R. Wren, son, 15/- per fortnight, both from 12th March, 1917.

Private F. R. Wren is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 100.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(39 pages of Pte Francis Robert Wren'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 Reports

BAIRNSDALE RECRUITS

The following additional Bairnsdale volunteers have passed for active service:- Messrs A. R. Kyle, F. R. Wren.....

(Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle, Victoria – Wednesday 8 March, 1916)

BAIRNSDALE PETTY SESSIONS

VACCINATION CASES

E. A. Wagg, A. T. Neil... F. R. Wren, D. Taylor and M. Evans, were fined £2 each (with ___ costs in those cases in which the registrar had to be called) for neglecting to have their infants vaccinated.

(Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle, Victoria – Wednesday 20 September, 1916)

BAIRNSDALE SOLDIER'S DEATH

Yesterday the sad news came by cable that Pte. F. Wren, of Bairnsdale had died from acute bronchitis on the 6th inst., at England. It was only last Tuesday that his wife and relatives heard of his illness through the Defence department. He was then stated to be seriously ill. Pte. Wren sailed from Victoria in September last and arrived in England about the middle of November. He went into training at Salisbury Plains and remained there until his death. It was a great wrench to him to leave his young wife and two children, and his business, to go to the war, but he, said on leaving that he felt he must go, and having informed the department that he would enlist on a certain date, when filling in his personal card, he would have to honor his promise and keep faith with the young fellows who had left before him and whom he had told he would follow. Under all the circumstances, he could well have been excused, but the sight of so many others whom he thought should go forward in the interests of their country holding back was galling to him, and he determined that no reproach would attach to himself. For his wife and family, and relatives the greatest sympathy will be felt. The deceased soldier took a keen interest in several branches of sport, being a prominent member of the Bairnsdale Rifle Club and a member of the committee of the football club.

(Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle, Victoria – Saturday 13 January, 1917)

DIED ON SERVICE

Wren – Died of illness, on 6th January, in Fargo Military Hospital, England, Pte F. R. Wren, only son of Mr and Mrs J. H. Wren, of Malop Street, Geelong, and loving husband of Myra and father of Stewart and Norman (Bairnsdale).

Sadly Missed.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – Tuesday 16 January, 1917)

DIED ON SERVICE

WREN – At the Fargo Military Hospital, England, from bronchitis, Pte F. R. Wren, the beloved husband of Myra Wren, Mitchell Street, Bairnsdale, Gippsland.

There is a link time cannot sever

Sweet remembrance lasts for ever.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – Wednesday 17 January, 1917)

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

The defence department yesterday released the 266th and 267th lists of casualties which have occurred amongst the Australian soldiers at the front..... Gippsland casualties include Pte F. R. Wren, Bairnsdale, died of illness....

(Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle, Victoria – Wednesday 24 January, 1917)

BEREAVEMENT NOTICE

Mrs F. R. Wren and family desire to express their heartfelt thanks for kind sympathy in their great sorrow.

Mitchell St. Bairnsdale.

(Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle, Victoria – Wednesday 31 January, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM

(On Active Service)

WREN -In loving memory of my dear husband, Private Frank R. Wren, who died of illness at Fargo Military Hospital, England, on 6th January, 1917; loving father of Stewart and Norman.

No one he loved was by his side

To hear his faint, last sigh,

To whisper just one loving word

Before he closed his eyes.

Inserted by, his loving wife and family.

(Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle & The Argus, Victoria – Saturday 5 January, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

WREN – In loving memory of Ruby Ivy (Dolly), who passed away January 7th, 1910; also Francis Robert, January 6th, 1917 in Fargo Military Hospital, England.

Re-united. Sadly Missed.

-Inserted by their loving parents and sisters.

(Geelong Advertiser, Victoria – Monday 7 January, 1918)

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 at Durrington War Graves Cemetery. 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)*

Pte F. R. Wren does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Sunshine Passes, Shadows Fall, Love And Remembrance Outlast All

Photo of Pte F. R. Wren's Headstone at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire.



(Photo © Ian King - with permission)



Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire *(Photo by Dave Healing 2013)*