



# FROMELLES ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

*For those lost so far from home*

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## Newsletter—July 2023

### HONOUR FOR 7 NEW SOLDIERS

#### Pheasant Wood Cemetery, Fromelles 19 July 2023

We pause to remember and honour the bravery and sacrifice of these seven men, rediscovered at Pheasant Wood Cemetery:

- ◆ Oscar Eric Baumann, Reg no 10, 32nd Battalion, A Company, Killed in Action 20th July 1916 (photo 1) <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/10-sergeant-oscar-eric-baumann/>
- ◆ Maurice James Claxton, Reg No 1329, 32nd Battalion, D Company, Killed in Action 20th July 1916 <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/1239-private-maurice-james-claxton/>
- ◆ Walter Allen Grace, Reg No 1537, 31st Battalion, Killed in Action 19th July 1916 (photo 2) <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/1537-private-walter-allen-grace/>
- ◆ Edwin Charles Gray, Reg No 20, 32nd Battalion, A Company, Killed in Action 20 July 1916 (photo 3) <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/20-private-edwin-charles-gray/>
- ◆ Richard James McGuarr, Reg No 3873, 55th Battalion, Killed in Action 20th July 1916 <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/3873-private-richard-james-mcguarr/>
- ◆ Alexander Russell Robert Page, Reg no 1082, 32nd Battalion, C Company, Killed in Action 20th July 1916 (photo 4) <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/1082-private-alexander-russell-page/>
- ◆ William John Stephen, Reg No 2772, 55th Battalion, Killed in Action 20th July 1916 (photo 5) <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/2772-corporal-william-john-stephen/>

On this day, a poignant ceremony takes place at Fromelles, France, where individual headstones bearing their names will be unveiled. Our thoughts are with them and their families as we pay tribute to their unwavering dedication and selflessness.

Our genealogical research is part of a collaborative effort with families, The Fromelles Project team of the Unrecovered War Casualties Section – Army and other interested folk. Without this spirit of co-operation, very few identifications could be made.

We wish to acknowledge and applaud our volunteer researchers who have worked many thousands of hours to achieve these, and so many other identifications.

Let us reflect on the enduring legacy of these heroes and express our gratitude for their service. Their sacrifice will never be forgotten.

At the end of the Newsletter we have included a snapshot of each of the soldiers for those who cannot access our Website or Facebook pages. Lest we Forget.

**Authors: Bronwyn Stanley and Zoe Wagner**

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# FROMELLES MEMORIAL MOSAIC WALL

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Broadford Memorial Park, 15 July 2023



The front panel of the Memorial Mosaic Wall depicting soldiers going into battle, the anxious mothers at home, and the damaged church at Fromelles. (Photo 1)



Donna Meyer, artist and creator of the Mosaic, with Patrick Lindsay, author of 'Fromelles. Our Darkest Day.' (Photo 2)



The reverse panel of the Memorial Mosaic Wall depicting a strand of DNA, the colour patches of the attacking battalions, and the soldiers lost in battle. (Photo 3)

## THE UNVEILING OF THE MEMORIAL MOSAIC WALL

In order to ensure that descendants, stakeholders, and the wider Fromelles 'family' would have a chance to commemorate the event, the official opening of this memorial was held on 15 July 2023, the weekend prior to the anniversary of the battle so as not to interfere with other ceremonies.

Donna Meyer, the artist who created the mosaic wall has advised me that for the unveiling of the memorial wall in Broadford, everything was perfect. It was a really lovely day. The mosaics were a success, and Tim Whitford and Patrick Lindsay gave presentations and added many more stories. There were tears of sadness and tears of laughter. It is hoped that memorial mosaic wall will become a place of pilgrimage and contemplation for the wider Fromelles 'family'.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MEMORIAL WALL

The Memorial Mosaic Wall is probably the only outside dedicated memorial wall to honour Fromelles in Australia. Mosaic artist Susan Deprost has created three separate mosaics featuring Fromelles, the Armistice, and General Monash, which are on display at Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, Victoria. There is a replica of the Cobber's Statue in the grounds of The Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, which is the scene for commemorative services for Friends of the 15th Brigade.

There is also the statue at Wollondilly Anglican College, Tahmoor NSW, replicating William Polding Ryan of 31 Bn holding the hand of a 5 y.o. girl, who is said to have remembered the soldiers, and him saying 'thank you for remembering us'.

The War Memorial at Toronto NSW also has 'Fromelles' inscribed as one of the places of battle at which soldiers from there had served. But this wall is the only memorial wall I know of in Australia. There are no State or Federal War Memorials at which 'Fromelles' is inscribed. Well done Donna Meyer, the mosaic's artist, and thank you Tim Whitford and Patrick Lindsay for hosting the unveiling and the presentation which followed.

**Author: Geoffrey Benn**



# JULY 19 EVENTS—MELBOURNE

## REMEMBERING THE BATTLE OF FROMELLES 19 July 1916

*Location: Shrine of Remembrance, Shrine Auditorium, Melbourne, 3004*

Together with Major Cameron Clarke of Unrecovered War Casualties - Army, Geoffrey Benn spoke on the processes undertaken by the Fromelles Association of Australia to Identify the Fallen. This was followed the ceremony at the Cobber's Statue in the afternoon. The Cobber's Statue in Melbourne is a replica of the one at Fromelles in France.

The annual pilgrimage by the Friends of the 15th Brigade commemorates the Battle at Fromelles, fought on 19 July 1916 and there was a large attendance on a sunny day in Melbourne.

The names of the 7 soldiers rediscovered at Fromelles was read out and wreaths laid by the families of Alexander Page, Edwin Gray and Maurice Claxton. Poppies were also handed out to lay at the site.

(Photos courtesy of Fromelles Association, Thanksforyourservice and Shrine of Remembrance.)





# JULY 19 EVENTS—SYDNEY

## REMEMBERING THE BATTLE OF FROMELLES 19 July 1916

**Courtesy of our friends at the FFAIF (Families and Friends of the First AIF)**

*Location: Hyde Park, Sydney*

FROMELLES DAY COMMEMORATIVE PROCESSION, COMMENCEMENT OF THE LEGACY CENTENARY TORCH RELAY THROUGH SYDNEY AND COMMEMORATION OF THE BATTLE OF FROMELLES



This year's commemoration was shared with Legacy and its centenary of service to the families of those servicemen who depend on Legacy for support. 2023 is the centenary of Legacy and to mark the occasion,

Legacy Australia is conducting the Centenary Torch Relay that commenced in Pozieres on Anzac Day and travelled to Villers Bretonneux in France, the Menin Gate at Ieper in Belgium, and thence to London before arriving in Albany (the last Australian port for troops departing to WW1).

From there it has now passed through Western Australia, South Australia, the Northern Territory and then Queensland and is now on its way south to reach Sydney.

The Legacy Torch will continue its journey through Victoria and Tasmania so that it will have visited all 45 Legacy Clubs on its way to the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, scheduled to arrive on Friday 13 October.

You can see the progress on their Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/LegacyAustralia>

or their website <https://www.legacy.com.au/centenary/>

or visit <https://legacytorchrelay.com.au/relay-route/>



# JULY 19 EVENTS—FROMELLES

## REMEMBERING THE BATTLE OF FROMELLES 19 July 1916

*Location: Pheasant Wood Cemetery, Fleurbaix*

In Fromelles at the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery with a dedication of named headstones for 7 soldiers whose identity has been announced since last year's Commemorative ceremonies.

- With 173 of the 250 soldiers buried in the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery now being identified, by difference, there are 77 graves (250-173) for soldiers whose identities have not yet been matched with DNA from relatives or with artefacts or anthropological studies.
- So far 39 soldiers whose names were not on the Fromelles Project Working List of 191 names have been identified by matching with DNA from relatives.
- At present, there are 52 Australian soldiers whose names were extracted from the German lists inspected in Geneva by Peter Barton but for whom DNA contributed by relatives does not match that of unidentified soldiers buried in the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery.
- While some of these 52 soldiers might have been buried by the Germans and were reinterred at the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery and there may be disconnect in their family trees (e.g. adoptions, mother remarried and child adopted the step-father's name etc.), perhaps most lie in unnamed graves, or were buried elsewhere in unnamed or unmarked graves, but their identity tags and / or some personal effects were collected by German soldiers for intelligence analysis and in accordance with the Geneva and Hague Conventions repatriated through the International Red Cross network to the Australian soldiers' families.

Identifying the 77 unidentified soldiers in the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery remains the challenge that can only be solved now by matching the soldier's DNA with that of a descendant.

That work will continue as we keep their memory alive.

This article was prepared with the gracious assistance of Jim Munro, President of Families & Friends of the First AIF.

**Author: Geoffrey Benn**

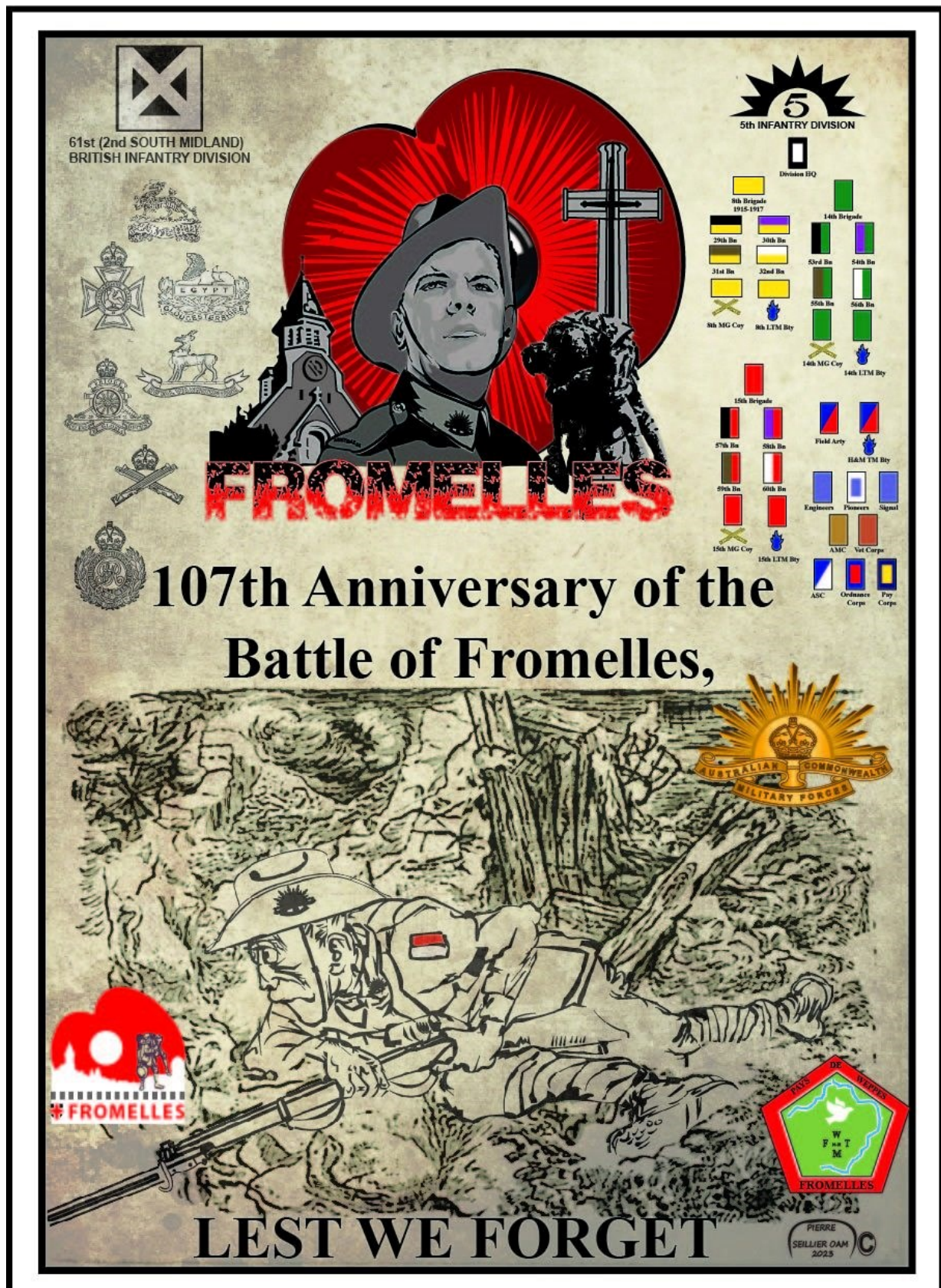
*Photos courtesy of Stephens and Claxton Families*





# JULY 19 EVENTS—PIERRE SELLIER

## REMEMBERING THE BATTLE OF FROMELLES 19 July 1916





# JULY 19 EVENTS—IPSWICH

## REMEMBERING THE BATTLE OF FROMELLES 19 July 1916

*Location: Honour Stone, Ipswich Soldiers Memorial Hall*

**With thanks to the Ipswich RSL and the 31st Battalion Association**



## FROMELLES ASSOCIATION IN THE NEWS

July 2023

- ◆ Geoffrey Benn appeared on **ABC Radio Adelaide** on 19th July 2023 <https://www.abc.net.au/.../identified-soldiers/102619684> and **ABC Radio Melbourne**.
- ◆ An article appeared in **Perthnow** <https://www.perthnow.com.au/news/world/honour-for-wwi-digger-after-century-in-unmarked-grave-c-11314725.amp> about Maurice and Theodore Claxton
- ◆ An article and audio recording appeared in **The Australian** about the soldiers found: <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/life-after-death-how-fallen-wwi-diggers-got-their-names-back/audio/d7a74f6ab89201baa166d9ed2bd96c01> and another article in **The Daily Telegraph**.
- ◆ An Article appeared in **The Sydney Morning Herald** <https://www.smh.com.au/world/europe/a-very-sad-story-after-107-years-seven-australians-can-finally-rest-in-peace-20230720-p5dprb.html>

A busy month for the team, and a big shout out to **Talkforce Media** [www.talkforcemedia.com.au](http://www.talkforcemedia.com.au)

for all their work and support.

# NEW SOLDIER STORIES

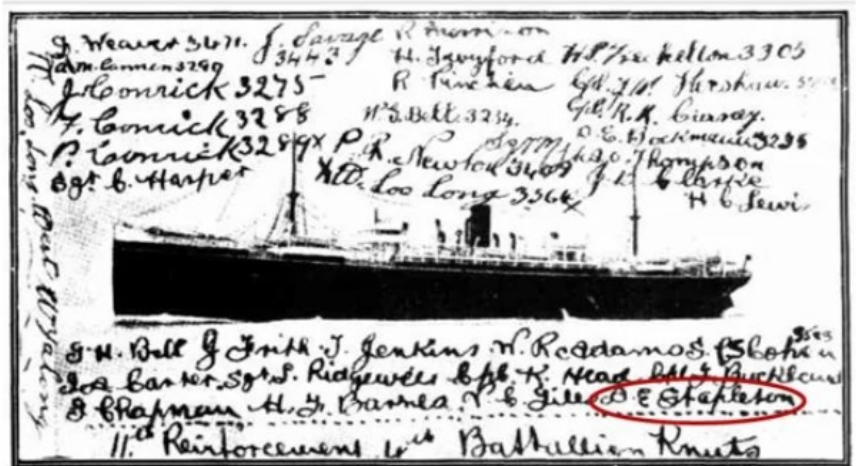
[www.fromelles.info](http://www.fromelles.info)

- ♦ Twins Ernest and Harold Wilkin, 29th Battalion <https://fromelles.info/.../1314-private-ernest-frank-wilkin/> and <https://fromelles.info/.../1269-private-harold-john-wilkin/>
- ♦ Charles Stevens Hill, 53rd Battalion <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/842-sergeant-charles-stevens-hill/>
- ♦ Arthur Mossop James, 30th Battalion <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/689-private-arthur-mossop-james/>
- ♦ Percy Bontoft, 32nd Battalion <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/45-private-percy-george-bontoft/>
- ♦ Albert Edward Stapleton, 53rd Battalion <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/3440a-private-albert-edward-stapleton/>



Private Percy George BONTOLT 1897-1916

David Ward, *I Only Know That You Are Somewhere* published in *Traces, Uncovering the Past*, Volume 2, 2018  
<https://www.scribd.com/article/450375648/I-Only-Know-That-You-Are-somewhere>



From Our Boys on the Way to Egypt.  
 THIS is a specimen of the kind of souvenirs that are flooding Australia. Thousands of them will be treasured as sacred possessions by parents and other relatives on the Isle who have gone to do their duty at the front. In the great wars of the past, before photography became the popular art it is today, the father or husband or son often had little to send or bring back with him to convey to his relatives any concrete idea of the realities of war. Now every soldier is able to take or buy pictures descriptive of the whole campaign, right from the departure in the transports to the great fighting on the battlefield.

A souvenir picture of the troopship for the 11th reinforcements, 4th Battalion published in the newspaper in February 1916. Albert's signature is circled in red at bottom right.

source: *DOING THEIR PART: ARE YOU DOING YOURS?* (1916, February 9). Sydney Mail (NSW : 1912 - 1938), p. 20. Retrieved May 4, 2023, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article166256406>



The Wilkin twins – Private Harold J. WILKIN (left) and Private Ernest F. WILKIN (right) enlisted separately but were assigned to the same company.

source: Courtesy of Kate Walker

Engl. Toten Listen Nr. 10536 / 42 W			
Name	HILL, C.S.		
Abchrift	HILL, C.S.		
Dienstgrad	Sergt.	Nr. der Ent.-Marke	842
Truppenteil	53 <sup>er</sup> Baf. I. A. J. F. C. F.		
Zeit u. Ort der Gefangennahme	Erk. Marke überwiesen v. N. O. A. O. K.		
Unfenthaltungsort	6., durch M. A. (Zentralstelle für		
Bemerkungen	Nachlasssachen) 12.10.16.		
Verwundung			
Heimatort			

One of the German Reports on Sgt Charles Hill

source: NAA: B2455, HILL, Charles Stevens – First AIF Personnel Dossiers, 1914-1918 War – p. 23



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# NOTICE OF AGM

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Fromelles Association of Australia

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**29TH JULY 2023 AT 11AM (AEST)**

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The Fromelles Association of Australia invite you to attend  
our Annual General Meeting held via Zoom

To join us click <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89358217106>

Meeting ID: 893 5821 7106

Passcode: 878085



Don't forget you can order your Lapel pin and badges by emailing [bill@fromelles.info](mailto:bill@fromelles.info)

The form can be used to both apply for Membership, as well as order some of our labels or embroidered badges:

<https://fromelles.info/association/membership/>

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## NEW BOOK RELEASE

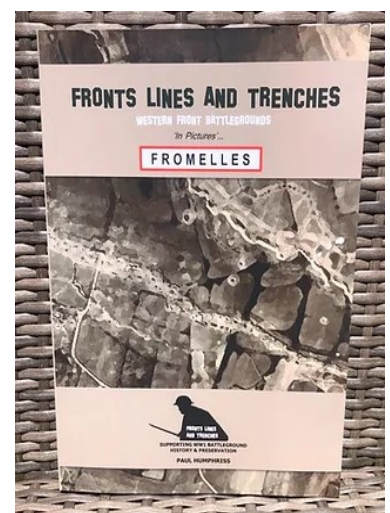
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Paul Humphriss—Front Lines and Trenches

**Paul Humphriss** of **Fronts Lines and Trenches**, has prepared a book on the battlefield that was Fromelles. It is a self-published work, and Paul is calling for expressions of interest if you would like to purchase a copy. Paul regularly uploads overlays of battle scenes from WW1 in his Facebook page, and the ones of Fromelles are no exception to his excellent work.

If you are interested in ordering a copy of this book, click on the link, and submit for Paul to gain an idea of how many copies of this work will need to be printed.

Visit, <https://www.frontlinesandtrenches.org/contact>



# BITS AND BOBS....

## FROMELLES ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

### Seeking Volunteer Genealogists and Experienced Family Tree Researchers

The Fromelles Association of Australia (FAA) is a not-for-profit group of dedicated volunteers – scattered all over the world – who undertake two primary tasks.

1. To undertake genealogical research and locate relatives of the boys Killed in Action at the Battle of Fromelles 1916. These boys are, and have been, identified via the use of DNA “matching”.
2. To maintain a web site – literally preserving the memories of all who fought at Fromelles. The website can be viewed at:  
[www.fromelles.info](http://www.fromelles.info)

In regards to genealogical research – the FAA hope there may be interested parties who might have time to dedicate some research to locating relatives of those boys who have been uncovered.

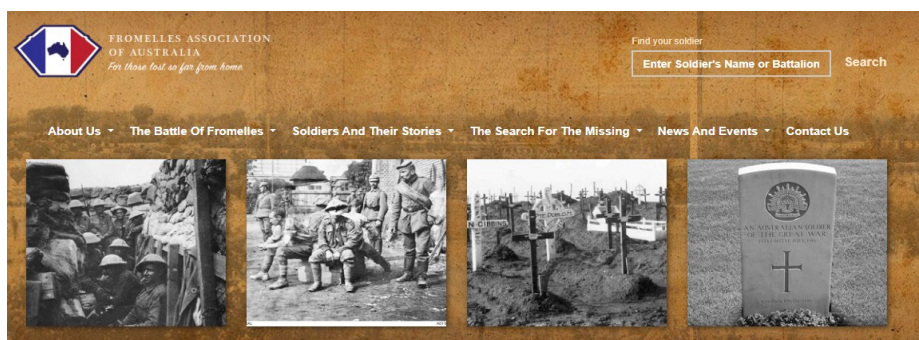
The research is difficult, and the rewards immeasurable. To give an indication of the FAA’s work – in 2023 they were responsible for research on all 7 of the boys identified. Over the past decade the FAA have identified donors for most of the boys who now have been named. Those seeking more information can contact the Director of Genealogy, Royce Atkinson, by emailing [royce@fromelles.info](mailto:royce@fromelles.info)

### BEWARE OF FAKE EMAILS



We have become aware that a number of fake emails with links are being sent from people pretending to be the Fromelles Association.

Please always check the email we are sending will be from  
[@fromelles.info](mailto:@fromelles.info)



### Fromelles Association of Australia

Assisting in identifying and honouring the soldiers who fought and lost their lives near Fromelles, France, during World War I.



[www.fromelles.info](http://www.fromelles.info)

#### What's New:

**Updated list of Pheasant Wood Soldiers**

**New Soldier Stories**

**The Sportsmen of Fromelles**

**Updated list of families at Fromelles**



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# THE DAY MY FAMILY CAME

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## Poem by Michael Edwards

Many of our readers and members are the first person in their families who have been to the Western Front, and to have found the headstone of a long-departed ancestor. This poem evokes the sentiment of the soldier who had waited for that day to come. Get some tissues before you start.

I half awoke to a strange new calm  
And a sleep that would not clear  
For this was the sleep to cure all harm  
And which freezes all from fear.  
Shot had come from left and right  
With shrapnel, shell and flame  
And turned my sunlit days to night  
Where now, none would call my name.  
Years passed me by as I waited,  
Missed the generations yet to come,  
Sadly knew I would not be fated  
To be a father, hold a son.  
I heard again the sounds of war  
When twenty years of sleep had gone,  
For five long years, maybe more,  
Till peace once more at last had come.  
More years passed, new voices came,  
The stones and trenches to explore,  
But no-one ever called my name  
So I wished and waited ever more.  
Each time I thought, perhaps, perhaps,  
Perhaps this time they must call me,  
But they only called for other chaps,  
No-one ever called to set me free.  
Through years of lonely vigil kept,

To look for me they never came,  
None ever searched or even wept,  
Nobody stayed to speak my name.  
Until that summer day I heard  
Some voices soft and strained with tears,  
Then I knew that they had come  
To roll away those wasted years.  
Their hearts felt out to hold me,  
Made me whole like other men,  
But they had come just me to see,  
Drawing me back home with them.  
Now I am at peace and free to roam  
Where 'ere my family speak my name,  
That day my soul was called back home  
For on that day my family came.

**Author: Michael Edwards (2011)**



# SERGEANT OSCAR ERIC BAUMANN

Reg no 10, 32nd Battalion, A Company, Killed in Action 20th July 1916



Sgt Oscar Baumann [1896-1916]

Australian War Memorial H06303

- ◆ Born in Hahndorf, South Australia, on 21 June 1886.
- ◆ Oscar worked as a joiner and had completed 3 years of a 5-year apprenticeship when he enlisted in Adelaide, SA, in July 1915. He was 20 years old when he was killed in action.
- ◆ Oscar was the youngest son of a well-known Hahndorf family in South Australia. He had three brothers and five sisters. The Baumann family resided and operated a store at 63 Main Street, Hahndorf. The family eventually changed its name to Bowman.
- ◆ Oscar had served with the voluntary cadets during school and continued afterwards with the Citizens Forces. Too young to sign up on his own, his parents gave their consent for him to enlist.
- ◆ Despite being only 19 years old he was promoted to Lance Sergeant a month after signing up and was promoted to Sergeant on 1st November 1915 just prior to embarking overseas with the 32nd Battalion.
- ◆ Oscar's father, Christian Heinrich Baumann, came to Australia in 1877 on the Peter Godeffroy bound for Port Adelaide. He was aged 27 and his last place of residence is listed as Grevesmühlen, Mecklenburg. His mother Maria Louise, nee Temme, was born in South Australia in 1859 to German parents.
- ◆ Oscar's older brother Private Walter Oscar Baumann enlisted on 16 October 1915 shortly after Oscar. Walter also went to Egypt but on 15 May 1916 he developed an inguinal hernia and was evacuated to Australia for an operation.
- ◆ The Fromelles Association helped to locate viable donors for Oscar.
- ◆ You can read more at <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/10-sergeant-oscar-eric-baumann/>



New Headstone Photo, Courtesy of Marie Victorie (Facebook)



# PRIVATE MAURICE JAMES CLAXTON

Reg No 1239, 32nd Battalion, D Company, Killed in Action 20th July 1916

- ◆ Born in St. Arnaud, Victoria, he worked as a teamster when he enlisted in Blackboy Hill, WA, in July 1915. He was 23 years old when he enlisted.
- ◆ Maurice's father John Claxton was a farmer. He married Maurice's mother Sophia Buncle in 1885 in Victoria and lived at Yawong and Coonooer Bridge near St Arnaud.
- ◆ They had four sons; Edward John, Harold Henry, Maurice James and Theodore Robert. All four sons enlisted, with Maurice killed in action, Theodore taken as prisoner of war and another brother sent back to Australia medically unfit.
- ◆ AIF and Red Cross records give no information as to Maurice and Theodore's experiences at Fromelles but both brothers were initially listed as missing in action on 20 July 1916 with advice being sent to John Claxton as next of kin in late August 1916.
- ◆ By September, John had received a postcard from his youngest son, Theodore, advising that he had been taken prisoner by the Germans. There had been no updates by military authorities.
- ◆ While Theodore's whereabouts was now known, there was still no news of Maurice. In a letter home, Theodore said he didn't know where Maurice got to even though "we were together until we made the charge, when we got separated."
- ◆ It was a further 12 months before Maurice's fate was confirmed killed in action aged 24.
- ◆ Theodore also lay in an unmarked grave in Boort Cemetery, thanks to family members, he now has a headstone to remember his service.
- ◆ The Fromelles Association assisted to locate family willing to donate DNA and is currently on the lookout for any photo's of Maurice
- ◆ For more information, visit <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/1239-private-maurice-james-claxton/>



New Headstones for Maurice Claxton and Theodore Claxton, Courtesy of Claxton family

# PRIVATE WALTER GRACE

Reg No 1537, 31st Battalion, Killed in Action 19th July 1916

- ♦ Walter was born on 27 March 1893 in Derbyshire, England.
- ♦ Walter was the fifth of eight children born to Mary (nee Allen) and Alfred Grace. Alfred died in 1910 when their youngest child was just 5. Walter, then 17, took on work as a cowhand at a local farm. In 1912 he emigrated to Australia.
- ♦ Walter was working as a farm labourer at Smith's Creek in the Tweed River area of Northern New South Wales when he enlisted in Brisbane, Queensland in July 1915.
- ♦ Walters older sister Jeannie wrote: *"I am afraid it is not much use hoping that my brother W. A. Grace is still alive, though my mother says she does not seem to quite take it in that he is gone."*
- ♦ Walter's eldest brother, George, served with the Royal Navy; Charles joined the Royal Engineers; and his younger brother, William, was with the Middlesex Regiment.
- ♦ George and William survived the war but sadly Charles (235992) was killed in action on 7th November 1917. Charles, aged 27 and married with two young daughters, is buried in La Brique Military Cemetery No 2, France.
- ♦ Walter Grace's name appeared on the German Death list and his identification disc was returned to military authorities. In July 1917, the disc was forwarded to his mother as next of kin.
- ♦ Following some great genealogical research, by our folk, one sample of Y and one of mt DNA was submitted for testing by the analytical laboratory in the UK.
- ♦ This has help contribute to Walter being successfully identified and we thank family, researchers and the key organisations for their assistance to honour Walters legacy.
- ♦ For more information, visit <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/1537-private-walter-allen-grace/>



Pte Walter A. GRACE  
1893-1916

State Library of Queensland, Image number: 702692-19160219-s0022-011



New Headstone Photo, Courtesy of Marie Victorie (Facebook)



# PRIVATE EDWIN CHARLES GRAY

Reg No 20, 32nd Battalion, A Company, Killed in Action 20 July 1916



Edwin Charles Gray

THE ROLL OF HONOR. (1917, April 3). The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), p. 7. Retrieved November 13, 2022, from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5575432>  
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5575432>



New Headstone Photo, Courtesy of  
Marie Victorie (Facebook)

- ◆ Born in Riverton, South Australia, on 22 March 1886. Edwin was the second son and third child of Walter Gray and Ada Sarre.
- ◆ Edwin had served for two years in the Volunteer School Cadets and when he enlisted in July 1915 he was working as a driver and chauffeur. He also delivered the local newspaper.
- ◆ An earlier attempt to enlist in January of that year was unsuccessful as his chest measurement did not meet the high standards.
- ◆ Edwin's father Walter was a local butcher who also enlisted one month after Edwin and was originally with the 13th Light Horse Regiment. Edwin's eldest brother Alfred had enlisted in September 1914 with the 10th Battalion.
- ◆ Edwin was part of A Company of the 32nd Battalion. According to the Battalion's War Diary, on the night of the 19th July 1916, Companies A and C were in the front line to form the first and second waves.
- ◆ In February 1917, Edwin's brother Lance Corporal Alfred Gray wrote to the Red Cross having heard his brother might be a prisoner of war. Sadly Edwin's identification disc was received from Germany and his name appeared on the German Death List, dated 4 November 1916. He was reported as killed in action on 20 July 1916.
- ◆ The Gray family was officially notified Edwin was killed in action on 2 April 1917, though they held out hope he might be found.
- ◆ Edwin's brother returned to Australia on 21 July 1918. He was a well-known lacrosse player and was wounded four times before being discharged. After returning home to Australia he married and had two children. His son Edwin Alfred Gray was killed in action in 1943 in Papua New Guinea during the Second World War.
- ◆ For more information, visit <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/20-private-edwin-charles-gray/>



FROMELLES ASSOCIATION  
OF AUSTRALIA  
For those lost so far from home

# PRIVATE RICHARD MCGUARR

Reg No 3873, 55th Battalion, Killed in Action 20th July 1916

- ◆ Born in Lismore, New South Wales in 1892 to Richard and Elizabeth McGuarr.
- ◆ Richard's father (Richard senior) was a blacksmith who had married Elizabeth Marsh in St Mark's Church at Picton in 1881.
- ◆ The young couple went on to have two daughters –Rosalie and Belinda, followed by Richard in 1889 and William in 1891. The McGuarr family took up dairy farming in Tuncester near Lismore in New South Wales.
- ◆ Richard junior completed his schooling at Cleveland Street Superior Public School in Redfern and joined his father in dairy farming at Tuncester.
- ◆ In October 1915 aged 26, Richard junior enlisted in Holsworthy, NSW. Arriving in France on 30 June 1916, the battalion entered the frontline trenches for the first time on 12 July and fought its first major battle at Fromelles a week later. He was 27 years old when he was killed.
- ◆ On 30 March 1917, official notification was sent to confirm Private Richard James McGuarr had been killed in action eight months earlier on 20 July 1916.
- ◆ Richard's name appeared on a German death list in November 1916.
- ◆ We are still looking for any photographs of Richard.
- ◆ Locating donors in the McGuarr family required a complex search and has been a co-operative effort between the Australian Army's Unrecovered War Casualties team and the Fromelles Association of Australia.
- ◆ For more information, visit <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/3873-private-richard-james-mcguarr/>



Richard McGuarr's new headstone, Courtesy of Marie Victorie (Facebook)

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS' EXHIBITS.**  
Though the thousands of schools exhibits are non-competitive, it is intended to issue certificates of merit. The plan adopted in getting these articles provided for all the schools in a district sending the exhibits into the local centre. The object aimed at was to have school representation rather than that of the individual, and thus to show what was achieved under the schools' new syllabus. Many of the goods are of a useful character. Richard M'Guarr, of the Cleveland-street School, exhibits horseshoes he made from old shoes, samples of which are produced, before he was in his teens, and commencing when he was only 9 years old. Metal work is shown

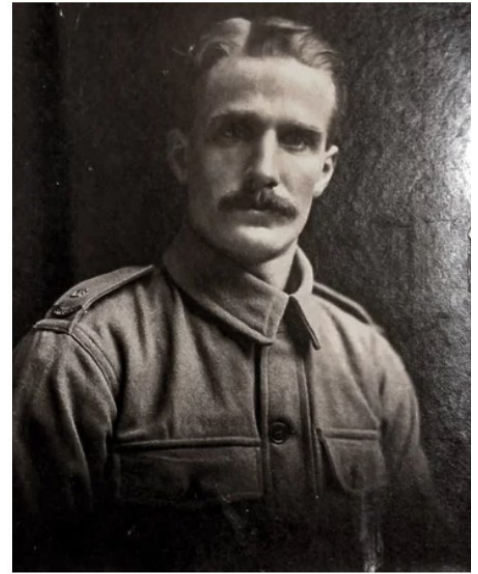
1905 'A.N.A. EXHIBITION.', The Sydney Morning Herald (NSW : 1842 - 1954), 22 December, p. 8. , viewed 18 Jul 2023, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article14736514>



# PRIVATE ALEXANDER RUSSELL PAGE

Reg no 1082, 32nd Battalion, C Company, Killed in Action 20th July 1916

- ♦ Alexander Russell Robert Page, known as Alex, was born and raised in Bow, England. He attended the Plough Road School and then the Church Farm Industrial School for Boys in East Barnet.
- ♦ The son of James William Page and Grace McKean, his father passed away in 1899 when Alex was just 10 years old. His mother briefly remarried before returning to her first married name (Page).
- ♦ Alexander moved to Western Australia in 1911. His mother Grace and his siblings arrived in 1912 and settled in the Maylands area, living at 3 Gladstone Street. Alex and his brother Jim worked as milk carters. Alex enlisted in Perth, WA, in July 1915 when he was 27 years old.
- ♦ Alex was the first of the Page brothers to enlist in July 1915. He was assigned to the 32nd Battalion and began his training at the Blackboy Hill camp in Western Australia before being sent to Adelaide.
- ♦ Alex was sent to Egypt with his battalion, arriving there in December 1915 and continuing to train. The 32nd Battalion arrived in Suez on 14 December 1915 and settled into El Ferdan just before Christmas. They also marched to Ismalia, Tel El Kabir, Duntroon Plateau, Ferry Post and Moascar, continuing their training as they went.
- ♦ Like many from the 32nd Battalion, Alex was officially listed as missing in action. In late August 1916, Alex's mother Grace was informed as next of kin that her younger son was missing in action/
- ♦ By this time, Alex's older brother Jim had enlisted and was in training with the 32nd Battalion preparing for embarkation to Europe. Private James William Page left Australia on 28 October 1916, leaving his mother and sisters awaiting news of Alex.
- ♦ Alex was pronounced as 'Killed in Action, 20 July 1916' in August 1917 after a court of enquiry held in the field on the 12 August 1917. The specific details of his death remain unknown with no eye-witness reports recorded. Alex was 28 years old when he was killed in action.
- ♦ For more information, visit <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/1082-private-alexander-russell-page/>



Pte Jim PAGE 1887-1917, buried at Wulverghem-Linderhoek Road Military Cemetery (Plot II, Row A, Grave No. 25), Belgium

SOURCE: Source Melinda Morris



Grace Page (nee McKean) 1862-1950 at Jim's graveside in Belgium, circa 1927 when she visited with daughters, Mabel and Grace

SOURCE: Source Melinda Morris



Alexander Pages new headstone, Photo Courtesy of Marie Victorie (Facebook)

# CORPORAL WILLIAM JOHN STEPHEN

Reg No 2772, 55th Battalion, Killed in Action 20th July 1916

- ♦ Born in Balmain, New South Wales, on 23 September 1887.
- ♦ William "Billie" John Stephen worked as a grocer when he enlisted in Liverpool, NSW, in July 1915. He was 28 years old when he was killed in action. Billie was the oldest of three children to Daniel Stephen and Mary Marshall.
- ♦ Billie went to school in Redfern and later to technical college. He became a grocer's assistant in Ryde and was a member of the Ryde Choral Society. He was also an active member of the Dee Why Surf Club.
- ♦ Billie's father Daniel was a Senior Sergeant in the NSW Water Police. He had arrived in Australia from Banff, Scotland in 1882.
- ♦ Billie embarked for Egypt on board HMAT A14 *Euripides* on 2 November 1915 with his younger brother Cecil and his brother-in-law Leonard.
- ♦ While Leonard remained with the 19th Battalion and Cecil with the 17th, Billie was transferred to the 55th Battalion on 16 February 1916. Billie was promoted to corporal on 10 July 1916 - just 10 days before he was killed during the Battle of Fromelles.
- ♦ Having first made enquiries in September 1916, Billie's father Daniel Stephen wrote a second time to authorities on 5 December 1916 seeking the official record of his son's death and his paybook that had been retrieved by Private O'Brien. Confirmation of William's death had 'crossed in the mail' having been sent at the end of November.
- ♦ In May 1917, Daniel Stephen, received his son's personal effects consisting of a tin of badges, two metal rings, razor, photo, holdall, two pairs of scissors, key, cigarette lighter (damaged), chevron.
- ♦ After the war, Daniel also received his son's medals (1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal) as well as the memorial plaque and memorial scroll.
- ♦ DNA Donors were located in both Canada and Australia.
- ♦ For more information, visit <https://fromelles.info/soldiers/2772-corporal-william-john-stephen/>



"QUERY CLUB." *Sydney Mail (NSW : 1912 - 1938)* 6 September 1916: 24. Web. 19 Jul 2023 <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article160388088>>.



New Headstone at Pheasant Wood  
Courtesy of Stephen family



PRIVATE W. J. STEPHEN,  
of Ryde, killed in France.

"Brave Boys Who Have Fought and Died." *The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW : 1888 - 1950)* 26 August 1916: 4. Web. 19 Jul 2023 <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article86070419>>



# MEMBERSHIP AND ORDER FORM

## Fromelles Association of Australia Inc

**THE FROMELLES ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED**      **Application for Membership/Orders from:**

Surname:		1 <sup>st</sup> name	
Surname		1 <sup>st</sup> name	
Surname		1 <sup>st</sup> name	
Address:			
City/Town		State	Postcode
Email:			
Phone (H)	Phone (M)		
For Single member fee: \$5.00	Family Membership – incl. additional Members under 18 years of age: \$10.00		
My/our Soldier: (No.)	Surname:		
Unit:	1 <sup>st</sup> Name(s):		
I hereby apply for Sole / Family Membership of the Fromelles Association Inc. and agree to abide by the Constitution of the Association	Signed + Date		
Membership Fee (calculate from above):	\$		
Lapel/Hat Badge(s) @ \$8.00 each x	\$		
Embroidered Badge(s) @ \$6.00 each X	\$		
Add Postage:	\$2.50		
Cheques to:	The Fromelles Association Inc., Attn: Bill Irvine, 41 Chantilly Court, Goulburn NSW 2580		
Direct Deposit: Westpac Bank	The Fromelles Association Inc. Westpac Bank, BSB: 032 721, Account No.: 310953		
Email to:	<a href="mailto:bill@fromelles.info">bill@fromelles.info</a> or to <a href="mailto:geoffrey@fromelles.info">geoffrey@fromelles.info</a>		



**FROMELLES ASSOCIATION  
OF AUSTRALIA**

*For those lost so far from home*