

Stretford War Memorial, Manchester, Lancashire, England



Lest We Forget

World War 1



7317 PRIVATE

H. THORPE

16TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

4TH AUGUST, 1917 Age 29

Harold THORPE

Harold Thorpe was born at Manchester, Lancashire, England in 1886 to parents Arthur & Minnie Thorpe. His birth was registered in the December quarter, 1886 in the district of Chorlton, Manchester, Lancashire.

The 1891 England Census recorded Harold Thorpe as a 4 year old, living with his parents at 7 Dudley Street, Stretford, Lancashire. His parents were listed as Arthur Thorpe (Bricklayer, aged 26, born Sowe, Warwickshire) & Minnie Thorpe (aged 25, born Manchester, Lancashire.) Also listed was Harold's younger sister – Lily Thorpe (aged 2, born Stretford, Manchester).

The 1901 England Census recorded Harold Thorpe as a 14 year old living, with his parents at 2a Henrietta Street, Stretford, Lancashire. His parents were listed as Arthur Thorpe (Foreman Bricklayer, aged 36) & Minnie Thorpe (aged 35). Also listed was Harold's younger sister – Lily Thorpe (aged 12).

The 1911 England Census recorded Harold Thorpe (born Moss Side, Manchester) as a 24 year old Joiner, living with his parents at 2a Henrietta Street, Old Trafford, Manchester which was a 6 roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as Arthur Thorpe (Builders General Foreman, aged 46) & Minnie Thorpe (aged 45, born Moss Side, Manchester). Harold's parents had been married for 25 years & had 3 children, 1 having since died.

According to information supplied by his mother for the Roll of Honour, Harold Thorpe came to Australia when he was 24 years old.

Harold Thorpe married Margaret Donohue in the district of Perth, Western Australia in 1913.

The 1914 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Perth, subdivision of East Perth recorded Harold Thorpe, Carpenter & Margaret Thorpe, Home Duties of 118 Edward Street.

Harold Thorpe was a 30 year old, married, Carpenter from Osborne, W.A. when he enlisted at Perth on 24th October, 1916 with the 16th Infantry Battalion, 24th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 7317 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Margaret Thorpe, Reeves Street, Osborne, Western Australia. Harold Thorpe stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously served with Volunteer Engineers for 2 years & Territorials for 4 years. Information supplied by his mother for the Roll of Honour states that Harold Thorpe served with the East Lancashire Royal Engineers in England.

Pte Harold Thorpe was posted to 89th Depot on 24th October, 1916. He was transferred to 22nd Depot on 10th November, 1916 then transferred to 16th Infantry Battalion, 24th Reinforcements on 29th November, 1916.

Private Harold Thorpe embarked from Fremantle, Western Australia on HMAT *Miltiades* (A28) on 29th January, 1917 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 27th March, 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.

Private Harold Thorpe was marched in from Australia to 4th Training Battalion at Codford, Wiltshire on 27th March, 1917.

Private Harold Thorpe was appointed Acting Lance Corporal on 15th June, 1917 while at Codford, Wiltshire. His rank reverted back to Private on 8th July, 1917.

Private Harold Thorpe proceeded overseas to France via Southampton from 4th Training Battalion at Codford on 9th July, 1917.

Private Harold Thorpe was marched in to 4th A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Havre from England on 19th July, 1917.

Private Harold Thorpe was marched out from A.D.B.D. on 25th July, 1917 & was taken on strength with his Battalion in the field on 27th July, 1917.

Private Harold Thorpe was killed in action at Messines, Belgium on 4th August, 1917.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Harold Thorpe contains a request from Mrs A. Thorpe of 2A Henrietta Street, Old Trafford, mother of the late Pte Thorpe, asking for additional information so that she can visit the "Sacred Spot" of her son's grave. Several unofficial reports on Pte Thorpe's death are contained in the file.

- Pte A. C. O. Dawson, 7223 wrote: " *We were in the communication trenches going to the front line when a shell burst 5 yards in front of Thorpe and he fell down. Pte Sladden was with him at the time and found he was dead though there was no mark on him, I think he was buried close to where he fell as there was no cemetery near. I knew him well, having come over in the same Rft. from Australia.*"
- Pte C. O. Sladden, 7338, 16th Battn. wrote: " *Re 7317 H. Thorpe. Killed at Messines about 5th Aug. 1917. Buried on the Field at Messines. Can't find out where the grave would be registered. Personal appearance – He was a man of about 30 years of age, rather above medium height, sturdily built, brown hair and eyes. Married shortly before embarkation. Promoted to L/Cpl. at Codford Camp England (temporarily).*"
- Pte E. G. Williams, 7325 D. Coy, 16th Batt. wrote: " *Pte H. Thorpe, 7317, D. Coy, 16th Batt. Killed August 4th, 1917. I saw him killed by a shell whilst we were close to Warnston in front of Messines, later I saw his grave, a cross was erected bearing full particulars, Pte Waller, A. No. 7327, who has since been killed, wrote to Thorpe's wife who lives at Perth and gave her full particulars, both these men's wives lived together. He was a carpenter by trade.*"
- G. E. Ball, 7208, D. Coy., 16th Battn. wrote: " *Thorpe was killed going into the line about the 2nd or 3rd of August, about ½ mile from the front line, Messines. I did not see anything of this but when we got to the line the chaps told me he was killed outright, just threw up his hands and dropped. They buried him next day just at the back of the Battn. Huts, not in a Cemetery. I can't say whether the grave was marked or not. I was told my A. Waller 7327, who was with him and who has been killed since I left the line.*"

Private Harold Thorpe is remembered on the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium – Panel number (7 -31) as he has no known grave. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

A War Pension was granted to Margaret Thorpe, widow of late Pte Harold Thorpe, in the sum of 40/- per fortnight from 20th October, 1917.

Pte Harold Thorpe was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Thorpe's widow - Mrs M. Thorpe, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque sent September, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Harold Thorpe – service number 7317, aged 29, of 16th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Arthur and Minnie Thorpe; husband of Margaret Thorpe, of Reeves St., Osborne, Western Australia. Native of Manchester, England.

Private H. Thorpe is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 81.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

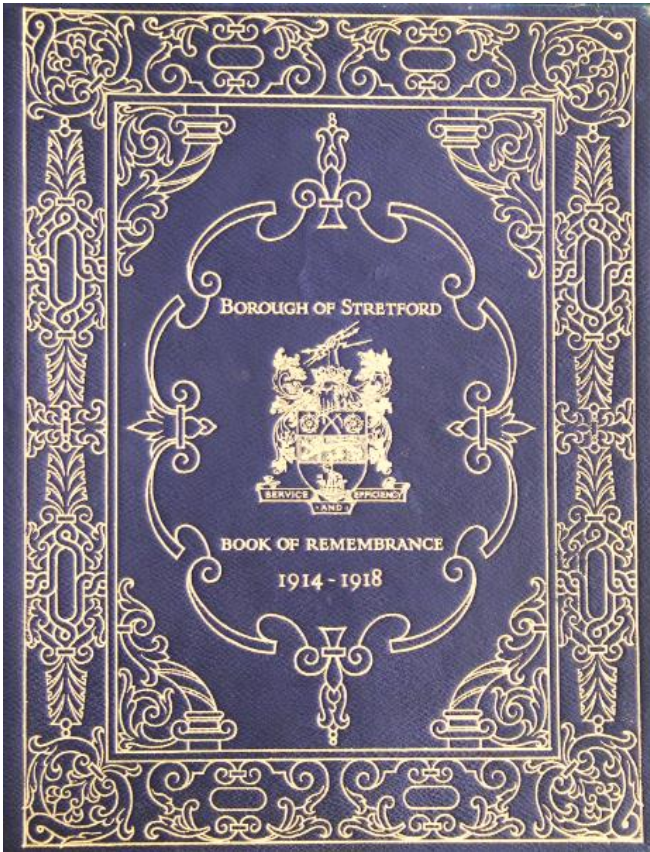
H. Thorpe is remembered on the Stretford War Memorial located at Chester Road, Stretford, Lancashire, England.



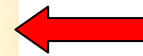
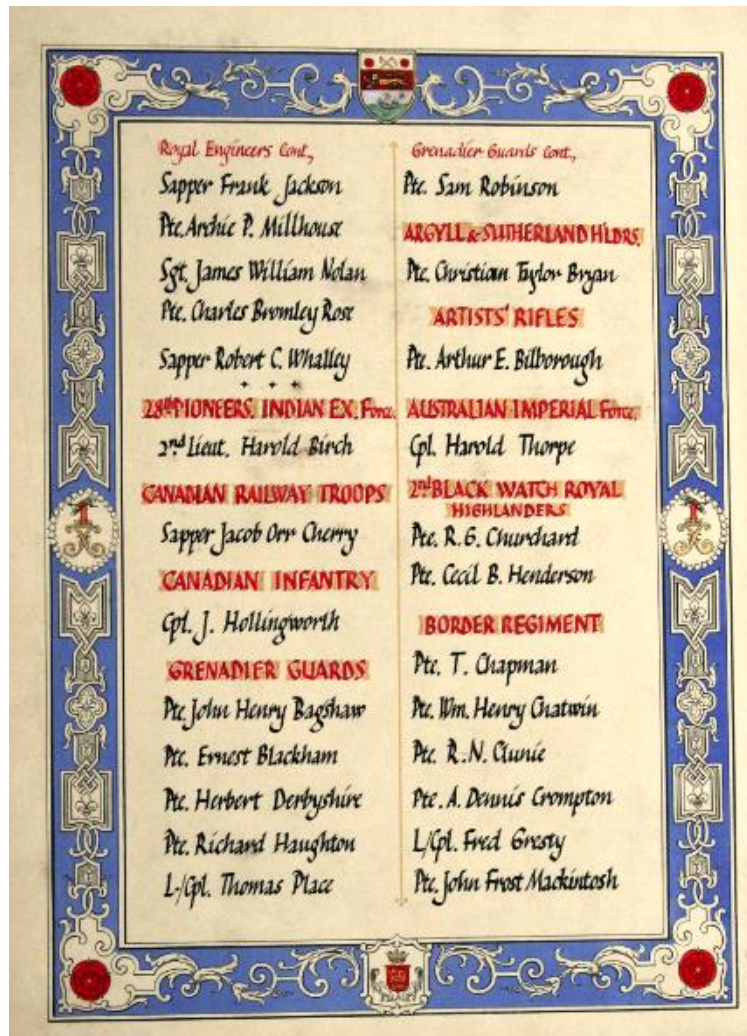
Stretford War Memorial (Top & bottom photos courtesy of George Cogswell – [Trafford War Dead](#))



Stretford War Memorial (Middle photos from War Memoirs Online – F. Moreton)



Stretford WW1 Memorial Book (photos courtesy of George Cogswell – [Trafford War Dead](http://TraffordWarDead.com))



(54 pages of Pte Harold Thorpe'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



Newspaper Notices

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

333rd CASUALTY LIST

KILLED IN ACTION

Thorpe, Harold (Osborne)

(The West Australian, Perth, W.A. – 28 August, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Heroes

THORPE – In loving remembrance of my dear husband, Private Harold Thorpe, killed in action at the battle of Messines, August 4, 1917; also his comrade, Private Arthur Waller, killed September 25, 1917. Ever in thought.

Some day we'll understand.

(The West Australian, Perth, W.A. – 3 August, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Heroes

WALLER – In loving remembrance of my dear husband, Private Arthur Waller, killed in action at Polygon Woods, September 25, 1917; also his comrade, Private Harold Thorpe, killed August 4, 1917.

Greater love than this hath no man,
That he lay down his life for his friend.
From memory's page time cannot blot,
Three little words, "Forget me not."

(The West Australian, Perth, W.A. – 25 September, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Heroes

THORPE – In loving memory of my dear husband, Private Harold Thorpe, killed at Messines, August 4, 1917; also his comrade, Private Arthur Waller, killed September 25, 1917.

Ever in thought.

(The West Australian, Perth, W.A. – 5 August, 1919)

Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium

The Menin Gate is one of four memorials to the missing in Belgian Flanders which cover the area known as the Ypres Salient. Broadly speaking, the Salient stretched from Langemarck in the north to the northern edge in Ploegsteert Wood in the south, but it varied in area and shape throughout the war.

The Salient was formed during the First Battle of Ypres in October and November 1914, when a small British Expeditionary Force succeeded in securing the town before the onset of winter, pushing the German forces back to the Passchendaele Ridge. The Second Battle of Ypres began in April 1915 when the Germans released poison gas into the Allied lines north of Ypres. This was the first time gas had been used by either side and the violence of the attack forced an Allied withdrawal and a shortening of the line of defence.

There was little more significant activity on this front until 1917, when in the Third Battle of Ypres an offensive was mounted by Commonwealth forces to divert German attention from a weakened French front further south. The initial attempt in June to dislodge the Germans from the Messines Ridge was a complete success, but the main assault north-eastward, which began at the end of July, quickly became a dogged struggle against determined opposition and the rapidly deteriorating weather. The campaign finally came to a close in November with the capture of Passchendaele.

The German offensive of March 1918 met with some initial success, but was eventually checked and repulsed in a combined effort by the Allies in September.

The battles of the Ypres Salient claimed many lives on both sides and it quickly became clear that the commemoration of members of the Commonwealth forces with no known grave would have to be divided between several different sites.

The site of the Menin Gate was chosen because of the hundreds of thousands of men who passed through it on their way to the battlefields. It commemorates casualties from the forces of Australia, Canada, India, South Africa and United Kingdom who died in the Salient. In the case of United Kingdom casualties, only those prior 16 August 1917 (with some exceptions). United Kingdom and New Zealand servicemen who died after that date are named on the memorial at Tyne Cot, a site which marks the furthest point reached by Commonwealth forces in Belgium until nearly the end of the war. New Zealand casualties that died prior to 16 August 1917 are commemorated on memorials at Buttes New British Cemetery and Messines Ridge British Cemetery.

The Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial now bears the names of more than 54,000 officers and men whose graves are not known. Panel Numbers quoted at the end of each entry relate to the panels dedicated to the Regiment with which the casualty served. In some instances, where a casualty is recorded as attached to another Regiment, his name may appear within their Regimental Panels.

(Information & Photos from CWGC)

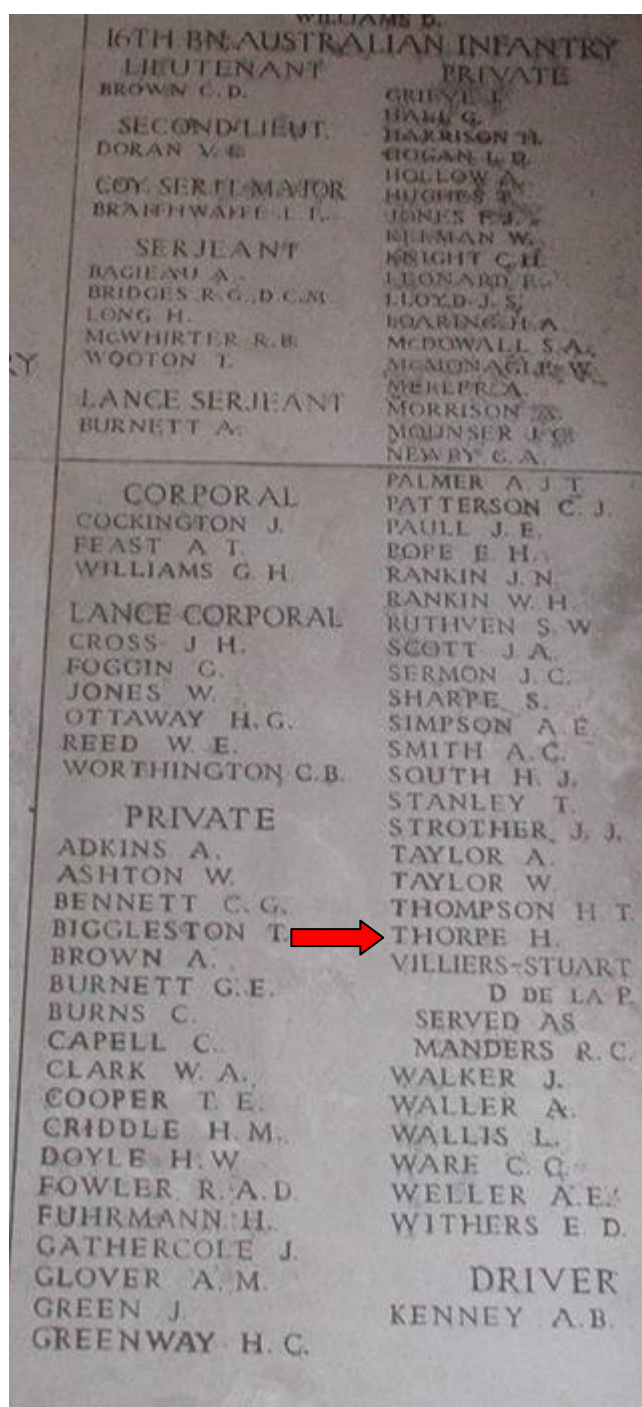
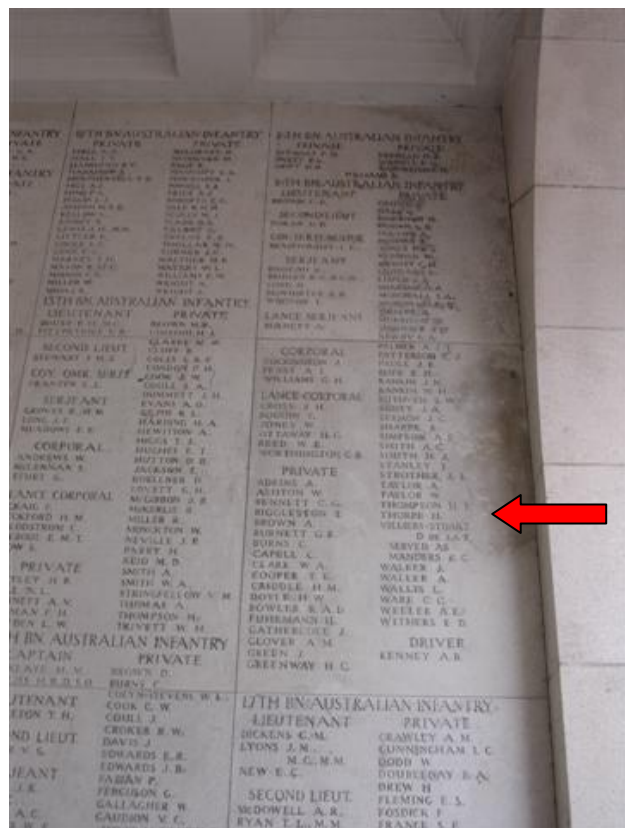




Menin Gate Memorial (above – At Night; below - the names on the Panels)

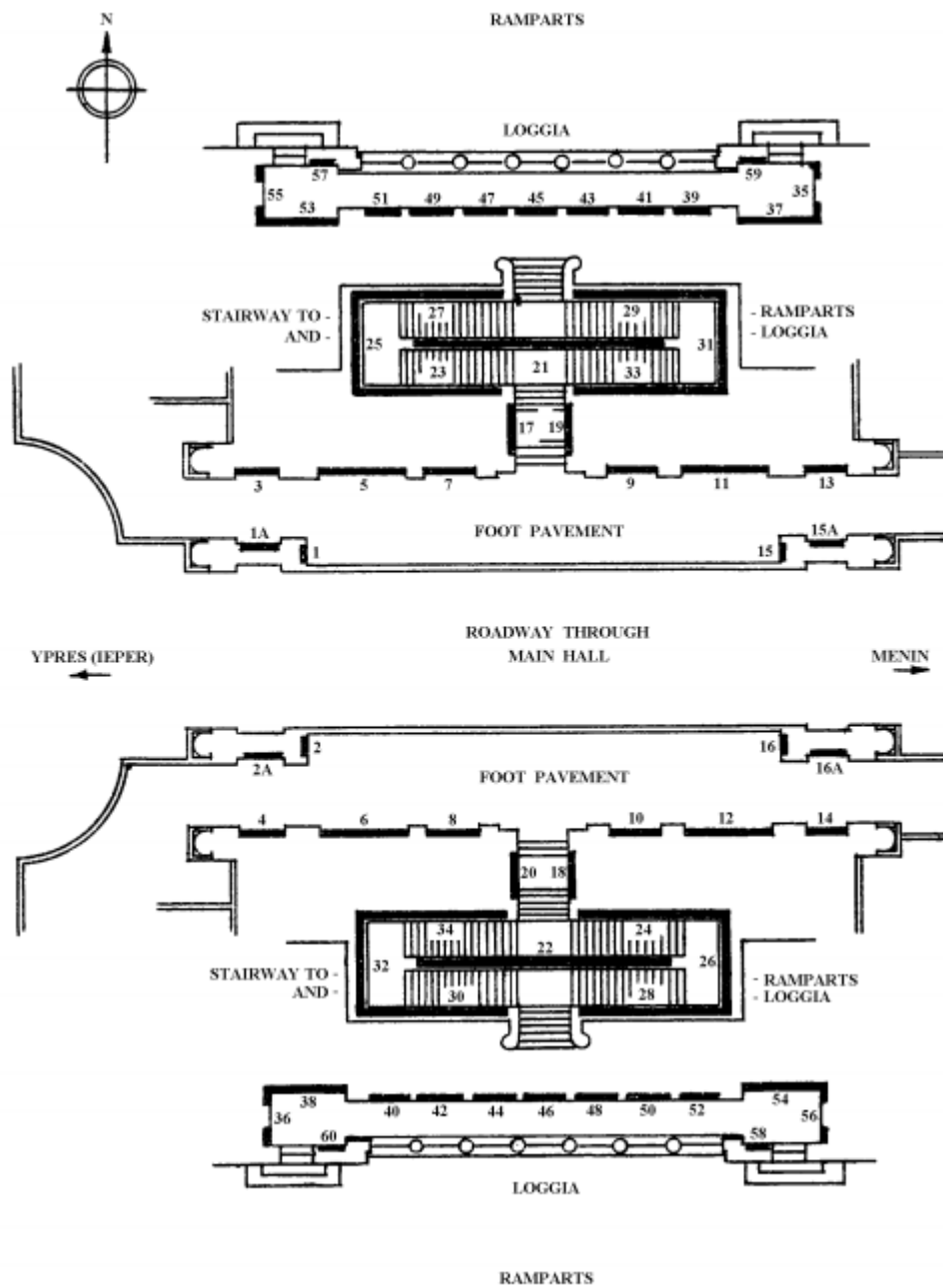


Photo of Pte H. Thorpe's name on the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium.



Menin Gate Memorial Panel for 16th Battalion Australian Infantry

(Photo by International Wargraves Photography Project)



LAYOUT OF THE YPRES (MENIN GATE) MEMORIAL PANELS