

# **Kemnay, Scotland**

## **War Memorial**



*Lest We Forget*

## **World War 1**



**2370 PRIVATE**

**W. CHALMERS**

**2ND BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**12TH NOVEMBER, 1917 Age 33**

## William CHALMERS

William Chalmers was born at Kemnay, Aberdeenshire, Scotland in 1886 to parents William and Elizabeth Chalmers.

The 1891 Scotland Census recorded William Chalmers as a 5 year old Scholar, living with his family at Kemnay, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. His parents were listed as William Chalmers (Granite Driller, aged 32, born Old Machare, Aberdeenshire) & Elizabeth Chalmers (aged 29, born Monymusk, Aberdeenshire). William was one of four children listed on this Census – Lizzie Chalmers (Scholar, aged 6, born Monymusk, Aberdeenshire) then William, Frederic Chalmers (aged 2, born Kemnay, Aberdeenshire) & Edith Chalmers (aged 1, born Kemnay, Aberdeenshire).

William Chalmers attended Kimnay Higher Grade Public School, Aberdeenshire, Scotland.

The 1901 Scotland Census recorded William Chalmers as 15 year old Driller at Granite Quarry, living with his family at Lilydale, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. His mother was listed as Head of the Household – Elizabeth Chalmers (Formerly Domestic Servant, aged 38). William was one of five children listed on this Census – Elizabeth Chalmers (General Servant, aged 16), then William, Edith Chalmers (Scholar, aged 11), Frederick Chalmers (Scholar, aged 13) & Annie Chalmers (Scholar, aged 8, born Kemnay, Aberdeenshire). Also listed was a boarder – William McGregor (General Labourer, aged 30).

According to information supplied by his wife for the Roll of Honour - William Chalmers came to Australia when he was 25 years old.

William Chalmers was a 29 year old, single, Labourer when he enlisted at Liverpool, NSW on 4th May, 1915 with the 2nd Infantry Battalion, 7th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2370 & his religion was Presbyterian (Religion listed on the Attestation Papers states Church of Scotland). His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs E. McGregor, of "Sambank Cottage" Kempsey, Aberdare, Scotland. William Chalmers stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously volunteered with the Gordon Highlanders.

Private William Chalmers embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Orsova* (A67) on 14th July, 1915.

Private William Chalmers joined his Unit with 2nd Battalion at Gallipoli Peninsula on 31st October, 1915.

Private William Chalmers disembarked at Alexandria from *Huntsgreen* on 28th December, 1915.

Private William Chalmers embarked for overseas from Alexandria on 22nd March, 1916 on Troopship *Invernia*. He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 28th March, 1916.

Private William Chalmers was on furlough to United Kingdom from France on 31st December, 1916. He rejoined his Battalion in France on 12th January, 1917.

Private William Chalmers was wounded in action in Belgium on 7th November, 1917. He was admitted to 3rd Australian Field Ambulance with multiple shrapnel wounds then transferred to 1st Canadian Field Ambulance. Pte Chalmers was transferred to 17th Casualty Clearing Station.

Private William Chalmers died on 12th November, 1917 at 17th Casualty Clearing Station, Belgium from wounds received in action.

### 2nd Battalion

The 2nd Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the A.I.F. during the First World War. Like the 1st, 3rd and 4th Battalions it was recruited from New South Wales and, together with these battalions, formed the 1st Brigade.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the battalion returned to Egypt. In March 1916, it sailed for France and the Western Front. From then until 1918 the battalion took part in operations against the German Army, principally in the Somme Valley in France and around Ypres in Belgium. The battalion's first major action in France was at Pozieres in

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the Somme valley in July 1916. Later the battalion fought at Ypres, in Flanders, before returning to the Somme for winter.

In early 1917 the German Army withdrew to the formidable defences of the Hindenburg Line. As the 2nd Battalion advanced towards these defences in April 1917, Private T. J. Kenny attacked several enemy machine gun positions with grenades, earning the 2nd Battalion's only Victoria Cross. The battalion spent much of the rest of 1917 fighting in increasingly horrendous conditions around Ypres.

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

War Diary – 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 7<sup>th</sup> November, 1917 (Position D16D6560):

*The work was carried on as yesterday, it is \_\_\_ difficult to get duckboards so the tracks have not be improved as much as they would have been.*

*The shelling has been less severe today.*

*Considerably annoyance has been caused by the enemy aeroplanes which fly over our lines in great numbers and very low. In some instance \_\_\_ have fired on our posts with M.G. but have not inflicted casualties.*

*Intercompany relief was carried out. C Coy relieved 3 post of A Coy and D Coy relieved B Coy. Thus over disposition was A Coy less 2 platoons on the night. C Coy center and D Coy left; 2 platoons of A Coy in support of B Coy in reserve. C. Coy was unable to relieve the whole of A Coy having lost so severely yesterday. Relief complete 2310. Casualties 5 OR. Weather light rain & cold.*

*As our pack train was coming up with the rations it was shelled and suffered severely. What really caused most of the damage was a small ammunition which exploded on being hit by a shell. 2 men killed 1 evacuated wounded 5 posted as missing and two slightly wounded. Also 8 horses were killed or destroyed and one was evacuated wounded to the M.\_.S.*

*Rations etc were very short especially the water which also had to be brought in petrol tins on pack horses.*

*(War Diary information from the Australian War Memorial)*

Private William Chalmers was buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium – Plot number XXVII. A. 7. by Rev. D. M. Salmon, attached to 17th Casualty Clearing Station, and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Pte William Chalmers requested in his Will, dated 8th June, 1917 that all his personal estate be bequeathed to Mrs Agnes Chalmers, of 126 Roseberry Square, Roseberry Ave, London.

A War Pension for Agnes Chalmers, widow of the late Pte William Chalmers, was granted in the sum of 40/- per fortnight commencing from 19th January, 1918.

Pte William Chalmers was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Chalmers' widow - Mrs A. Chalmers, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque sent October, 1922).

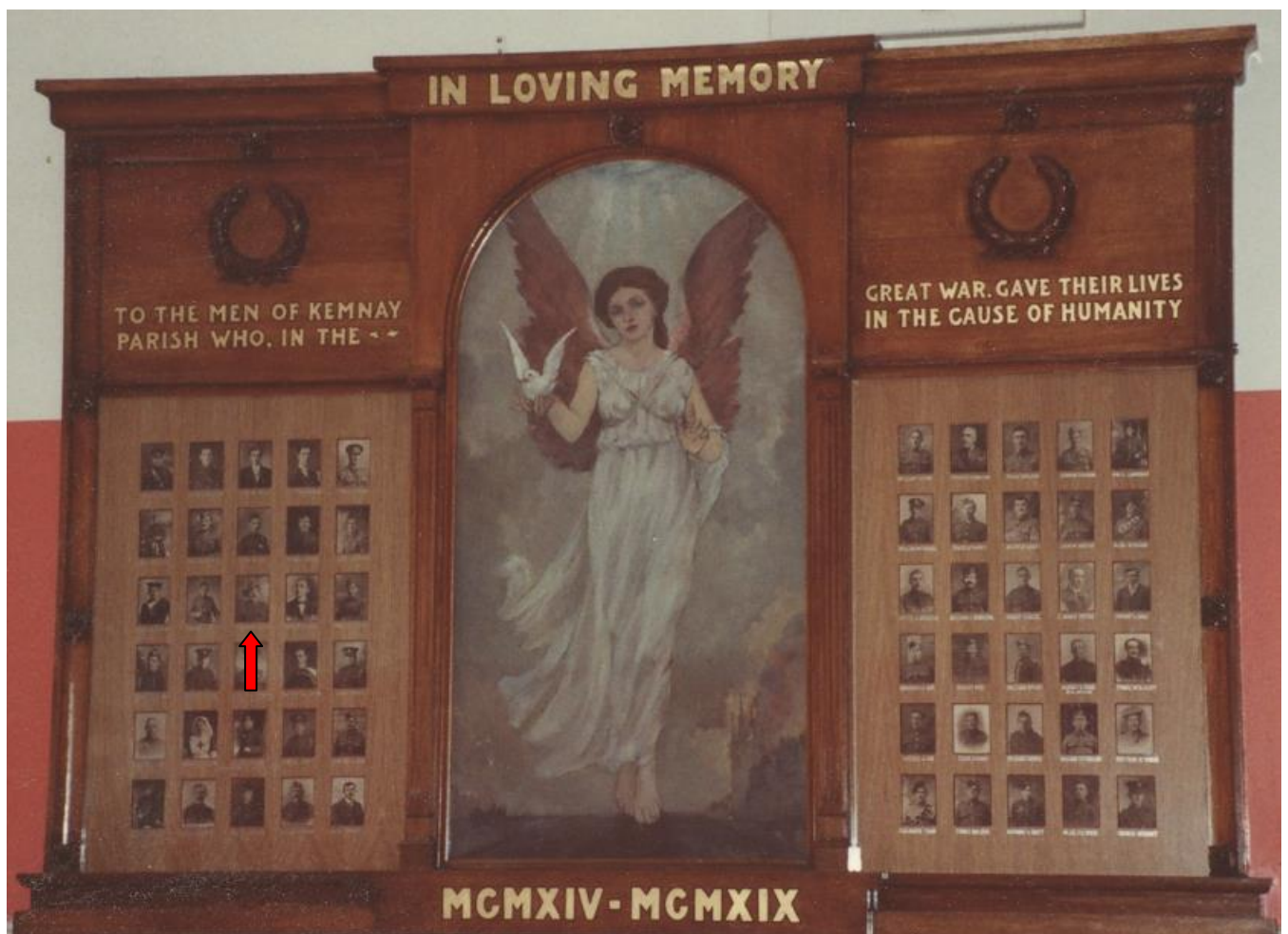
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private William Chalmers – service number 2370, aged 33, of 2nd Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of William and Elizabeth Chalmers; husband of Agnes Chalmers, of "Sinside", Invershin, Sutherland, Scotland. Native of Kemnay, Scotland.

Private W. Chalmers is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 32.



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

Private William Chalmers is remembered on the Kemnay Primary School Memorial Board, located in the Hall at Kemnay Primary School.



**Kemnay Primary School Memorial Board**

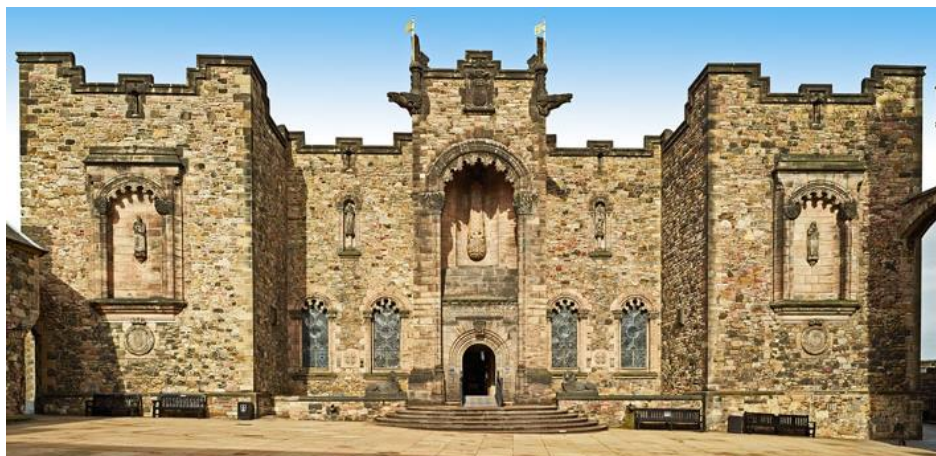
Private William Chalmers is remembered on the Kemnay War Memorial which is located on Station Road at the junction of Grove Road, Kemnay, Scotland.



**Kemnay War Memorial** (Photos by John Aldersey-Williams)

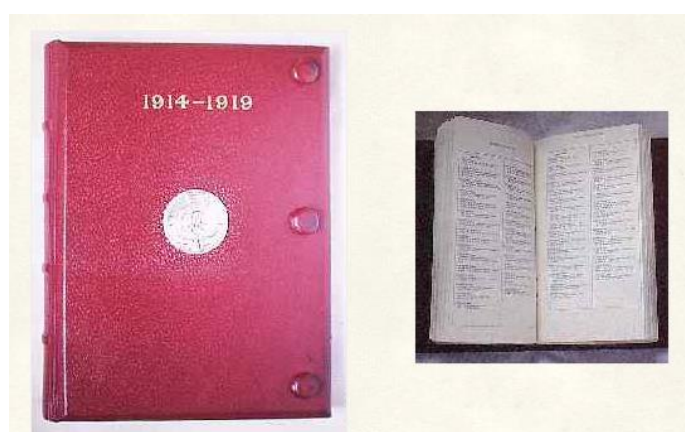
**PTE. DAVID S. ABEL**  
 - - **JOHN ANDERSON**  
 - - **DOUGLAS AULD**  
 - - **JAMES D. BANNERMAN**  
 - - **JOHN P. B. BERRY**  
 - - **GEORGE BOOTH**  
 - - **ROBERT G. BOOTH**  
**SCT. JOHN BRAJK**  
 - - **FRANCIS BROWN**  
**L/CPL. JOHN A. BURNESSE**  
**CAPT. IAN A. K. BURNETT**  
**P.O.F.S. WILLIAM P. CALDER**  
**L/CPL. WILLIAM CASSIE**  
**PTE. WILLIAM CHALMERS**  
 - - **GEORGE S. CLARK**  
 - - **ANDREW P. COLLIE**

Private William Chalmers is remembered in the Roll of Honour Books held in the Hall of Honour inside The Scottish National War Memorial. The north side of the Hall of Honour is divided by columns into bays, each dedicated to a different regiment and enhanced with battle honours and consecrated colours. On the broad shelf in front of each of the bays, the names of the dead are listed in leather-bound books.



**The Scottish National War Memorial & the Hall of Honour & the Roll of Honour Books.**

*(Photos from The Scottish National War Memorial)*



(35 pages of Private William Chalmers' 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 William Chalmers**



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **Northern Casualties**

WOUNDED

Private W. Chalmers. Kemnay

*(Aberdeen Evening Express, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Scotland – 20 November, 1917)*

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### **NORTH OFFICERS AND MEN IN CASUALTY LISTS**

KEMNAY – Mrs MacGregor, Lineside Cottages, Kemnay, has been notified that her son, William Chalmers, Australians, previously reported seriously wounded, has died in hospital.

*(Aberdeen Weekly Journal, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Scotland – 30 November, 1917)*

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### **371st and 372nd LISTS**

#### **NEW SOUTH WALES**

Killed in Action

Pte W. Chalmers, Scotland

*(The Land, Sydney, NSW, Australia – 21 December, 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)*

Pte W. Chalmers does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

## **Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium**

During the First World War, the village of Lijssenthoek was situated on the main communication line between the Allied military bases in the rear and the Ypres battlefields. Close to the Front, but out of the extreme range of most German field artillery, it became a natural place to establish casualty clearing stations. The cemetery was first used by the French 15th Hopital D'Evacuation and in June 1915, it began to be used by casualty clearing stations of the Commonwealth Forces.

From April to August 1918, the casualty clearing stations fell back before the German advance and field ambulances (including a French ambulance) took their places.

The cemetery contains 9,901 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, 24 being unidentified. There are 883 war graves of other nationalities, mostly French and German, 11 of these are unidentified. There is 1 Non World War burial here.

The only concentration burials were 24 added to Plot XXXI in 1920 from isolated positions near Poperinghe and 17 added to Plot XXXII from St. Denijs Churchyard in 1981.

Eight of the headstones are Special Memorials to men known to be buried in this cemetery. These are located together alongside Plot 32 near the Stone of Remembrance.

*(Information from CWGC)*



*(Photo courtesy of International Wargraves Photography Project)*





**Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium** *(Photo by Wernerc)*



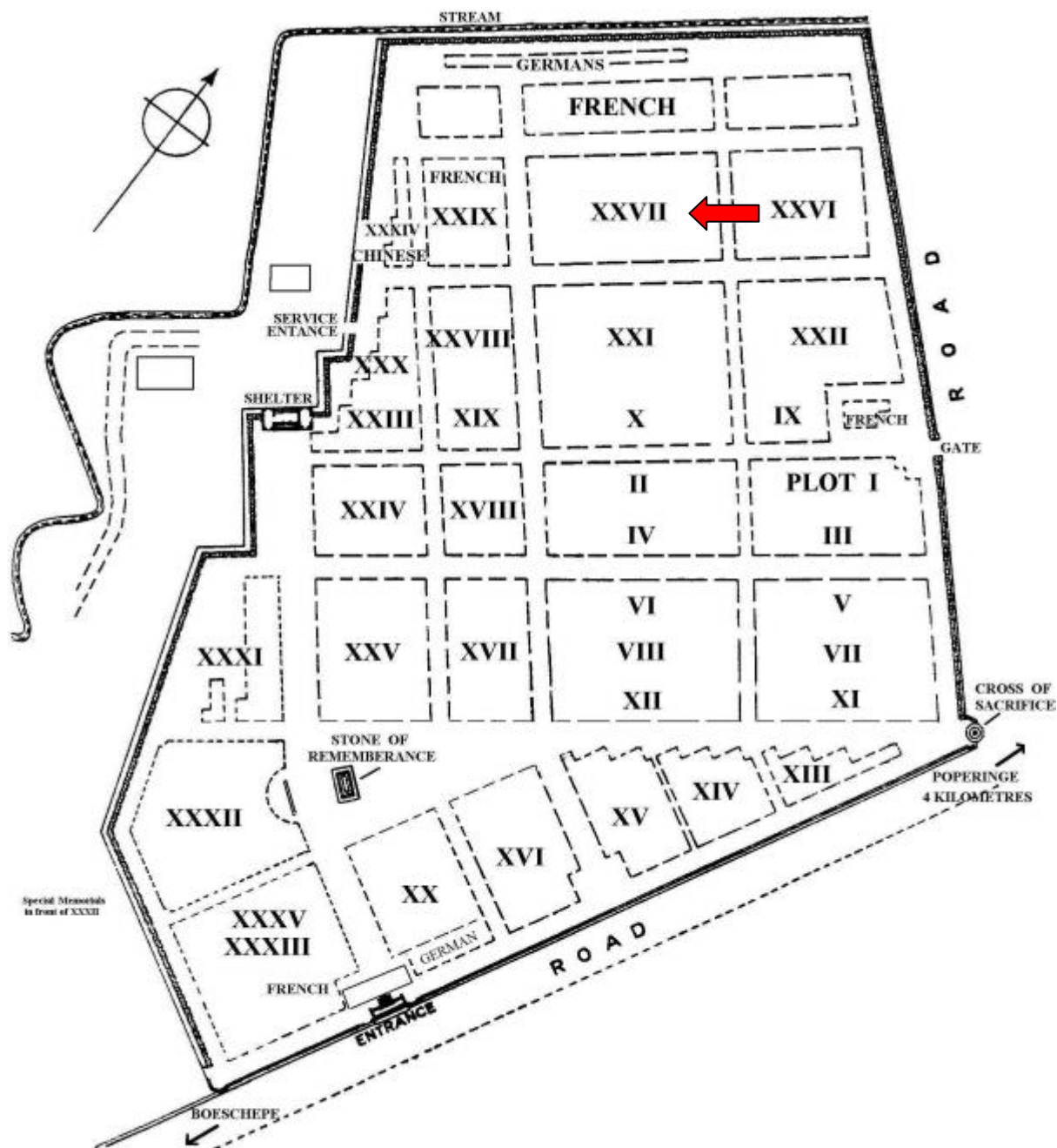
**Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium** (Photo from CWGC)

Photo of Pte W. Chalmers' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium.



(Photo courtesy of International Wargraves Photography Project)





LIJSSENTHOEK MILITARY CEMETERY