

# **Minwear, Wales**

## **War Memorial Plaque**



*Lest We Forget*

### **World War 1**



**2153 PRIVATE**

**B. D. JOHNS**

**11TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**6TH AUGUST, 1915**

## Benjamin Davies JOHNS

Benjamin Davies John was born on 16th July, 1888 at Amroth, Pembrokeshire, Wales to parents Benjamin George & Caroline Butler John (nee Thomas).

The 1891 Wales Census recorded Benjamin David John as a 2 year old, living with his family at Gent Craigefovvr (?), Amroth, Pembrokeshire, Wales. His parents were listed as Benjamin George John (Farmer, aged 39, born St. Pembrokeshire – partially deaf) & Caroline John (aged 28, born St. Martens, Haverford West). There were four children listed on this Census – Martha Jane John (aged 4, born Minwear, Pembrokeshire), then Benjamin, Thomas Bullen John (aged 1, born Amroth, Pembrokeshire) & Rebecca John (aged 5 months, born Amroth, Pembrokeshire). Three servants were also listed in the household – Evan William Evans (General Servant, aged 17), Margaret Ann Baynon General Servant domestic, aged 21) & Catherine James (Nurse, aged 15).

Benjamin Davies John attended school at Martletwy, Pembrokeshire, Wales.

The 1901 Wales Census recorded Benjamin D. John as a 12 year old, living with his family at Martletwy House, Martletwy, Pembrokeshire, Wales. His parents were listed as Benjamin G. John (Farmer, aged 49) & Caroline John (aged 38). There were six children listed on this Census – Benjamin, Thomas B. John (aged 11), William A. John (aged 8, born Martletwy, Pembrokeshire), Mary W. John (aged 7, born Martletwy, Pembrokeshire), Caroline M. John (aged 5, born Martletwy, Pembrokeshire), & David V. R. John (aged 3, born Martletwy, Pembrokeshire). Three servants were also listed in the household – William Butland (Agricultural Team Man, aged 18), Thomas Picton (Milk Boy, aged 13) & Eliza Williams (General Servant domestic, aged 26).

Benjamin George John, father of Benjamin Davies John, died on 15th February, 1905 at Pembrokeshire, Wales.

According to information supplied by his mother for the Roll of Honour - Benjamin Davies Johns came to Australia when he was 20 years old. A "Mr Benj. John", Farmer, was listed as a passenger on *Ormiz* which departed from London, England on 14th May, 1909 bound for Fremantle, Western Australia.

[The 1911 Census recorded the John family living at Martletwy House, Templeton, Pembrokeshire, which was a 9 roomed dwelling. The family consisted of Caroline John (widow, Farmer, aged 48), Thomas Butler John (Farmer's son working on Farm, aged 21), Rebecca John (Elementary School Teacher, aged 20), Mary Winifred John (Farmer's daughter, Dairy Work, aged 17) & Caroline Mary John (Farmer's daughter, HouseWork, aged 15). Also listed was John Penry Pryse – Apprentice (Working on farm, aged 17).]

Benjamin Davies Johns was a 26 year old, single, Farm Hand when he enlisted on 7th April, 1915 with the 11th Infantry Battalion 6th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2153 & his religion was Baptist. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Caroline Johns, of Pembrokeshire, South Wales, England. Benjamin Davies Johns stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served for 4 years with 25th Light Horse at Kojonup, Katanning, Western Australia.

Private Benjamin Davies Johns was posted to No. 14 Depot on 7th April, 1915. He was transferred to 6th Reinforcements of 11th Infantry Battalion.

Private Benjamin Davies Johns embarked from Fremantle, Western Australia on HMAT *Geelong (A2)* on 6th June, 1915.

Private Benjamin Davies Johns embarked for Dardanelles from Alexandria on 31st July, 1915.

Private Benjamin Davies Johns was taken on strength of 11th Battalion from 6th Reinforcements on 4th August, 1915 at the Dardanelles.

Private Benjamin Davies Johns was killed in action on 6th August, 1915 at Dardanelles. (According to information supplied by his mother for the Roll of Honour – Private Benjamin Davies Johns was killed in action at Lone Pine, Gallipoli.

## **War Diary – 11th Battalion**

### **Anzac Cove – 4th August, 1915**

*Reinforcements as under reported for duty –*

*6th Reinforcements 2nd Lt. Hall, S. G. L., 2nd Lt. Roberston, A. J. & 138 others*

*7th Reinforcements – Lt. Pinnell, E. R., Lt. Morris, E. W. & 128 others.*

### **Anzac Cove – 6th August, 1915**

*About 0430 this morning Enemy made an attack in force on LEANE'S TRENCH which we recently captured. They crept up close under the parapets and delivered a heavy bomb attack. SO fierce was the onslaught that the Enemy succeeded in getting a foothold in the right section of our trenches. Capt. Aarons was in command of this section. We immediately blocked with sand bags the communication tunnel leading from that position of the trench occupied by the Enemy. Our men in the trench endeavoured by fire & bombs from the flank to dislodge the Enemy but failed. A storming party was then formed of about 30 men under 2nd Lt. Prockter to push the trench from TASMANIA POST. This they did in a most dashing manner under a heavy M.G. and Rifle fire. As their casualties were considerable in carrying out this operation I did not consider the remainder sufficiently strong to seize & hold the position so I detailed another party of 25 men under 2nd Lt. Franklyn to follow on. They charged over the open ground in a gallant manner & succeeded in completing the capture of the trench shooting and bayoneting all Turks left there. It was then found that a party of Turks had retired into No 1 A Sap where for some time they held out, but they were ultimately taken prisoners & sent off to Hdqts. Meanwhile Turkish reinforcements had been hurried up and took cover close in in front of our parapets from which they could not be dislodged even by bombs. They attempted to dig under our trenches and as there was a danger of our trenches being blown up I decided to launch a counter attack from the left flank to clear out the Enemy from under our parapets. For this purpose 2nd Lt. Hall and 25 men were detailed and they succeeded in clearing the enemy out and also assisted our attack which was developing from our left. The Enemy attack continued for 6 hours during which a heavy bombardment by heavy guns took place as well as incessant rifle & M.G. fire.*

*The Trenches parapets were badly knocked about but with the assistance of the Engineers Coy. they were speedily repaired.*

*The Enemy was completely repulsed with heavy loss and the whole of the trench left in our possession. Our casualties were heavy especially from Bomb wounds-*

*Killed - 2nd Lt Prockter, 2nd Lt. Robertson, 39 other ranks.*

*Wounded - Capt J. B. Aarons, 2nd Lt. Franklyn, J. F., 91 other ranks.*

*Missing – 2nd Lt. Hall, S. G. L., 18 other ranks*

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

Private Benjamin Davies Johns was buried in Shell Green Cemetery, Turkey – Plot number II. I. 20. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Private Benjamin Davies Johns was Mentioned in Despatches in *London Gazette* - 28th January, 1916 & the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* – 6th April, 1916. A Certificate covering a Mention in Despatches was sent to Mrs C. Johns, at Martletwy House, Templeton, Pembrokeshire, South Wales on 27th August, 1923. The Certificate had not been sent previously as the address of the next-of-kin was insufficient.

Newspaper Notice – *The West Australian*, Perth, Western Australia – 14 April, 1916:

### **MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES**

### **GALLANT WESTRALIANS**

*In the latest issue of the "Commonwealth Gazette" a long list of names of Australian soldiers who have been mentioned in despatches, or who have already been honoured appears. Included amongst the number are the following West Australians:-*

### *Recommendations*

*11th Battalion – Major S. R. Roberts, Captain R. L. Leane, Lieutenant H. James. 2nd-Lieutenant G. Potter, 2nd-Lieutenant C. H. Prockter (killed), 2nd-Lieutenant J. F. Frankly, Sergeant A. J. Wallish, Sergeant W. Hallahan, Lance-Corporal L. B. Taylor, Lance-Corporal F. Smith, **Privates B. D. Johns (killed)**, J. M. Morrison (killed), D. Roper, W. R. Smith, H. Whitbread, H. R. Retchford.*

Private Benjamin Davies Johns was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Johns' mother in England – Mrs C. Johns, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque sent February, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Benjamin Davies Johns – service number 2153, of 11th Battalion Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Private B. D. Johns is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 62.



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

B. D. Johns is remembered on the Kojonup War Memorial located in front of the R.S.L. Hall in Spencer Street, Kojonup, Western Australia.





**Kojonup War Memorial**

B. D. Johns is remembered on the Katanning War Memorial, located at Prosser Park, corner of Carew & Cliff Streets, Katanning, Western Australia.



**Katanning War Memorial, Western Australia** (Photo by Derek Graham)



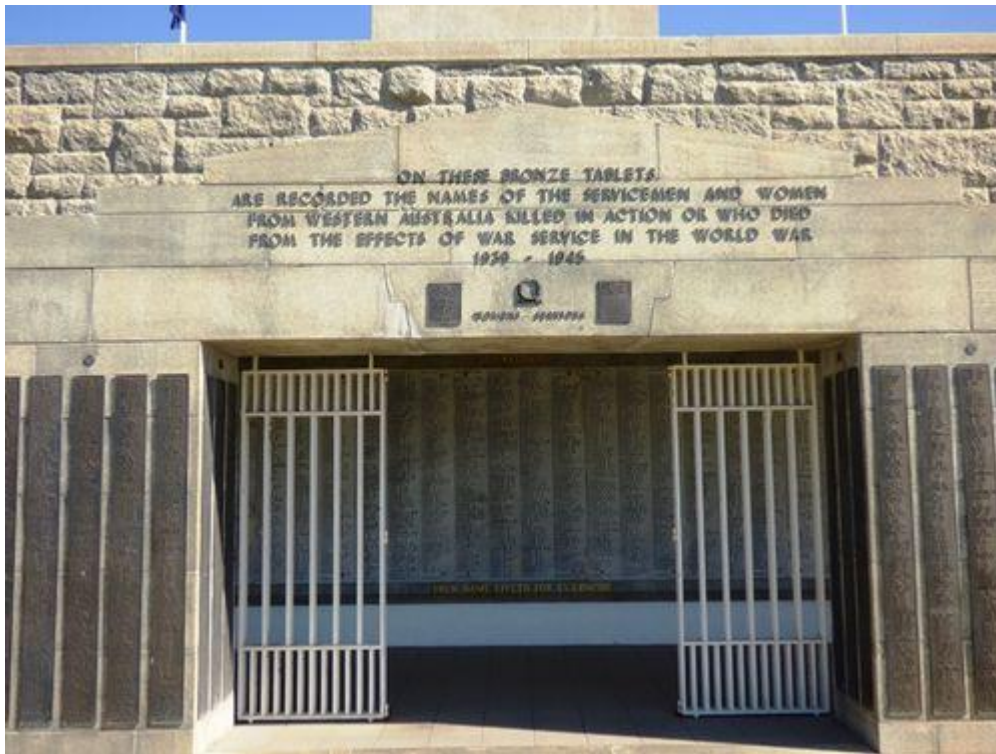


B. D. Johns is remembered on the Western Australia State War Memorial which is located at the top of Kings Park and Botanic Garden escarpment, ANZAC Bluff, Fraser Avenue, Perth, Western Australia. The memorial was developed around an 18 metre tall obelisk as the principal feature, which is almost a replica of the Australian Imperial Force Memorials erected in France and Belgium.

The heavy concrete foundations are supplemented by heavy brick walls which enclose an inner chamber or crypt. The walls surrounding the crypt are covered with The Roll of Honour; marble tablets which list under their units the names of more than 7,000 members of the services killed in action or as a result of World War One.

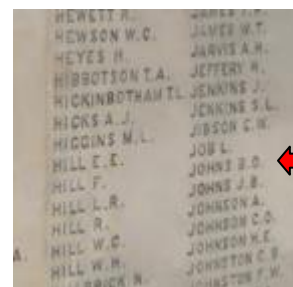


**Western Australia State War Memorial Cenotaph, Kings Park**



The Crypt with the Roll of Honour names

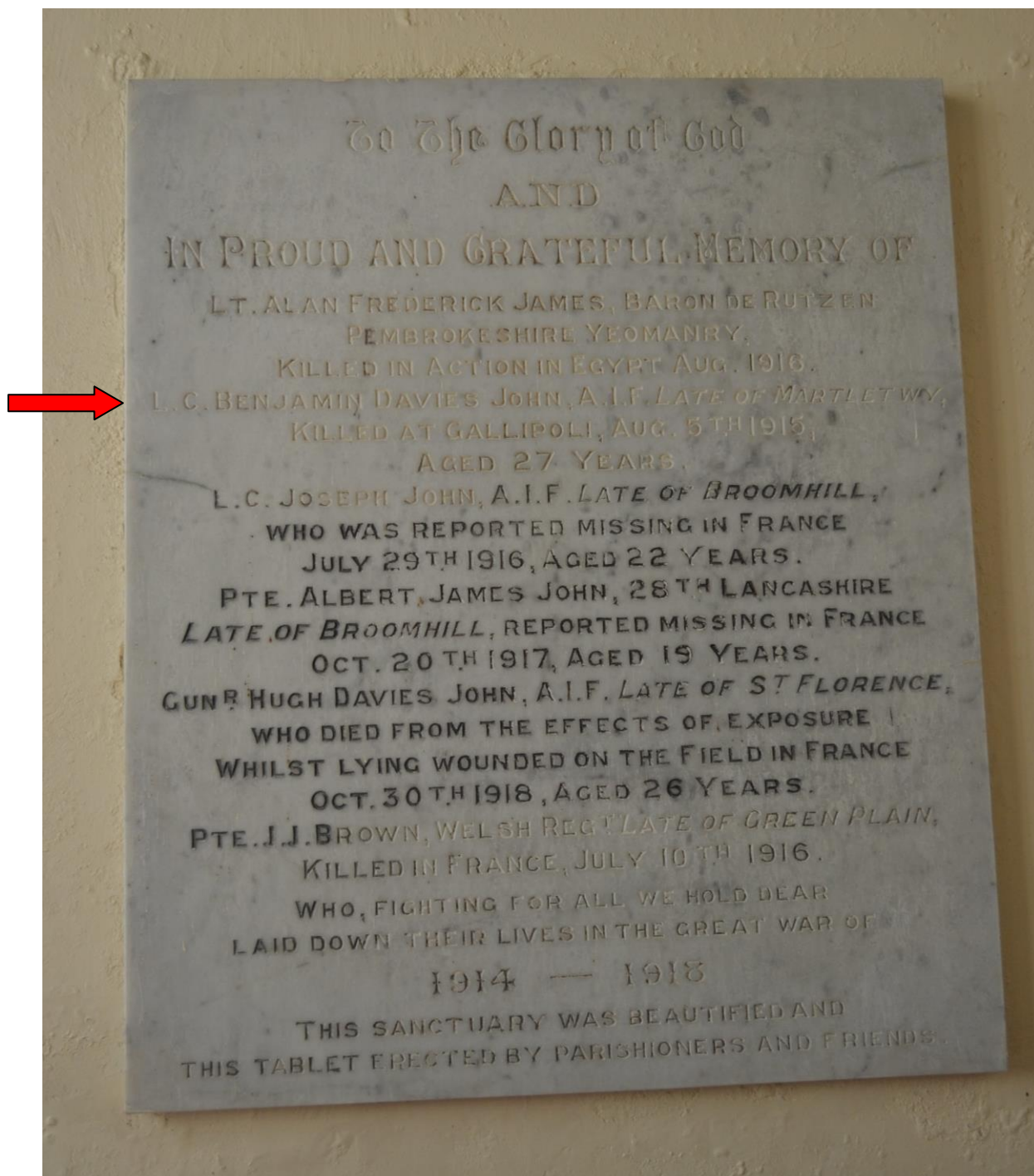
(Photos from Monument Australia – Kent Watson/Sandra Tattersall/Graeme Saunders)



11th Battalion Panel Roll of Honour Names



Benjamin Davies John is remembered on the Minwear Memorial which is located inside St. Womar Church, Minwear, Wales & is dedicated in memory of the men of the parish who fell in the Great War.



**Minwear War Memorial** (Photo courtesy of Deborah Tilley)

(33 pages of Private Benjamin Davies Johns' 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 Notices**

### **WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

#### **THE ROLL OF HONOUR**

#### **SEVENTY-SIXTH CASUALTY LIST**

##### DEATHS

##### KILLED IN ACTION

11th Battalion

B. D. Johns, 6th Reinforcements (England)

*(The West Australian, Perth, Western Australia – 13 September, 1915)*

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#### **DECEASED PERSONS' ESTATES**

##### Letters of Administration

Benjamin Davies Johns, late of Kojonup, to Rebecca Johns, as attorney for Caroline Johns £61.

*(Kalgoorlie Miner, Western Australia – 28 July, 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 B. D. Johns does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

#### **Shell Green Cemetery, Turkey**

The eight month campaign in Gallipoli was fought by Commonwealth and French forces in an attempt to force Turkey out of the war, to relieve the deadlock of the Western Front in France and Belgium, and to open a supply route to Russia through the Dardanelles and the Black Sea.

The Allies landed on the peninsula on 25-26 April 1915; the 29th Division at Cape Helles in the south and the Australian and New Zealand Corps north of Gaba Tepe on the west coast, an area soon known as Anzac. On 6 August, further landings were made at Suvla, just north of Anzac, and the climax of the campaign came in early August when simultaneous assaults were launched on all three fronts.

Shell Green was captured, and passed, by the 8th Australian Infantry Battalion on the morning of 25 April, but it

remained close to the Turkish line throughout the campaign and was subject to frequent shelling.

The cemetery was used from May to December 1915, largely by the Australian Light Horse and the 9th and 11th Infantry Battalions. It was originally two cemeteries a short distance apart, but after the Armistice the two were combined and enlarged when graves were brought in from the battlefields and from the following 4 smaller cemeteries:-

ARTILLERY ROAD CEMETERY and ARTILLERY ROAD EAST CEMETERY, contained 21 Australian graves of April and May 1915. These were North-East from Shell Green, between the "Artillery Road," which led up from Shell Green to Brown's Dip, and the front-line trench near the Wheatfield.

WRIGHT'S GULLY CEMETERY, was South of Shell Green, near Chatham's Post. It contained the graves of eight men of the 5th Australian Light Horse who fell on 28 June 1915.

THE EIGHTH BATTERY CEMETERY, was half-way between Shell Green and Hell Spit, containing the graves of seven men of the 8th Battery, Australian Field Artillery.

In addition in March 1927, the graves of 20 sailors and soldiers who died in 1922 and 1923 were removed from Kelia Liman (Kilye Bay), near Maidos, and reburied here between the Artillery Road Plot and Row G of Plot II.

The cemetery now contains 409 First World War burials, 11 of them unidentified.

*(Information & photos from CWGC)*





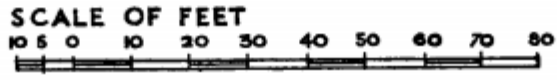
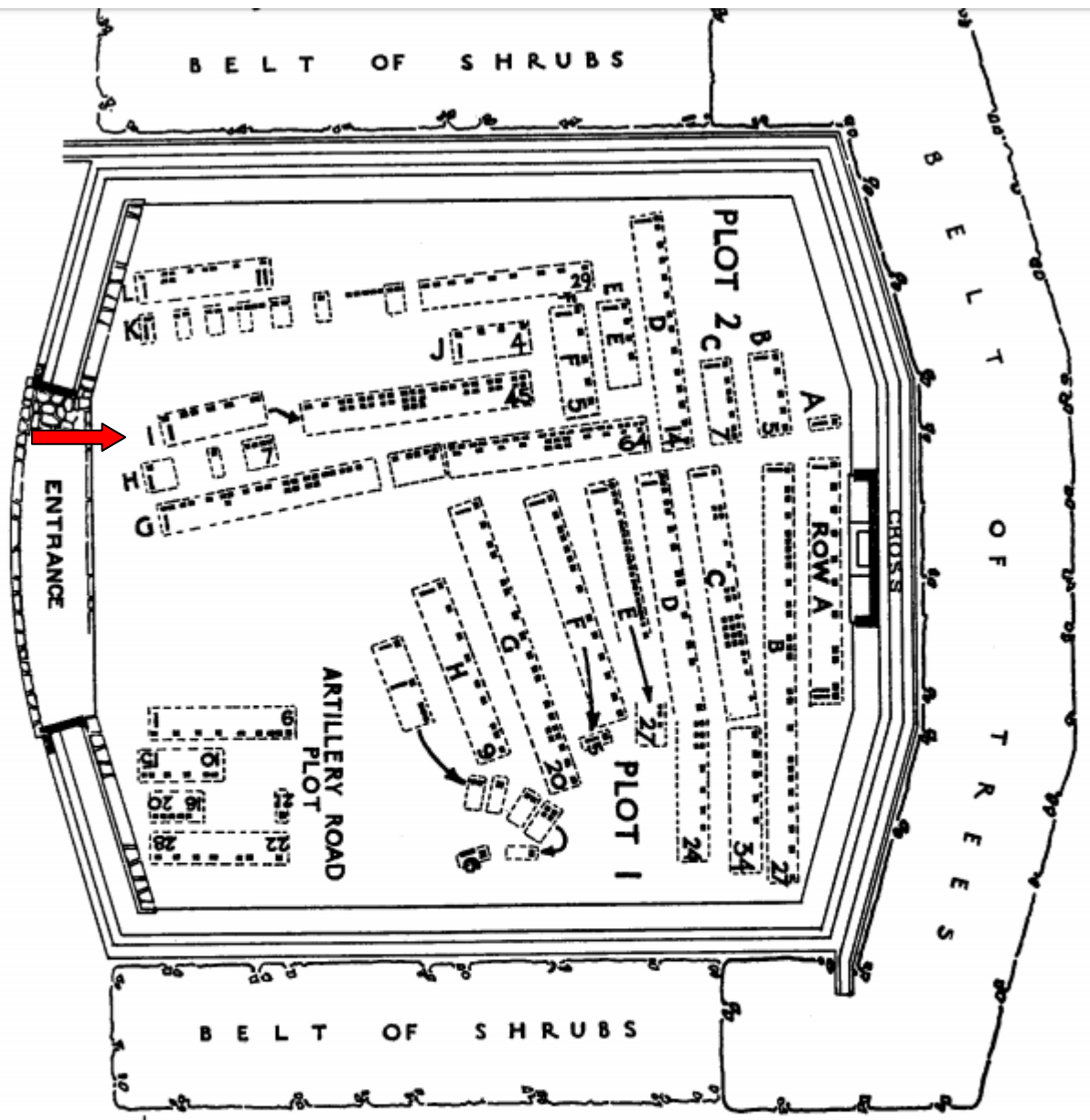


Photo of Private B. D. Johns' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Shell Green Cemetery, Turkey.



*(Photo courtesy of British War Graves)*





SHELL GREEN CEMETERY, ANZAC