

Stories from the Honour Boards

Stories of those who served and are remembered on the Honour Boards in the Merrington Anzac Memorial Peace Chapel at Saint Andrew's Uniting Church

Booklet Number 85

LEONARD HENRY ATHERDEN

1885 - 1959



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Please see a Guide if you would like a copy.



*Moreton Bay Pile Light (ca 1880)
Leonard's father was the lighthouse keeper*

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Corner Ann and Creek Streets
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Private Leonard Henry Atherden

Leonard Henry Atherden was born at Dover in the County of Kent, England on 29 May 1889, the youngest son of George Atherden and Ellen née Hulse. When only one year old he migrated on board the German steamship *Kaiser Wilhelm II* with his parents and older siblings Lizzie, Hilda and Willie to Australia. They settled in the Brisbane suburb of Taringa. George Atherden was appointed lighthouse keeper at the Pile Light.¹ Leonard attended Taringa State School and joined the Taringa Football Club.



Len Atherden is on the right in the front row. His brother Willie is seated on the ground in front on the right.

1. Moreton Bay Pile Light was a pile lighthouse positioned at the mouth of Brisbane River in Moreton Bay, marking the entrance to the port of Brisbane.

Sadly, Leonard's mother died at the end of the year 1901 when he was twelve years old. He enlisted for service in the naval cadets and obtained work as a chair fitter and later as a polisher. On 18 February 1914, Leonard Atherden married Clara Luke, the oldest daughter of Mr and Mrs D Luke who had also migrated from England. The wedding took place in the Wharf Street Congregational Church where the minister, Rev W H Lewis officiated. The couple took up residence at Killeen Street, Nundah and Leonard continued to be employed as a polisher.

On 24 August 1916 Leonard Henry Atherden enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force to serve overseas in the military forces of the Commonwealth of Australia in the Great War. On his attestation paper he gave his wife's name, Clara Atherden of Killeen Street, Nundah as next-of-kin and Baptist as his religious denomination. Then 27 years of age, Len was 5 feet 2½ inches (159 cm) tall and weighed 140 lbs (63.5 kg). Allotted regimental number 6282, he was attached to the 26th Battalion at Rifle Range Camp Enoggera on 29 November 1916.

With reinforcements for 26th Battalion Private Atherden embarked from Sydney on board HMAT *Demosthenes* on 22 December and disembarked at Plymouth, England on 3 March 1917. After training at Rolleston in Southern England, Len Atherden proceeded to Le Havre in France in early July. At that time the focus of the AIF's operations was in Belgium. There, the 26th battalion fought in the battle of Menin Road on 20 September, and participated in the capture of Broodseinde Ridge on 4 October. Len Atherden's service record shows he was granted a period of leave in England from Belgium in March 1918. In July and again in August he was occupied at the Australian Corps School in France probably for a course of instruction or for other duties.

He rejoined his unit in early September as the 26th Battalion was preparing for its part in the operation to breach the Beaurevoir Line. The capture of L'Ormisset Farm was achieved on 3 October 1918.

Suffering from broncho pneumonia in early November, Private Atherden was moved from hospital at Abbeville, France to Plymouth in England on 11 November, the day the Armistice was signed. He was discharged on 12 December and granted furlough with instruction to report to No 1 Depot at Sutton Veny on 27 December. He did not return however till 10 am on 4 January 1919, an AWL offence for which he forfeited 15 days' pay.

Private Atherden returned to Australia on the troopship *Delta*, embarking from Devonport on 25 January 1919. After medical examinations Leonard Henry Atherden's period of enlistment was terminated on 23 April 1919. He returned to his wife and his home at Killeen Street Nundah. Their daughter Jean Mary was born in 1920, son Roland Leonard in 1921 and son George Luke in 1923. Len continued his occupation as a polisher for the rest of his working life. The growing family moved to Collins Street Toombul in about 1927. Len died on 15 July 1959 at the age of 70. His widow Clara was 96 years old when she died on 5 October 1981.



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Lest we forget