

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 68

WILLIAM TEMPLE

1894 – 1917



PRIVATE W. TEMPLE,

Son of Mr. and Mrs. Temple,
Craigmore, Moorooka. Killed in action
in France, July 23.

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Please see a Guide if you would like a copy.

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Corner Ann and Creek Streets
Brisbane QLD 4000
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Go to <http://heritage.saintandrews.org.au/>
for an online copy of this booklet and more pictures.

Private William Temple

The 1891 census in Scotland records the names of a young couple living in Glasgow – William and Mary Temple. William, 24 years old, a Pawnbroker's Assistant had married Mary Hart Anderson aged 25 years and they lived at 154 Slatefield Street, Glasgow. By the census ten years later William was employed as a Boiler Maker and he and Mary had moved to 10 Muir Street, Springburn, Glasgow with their five children ranging in age from 9 years to 4 months. In the middle of the young family was their first son William, a scholar aged 6. William attended Wellfield Public School in Springburn, Glasgow. He joined the Wellfield Church Boy Scouts' Troop where he was a bugler and he passed an ambulance test. He became a Baker. When William was 17 years old, he left Scotland and with his mother, brothers and sisters immigrated to Australia. They came to live at Craigmore in Blackmore Street in the Brisbane suburb of Moorooka. Mrs Temple was admitted into the membership of Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Creek Street, Brisbane on 16 October 1917 by transfer from Wellfield United Free Church, Glasgow. On the same day her eldest daughter, Helen Erskine Temple was admitted to membership by profession of faith.



*The Wellfield Public School,
Glasgow*

On 5 January 1916 William Temple enlisted for service abroad in the Australian Military Forces. Then aged 21 years 5 months, William stood 5 feet 4½ inches (163.8 cm) tall and weighed 120 lbs (54.43kg). He had a fresh complexion, blue eyes and brown hair. He gave his religious denomination as “Protestant” and his mother, next-of-kin. Private Temple was assigned to the 3rd Pioneer Battalion with service number 914.

Pioneer battalions performed construction tasks in the forward area not requiring the special equipment of engineers, such as constructing trenches and dugouts although they occasionally acted in the engineer role on tasks such as the construction of bridges. They had a large proportion of tradesmen and were organised the same as infantry battalions. In a pinch they could and did serve as infantry in the front line. Pioneer Battalions were formed in 1916 and one Pioneer Battalion was attached to each Division. The 3rd Pioneer Battalion, made up of soldiers from Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia was formed in Victoria and assigned to Third Division. The unit embarked from Melbourne on board HMAT *Wandilla* on 6 June 1916. While in Capetown on the voyage to Plymouth, Private Temple was admonished for being absent without leave for a period of six hours. He forfeited a day’s pay.



*3rd Pioneer Battalion men
boarding the HMAT
Wandilla 1916*

After a short training period in the south of England the 3rd Pioneer Battalion proceeded overseas from Southampton to France. Private Temple attended a Signal School during the months of April and May 1917. His record notes another “crime” on 8 July 1917: “When on active service absent from his billet contrary to G.R.O.¹ 1599”. The “award” was severe. Two days’ Field Punishment Number 2 meant the prisoner was placed in fetters and handcuffs but was not attached to a fixed object as for Field Punishment Number 1. In both forms of field punishment, the soldier was also subjected to hard labour and loss of pay, in this case, ten shillings being forfeited. Yet another “crime” was recorded on this soldier’s card: “While on active service being in an Estaminet² during prohibited hours contrary to G.R.O. 1661”. This time the “award” for Private William Temple was forfeiture of one day’s pay, five shillings.

Private Temple was killed in action at Messines on 23 July 1917. The Battle of Messines was regarded as successful but the losses of life on both sides were horrific.

There were 26,000 British casualties, including 13,900 Anzac II soldiers. Messines is in Belgium near the French border.

William Temple was buried at the Bethleen Farm Military Cemetery, just south-east of Messines.



3rd Pioneer Battalion 3rd Division AIF

1. General Regimental Orders
2. Small café selling alcoholic drinks



*Bethleen Farm West
Cemetery*



*Noel Adsett laying a tribute from
Saint Andrew's Congregation in
Brisbane on the grave of Private
William Temple at Bethleen
Farm West Cemetery.
August 2015*

Of course, sadness on the home front followed the news of William's death. A friend in Melbourne, on reading in *The Herald* that Private W Temple had been killed in action expressed disbelief. She wrote to the Officer-in-charge, Base Records, "Having a friend of that name on active service with the men from that State, I am very anxious about him. Will you kindly send me the regimental number of the fallen soldier?"

On 20 April 1918, Mrs Temple received a parcel containing her son's personal effects: disc, diary, metal cigarette case, testament, folding scissors, wallet, photos, references and handkerchief.

From his home at Moorooka, William's brother Archie wrote a letter on behalf of his mother in June 1918, "We have been told by several men of the above company who have returned that my brother was recommended we have also got word through the Red Cross information Bureau my mother would be very glad to know if there is any truth in it." The official reply from the Officer-in-charge, Base Records, said, "... there is no record to date of your brother, the late No 914, Private W. Temple, 3rd Pioneer Battalion, having been awarded any decoration. Should this information come to hand, next-of-kin (mother) will be promptly notified."

Archie wrote again in January 1921, requesting "four more copies of the photo of the grave of the late No 914 Pte Wm Temple, 3rd Pioneer Battalion" and enclosing stamps to the value of one shilling.

At the base of the headstone in Belgium, honouring William Temple are these words,

"GREATER LOVE
HATH NO MAN THAN THIS
DEARLY LOVED. DEEPLY MOURNED"

References

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Compiled by Noel E Adsett, Brisbane, September 2015, February 2019



Lest we forget