

Remembering an ANZAC



This is a picture of George Redman Featherstone in army uniform this photograph was taken in England before he left for France.

GEORGE REDMAN FEATHERSTONE

10/8/1890-19/10/1917

LEST WE FORGET.



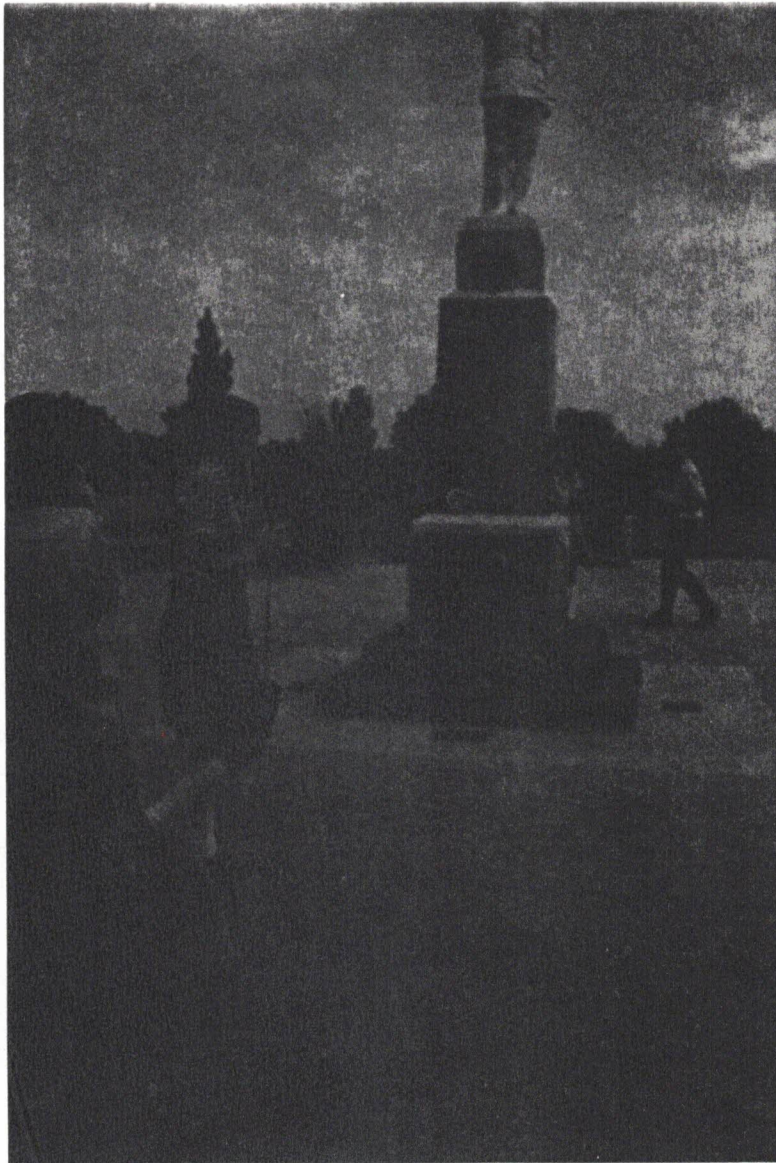
Mitcham War Memorial.

The Mitcham war memorial was erected to honour those who fought in the Great War and World War II.

This memorial I thought had more thought put into it because each individual had been researched to see if they received any awards.

It was also very detailed including information such as whether they were in the navy, army or if they were killed in camp.

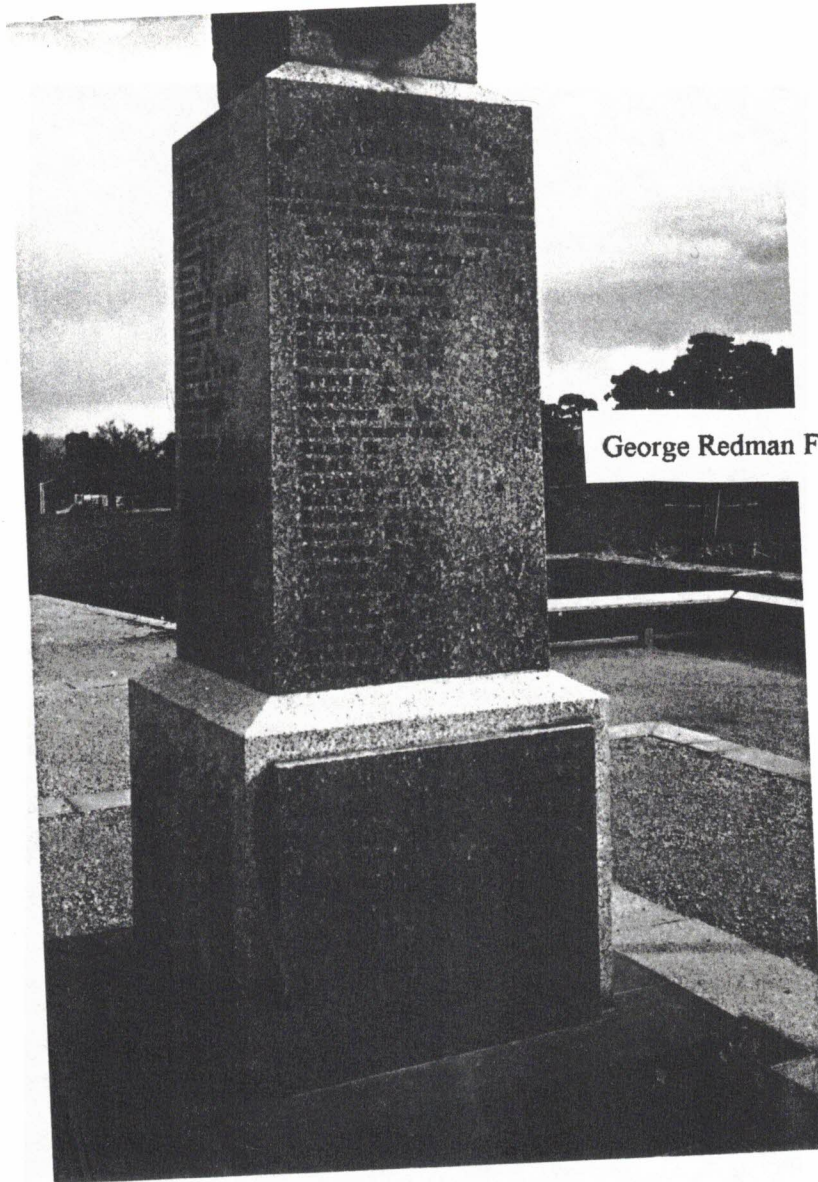
Like Box Hill, the Mitcham war memorial also has a soldier playing a bugle on the top.



This is a photograph of the Mitcham War Memorial.

Mitcham War Memorial.

The war memorial in Mitcham is where my Anzac George Redman Featherstone, name appears. This is just one way that he and many others are helped to be remembered for the service and sacrifice they gave.



George Redman Featherstone.

There is some doubt in my mind as to why he is on the Mitcham War memorial, because he moved from Mitcham to New South Wales. Therefore his name, I would think would be on a memorial in New South Wales rather than where his family lived. So George Redman Featherstone's name probably appears on a War Memorial in New South Wales.

Casualty Details

Rank : Private
Initials : G R
Surname : FEATHERSTONE
Forenames : GEORGE REDMAN
Unit Text : 24th Coy.
Regiment : Australian Machine Gun Corps
Secondary Unit Text :
Secondary Regiment : UNKNOWN
Service No : 440
Age : 27
Date of death : 19th October 1917
Grave Ref : XVI. D. 6.

Cemetery : BEDFORD HOUSE CEMETERY ENCLOSURE NO. 4.
Belgium

Additional Information

Son of William Frederick and Emily Elizabeth Featherstone, of "Redmayne," White Horse Rd., Mitcham, Victoria, Australia. Born at Hastings, Sussex, England.

Original register text:

FEATHERSTONE, Pte. George Redman, 440. 24th Coy. Australian Machine Gun Corps. Killed in action 19th Oct., 1917. Age 27. Son of William Frederick and Emily Elizabeth Featherstone, of "Redmayne," White Horse Rd., Mitcham, Victoria, Australia. Born at Hastings, Sussex, England. XVI. D. 6.

Cemetery Location Information:

Bedford House Cemetery is located 2.5 Km south of Ieper town centre. The cemetery lies on the Rijselseweg (N365), the road connecting Ieper to Armentieres. From Ieper town centre the Rijselsestraat runs from the market square, through the Lille Gate (Rijselpoort) and directly over the crossroads with the Ieper ring road. The road name then changes to the Rijselseweg. The cemetery itself is located 2 Km after this crossroads on the left hand side of the Rijselseweg.

This Casualty Detail sheet came from the
THE OFFICE OF AUSTRALIAN WAR GRAVES
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS
PO BOX 21
WODEN ACT 2606

This document shows that George Redman Featherstone's rank was Private and that he was in the 24th Machine Gun Corps, his Service Number was 440. And that he was 27 when he died on the 19th of October 1917. It also gives a small amount of information about where he was born, where he lived and a few details about his family. There is also quite a lot of information about what cemetery George Redman Featherstone is buried in, location etc. He is buried in the Bedford House Cemetery.



Australian Archives

National Office

World War I Personnel Records Service

The folios attached to this sheet have been copied from the following Commonwealth Records Series:

SERIES B2455

TITLE Personnel dossiers for 1st Australian
Imperial Forces ex-service members

Australian Archives National Office
World War I Personnel Records Service
PO Box 117
MITCHELL ACT 2911

ph: (06) 2093 428
fax: (06) 241 7711
e-mail: ww1prs@aa.gov.au

My next pieces of information come from the Australian Archives in the ACT. This service helped me to find out more about George Redman Featherstone and how he came to die in Belgium.



AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. 11 30741
440

Name FEATHERSTONE G. R.
Unit 1st B. Detach
Joined on 2/5/16

Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

1. What is your name? George Redman Featherstone
2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born? St Mary w Castle in or near the Town of Bassingb in the County of Sussex England
3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown.) Natural Born
4. What is your age? 25 1/2 years
5. What is your trade or calling? Chauffeur Chauffeur Mechanic
6. Are you, or have you been, an apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period, No
7. Are you married? No Single
8. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) Mother Mrs Emily Featherstone
"Redmayne"
White Horse Road
Mitcham, Victoria
9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? No
10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Incorrigible and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with Disgrace from the Navy? No
11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, The Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge No
12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? Yes
13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? No
14. Do you understand that no Separation Allowance will be issued in respect of your service beyond an amount which, together with Pay, would reach eight shillings per day? Yes
15. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against small-pox and enteric fever? Yes

These two pages are George's enlistment form. I think George Redman Featherstone's name is on the Mitcham war memorial because his mother is his next of kin and she lived in Mitcham so that is probably how they determine where their names go.

I, George Redman Featherstone do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

*And I further agree to allot not less than two-fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during my service for the support of my wife three-fifths wife and children

Date 23 5 16

George Redman Featherstone
G. R. Featherstone
Signature of person enlisted.

clause to be amended where necessary and should be struck out in the case of unmarried men or widowers without children under 18 years of age

CERTIFICATE OF ATTESTING OFFICER.

The foregoing questions were read to the person enlisted in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to by him.

I have examined his naturalization papers, and am of opinion that they are correct.

(This to be struck out except in the case of persons who are naturalized British Subjects).

Date 23. 5. 16

A. J. A. Bloomfield

Signature of Attesting Officer.

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY PERSON BEING ENLISTED.*

I, *George Redman Featherstone* swear that I will well and truly serve our Sovereign Lord the King in the Australian Imperial Force from *23 May 1916* until the end of the War, and a further period of four months thereafter unless sooner lawfully discharged, dismissed, or removed therefrom; and that I will resist His Majesty's enemies and cause His Majesty's peace to be kept and maintained; and that I will in all matters appertaining to my service, faithfully discharge my duty according to law.

SO HELP ME, GOD,

G. R. Featherstone
Signature of Person Enlisted.

Taken and subscribed at *Radson Rd. Manukiville* in the State of *New South Wales* this *23rd* day of *May* of *Year 1916* before me—

A. J. A. Bloomfield
Signature of Attesting Officer.

*A person enlisting who objects to take an oath may make an affirmation in accordance with the Third Schedule of the Act, and the above form must be amended accordingly. All amendments must be initialled by the Attesting Officer.

This is the Certificate of Medical Examination, it shows that George is considered fit for active service.

Description of on Enlistment.

Age 22 years 9 months
 Height 5 feet 7 1/4 inches
 Weight 131 lbs.
 Chest Measurement 34 35 1/2 inches
 Complexion fresh
 Eyes blue 6/6 6/6 (R)
 Hair Brown
 Religious Denomination P of C

DISTINCTIVE MARKS



CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

I have examined the above-named person, and find that he does not present any of the following conditions, viz.:-

Scrofula; phthisis; syphilis; impaired constitution; defective intelligence; defects of vision, voice, or hearing; hernia; hæmorrhoids; varicose veins, beyond a limited extent; marked varicocele with unusually pendent testicle; inveterate cutaneous disease; chronic ulcers; traces of corporal punishment, or evidence of having been marked with the letters D. or B.C.; contracted or deformed chest; abnormal curvature of spine; or any other disease or physical defect calculated to unfit him for the duties of a soldier.

He can see the required distance with either eye; his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his joints and limbs; and he declares he is not subject to fits of any description.

I consider him fit for active service.

Date 2/1/16

Place Sydney

Sgd. Stanley Booth
 Signature of Examining Medical Officer.

CERTIFICATE OF COMMANDING OFFICER.

I CERTIFY that this Attestation of the above-named person is correct, and that the required forms have been complied with. I accordingly approve, and appoint him to

Date

Place

Commanding

Military Forces of the Commonwealth

Medical History of

Pte
Surname Featherstone Christian Name George Redman

Examined on 2nd day of May 1916
 at Sydney
 Birthplace { Parish Hastings Sussex
 Country England
 Declared Age 25 9/12 years
 Trade or Occupation Chauffeur Mechanic
 Height 5 feet 2 1/4 inches
 Weight 131 lbs.
 Chest Measurements { Minimum 34 inches
 Maximum Expansion 35 1/2 inches
 Physical Development
 Small Pox Marks
 Vaccination Marks { Arm Right Left
 Number May '16
 When Vaccinated
 (a) Marks indicating congenital peculiarities or previous disease
Nole left side back
 (b) Slight defects but not sufficient to cause rejection—

Approved by—

L Stanley Booth
 (Rank) Capt. A.M.B.
 Medical Officer.

Examined for re-enlistment—

_____ day of _____ 19__

* Considered _____

(Signature) _____ Medical Officer.

* If unfit, state disability.

Re-vaccinated on _____ day of _____ 19__

Arm _____ Number _____

Result _____

(Signature) _____ Medical Officer.

Enlisted on 23rd day of May 1916, at Addison Rd Barrickville

On Enlistment joined	Corps.	Reg. Number.	Date.
Transferred to	<u>Cycle Coy</u>	<u>440</u>	<u>23/5/16</u>
		<u>830</u>	

Appeared Before a Medical Board.

Station.	Date.	Disease.	Result.
	<u>1917</u>		<u>EXAMINED FIT.</u>
	<u>OCT 1917</u>		<u>Billie Paul</u>
			<u>EXAMINED</u>

Casualty Form—Active Service.

Regiment or Corps *Actl. Batts. A.Sk. Coy. B.L.Ask. B.L.Ask. B.L.Ask.*

Rank..Private... Surname... F. E. A. T. H. E. R. S. T. O. N. Christian Name George. Redman.....

Religion..... Age on Enliment..... years..... months

Enlisted (a) 23.5.16..... Terms of Service (a) War & 4 Mos. Service reckons from (a) 23.5.16

Date of promotion to present rank..... Date of appointment to lance rank.....

Extended { } Re-engaged { } Qualification (b)

Occupation { } or Corps Trade and rate.....

Signature of Officer.....

These are copies of the armies record forms, I got most of my information telling me where George went during his time with the Australian Imperial Force from this document

Report		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, &c., during active service, as reported on Army Form B.213, Army Form A.36 or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents.
Date	From whom received				
6.11.16	O.C. Troops A.18	"Wiltshire" Embarked ...	Sydney	12.8.16	
13.10.16	No 3 Com. Depot	Marched in from Australia	England	12.10.16	E.R. 8230
8.11.16	-do-	Marched out to Cyc. Trg. Bn. Chiseldon	Wob1	8.11.16	E.R. 6796
8.11.16	Cyc. Trg. Bn.	Marched in from No 3 Com. Depot	Chiseldon	8.11.16	E.R. 936 D.O. 18 1331E
28.7.17	-do-	Transferred to 1st Bn. (1st Trg. Bn.)	England	26.6.17	L.R. 4923 D.O. 46 E
30.6.17	1st Trg. Bn.	Marched in from Cyc. Trg. Bn. Chiseldon	Durrington	26.6.17	L.R. 4961 D.O. 54E
21.7.17	-do-	Transferred to M.G.C. Dtls Grantham		-20.7.17	Auth. C.R.A. I.F. 17368 D.O. 60E L.R. 5939

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section D, Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered. (b) Signaller, Shoeing-Smiths, &c.

Once he joined up.....

George Redman Featherstone enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on the 2nd of May 1916 in Sydney. Here he underwent a medical examination. At this time he is 25 years old.

And on the 23rd of May George Redman enlisted at Addison Road Marrickville New South Wales. In May 1916 there were many French casualties at Verdun, therefore in Australia they may have had the need to boost up the amount of men enlisting. So in May there may have been enormous campaigns promoting war on the Western Front, and this may have indirectly encouraged George to enlist.

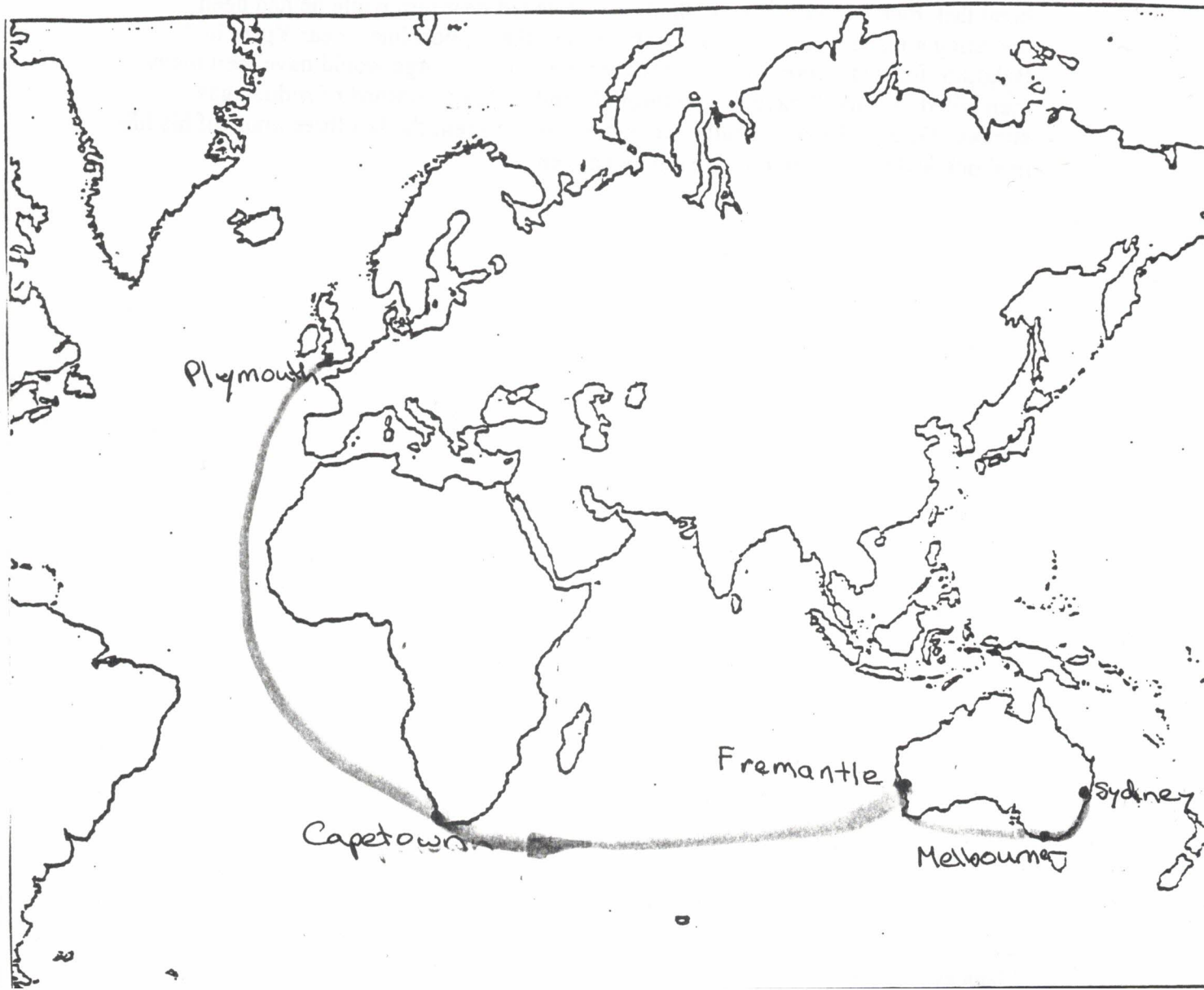
Throughout June and July George is at a basic training army camp in New South Wales.

On the 12th of August 1916 he leaves Australia from Sydney on the Troop Transport ship "Wiltshire". And makes the long voyage to England.

Two months later on the 12th of October 1916 George Redman disembarks at Plymouth in England.

The trips on the Troopships were extremely boring and uncomfortable. The two month trip was attempted to be made slightly more enjoyable by a daily exercise drill.

This map shows the route that George's troopship, the "Wiltshire", would have most likely taken.



On the 13th of October George Redman marched in to No 3 Command Depot, Woolwich.

8th of November 1916 Featherstone is transferred to 2nd Anzac Cyclist Corps at Chiseldon, England. Whilst in England he met up with his father and brother.

On the 26th of June 1917 George is transferred to 1st Battalion at Dunnington, England, attached to 1st training Battalion (to become an infantryman).

Just under a month later on the 20th of July 1917 George was transferred to Machine Gun Company Details (Reinforcements) at Grantham, England.

12th of October 1917 going overseas to France, at Folkestone. He arrives at Caniers, Machine Gun Company Base Depot.

Three days latter George Redman joins the 24th Machine Gun Company.

On the 17th of October he officially joins the 24th Machine Gun Company in Belgium, George is in the 4th Division.

Only two days later George arrives out near Ypres in Belgium. This is a very important place for the history of World War I, because there were three major battles fought in this area. George arrived to fight at what is known as "The Third Battle of Ypres" or "The Battle of the Mud". And it is his first time in the trenches so Sargent W.J. Fookes shows him around.

The same day George Redman Featherstone is killed in action, before breakfast, by a High Explosive Shell that exploded near him while he had been operating a machine gun. He had only been in the support lines, near Ypres in Belgium, for under three hours. In those three hours George would have seen many men killed, he would have waded through mud and been warned of sudden gas attacks. George Redman Featherstone would have spent the last three hours of his life in shock and being scared of what may happen.¹

¹ Information from Army Records.



This map shows where George went during his time with Cyclist Corp.

George Redman Featherstone.

When George Redman Featherstone enlisted he was 25. He had blue eyes and brown hair. He was 5 feet 2 and a quarter inches. And had a chest measurement (fully expanded) of 35 and a half inches, he was well built. George had a fair to medium, fresh complexion, and was clean shaven. His only distinctive mark was a mole on the left side of his back.

One man who knew George Redman Featherstone described him as delicate.

At the start of the Great War volunteers had to be a minimum height of 5 feet 4 inches. Although George's chest measurement is one and three quarters under so the minimum height probably changed so that the AIF would not need to keep turning down men, by 1916 the numbers of men joining would have been disintegrating.¹



This photograph, I was told, is of George Redman Featherstone (left) with his father, William Frederick in Naval Uniform. This photo was apparently taken when they met up in England before George went to France. Although Brian Featherstone told me that it was George's father I think it looks more like his brother to me. His brother was also in England and served in the Royal Navy during the First World War. Brian Featherstone was my main contact, he is the nephew of George Redman he supplied information on his uncle's personal life and also gave me many photographs. I was able to contact him because in George's personal files it shows some letters from Brian asking for some information on his uncle, therefore his details were in the files.

¹ Information from George's enlistment forms.

Ypres.

According to the book "Somewhere in France" The Third Battle of Ypres began on the 11th of April 1917. Although I have read else where that it started on the 3rd of July, 1917. The campaign was launched by General Haig, the British Commanding General. General Haig had three aims, one: to break through and "roll up the German line from the North" two: capture the Belgian port of Ostend, and three: to cut off all the Belgian railways supplying the Germans.

The Third Battle of Ypres is also known as 'the battle of the mud.'

In the first three weeks of what was known as the Ypres Offensive there were 80 000 casualties recorded, victims of bungling and mismanagement.

The British planned to have an artillery barrage, but it came too late so it proved to be of no use. The British sent their tanks in advance, but they turned out to be slower than the infantry, and not one of the tanks reached the barbed wire before the soldiers. Such ignorant mistakes were made throughout the battle, one tank even began to fire at Australian troops, mistaking them for Germans.

But what made this battle different to many of the other historic battles was that although Britain and France were still in trenches, the Germans had come up with a new way of defence. Because they had had ample time to prepare the Germans constructed concrete 'pill boxes' covered by machine guns and artillery. The aim of this was to have less men out in the front and more back in the support lines. The 'pill boxes' could only be captured by infantry attacks, because they were solid and there was only a small hole to aim for, - the holes were big enough for the Germans to see out of.

This photo is of members of the Australian battery hauling their gun forward as part of the advance near Hannebeek, in the Ypres section in Belgium on the 4th of October, 1917.



Despite the British mismanagement, the Australians did break through part of the Hindenburg line, named after one of the German generals, and managed to hold it for a time but it cost the Australians heavy casualties. Both sides suffered a terrible loss, with the 4th Brigade alone losing 2 339 of its 3 000 men.

In early May a second attempt to capture Bullecourt was made. Under immense artillery barrage the allies moved forward, but again it was a failure, the German defences were simply too great. There were 7 000 Australian casualties. But a few weeks after the attack the allies captured Bullecourt, after the Germans had abandoned it.

June came and the battle of Messines (south of Ypres) began. The Australians had two things in their favour, for the first time the Australian Divisions would be fighting side by side, and they would be commanded by General Plumer who left nothing to chance, every move was rehearsed. This was a welcome change and the higher morale no doubt contributed to the Australians achieving their objectives.

The Battle of Menin Road went down in history as "as one of the great successes". There were more large casualty figures, but eventually the Australians were successful with all objectives achieved.

Passchendaele is one of the more well known battles at Ypres, it cost many lives in an attempt to cut off German communications to Belgium before the coming winter.

This photograph is of a derelict Mark IV tank near Passchendaele in October 1917. Prolonged bombardments destroyed the local drainage system and turned the battlefield into a swamp.



8th October 1917, winter, it was sometimes said that the Germans could make it rain to order. Fighting came almost to a halt.

This is when George Redman Featherstone arrived, and died out in Ypres, he would have witnessed extremely bad conditions, because it was winter and with all the rain the battlefields and trenches had basically become swamps. And to add to the bad conditions due to the bad weather mustard gas was being used, so if men fell asleep on the bottom of the trench they would die because there would be gas just sitting on the bottom.

On October 27th, it was formally announced that American troops had fired their first shot in trench warfare, six months after the announcement that the U.S. had declared war on Germany.

By November the Ypres battlefields were completely covered in mud. The Canadians finally took over Passchendaele. But because of all the mud not one heavy gun could be brought forward, so the advance halted. Winter had set in.

The one thing that the troops hated even more than the abysmal weather and the enemy they called 'Fritz', Staff Officers. Not the divisional men, but the 'champagne sipping' staff at General Headquarters. They saw the biggest threat to their lives as being incompetent base officers, who knew nothing of their needs as fighting men. Moves were made to unify the five Australian Divisions, with Australian Divisions, with Australian commander Monash taking over command from Birdwood.

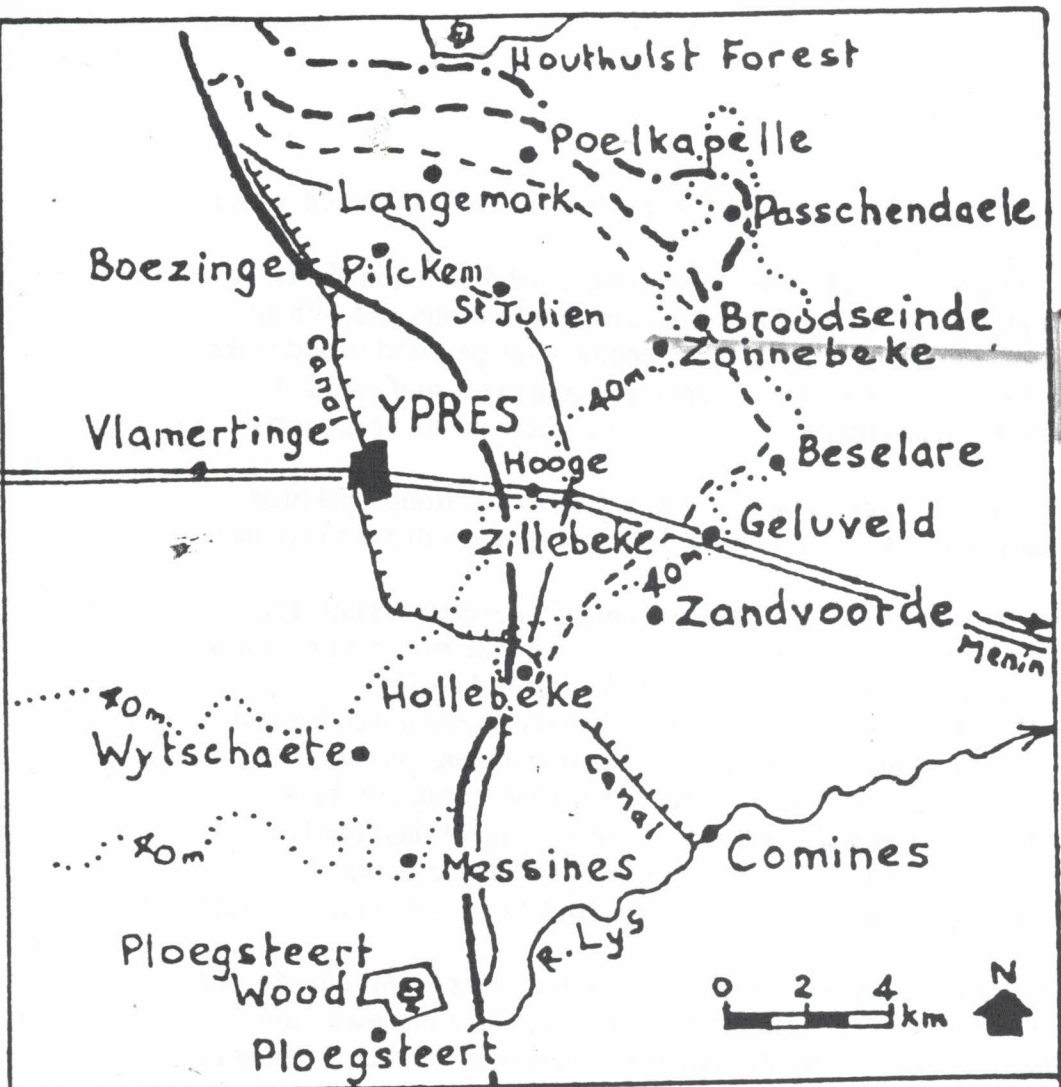
British General Haig demanded that the 1918 replacements for his already vast army total an extra 600 000 troops. The British Government, under pressure from Australia, was becoming reluctant to supply Haig with a seemingly endless number of willing young men who would be simply slaughtered. He didn't get them all.

The importance of the Three Battles of Ypres can be measured by just one of the many memorials today which records the names of 54 896 allied troops who died between 1914 and 1917 and have no grave.

British preliminary bombardments – number of shells fired at the Battle of Ypres: 4 300 000. The most out of all the battles on the Western Front.

There were 25 031 new guns made in Britain during the war. Total shells fired by British guns, 1914-1918: 170 385 295. There were 217000 German casualties, and 448614 (including 38093 Australians) British. And there was 130 square km of ground captured.¹

¹ By Allan M. Nixon. "Somewhere in France", Fitzroy 1989. Page 110. By Pat Farmer. "Western Front 1914-1918" Victoria, 1989. Pages 65-78. And By A.K. Macdougall. "ANZACS Australians at War". Chastwood, 1991. Pages 91-97.



George Redman Featherstone was killed here, at Zonnebeke, he was buried where he fell.

Third Battle of Ypres
Jly. - Nov. 1917.

- front line 30. Jly. 1917.
- front line 31. Jly. 1917;
(the battle of Pilckem Ridge).
- - - front line 4. Oct. 1917;
(the battle of Broodseinde).
- - - front line 9. Oct. 1917;
(the battle of Poelkapelle).
- . - . front line 10. Nov. 1917;
(the battle of Passchendaele).

George Redman Featherstone's death.

George Redman Featherstone was killed in action at the Ypres Salient on the 19th October in the morning, before breakfast.

Going by the information that I received from the Red Cross Wounded and Missing Files George was working a machine gun in the support lines at Ypres, he was in a dug out at the time, when a H.E. (High Explosive) shell exploded near him, killing him instantly. J.M. Gleason who was three feet away at the time said "*I saw casualty's body immediately afterwards. He was most severely wounded in the head, and chest, and he was buried just where he fell.*" He was buried there that day, some say at the back of the trench, and a cross with his name on it was put on his grave. Lieut Peut buried him, he was he Lieutenant.

The pages that follow are from the Red Cross Wounded and Missing Files. They are five accounts of George Redman Featherstone's death. Some of the information is different because I think that not everyone remembered the event. Also only one man says that he knew him, mainly I think because he had only been out in the support lines for under three hours.

If George Redman Featherstone hadn't have died so soon he would have witnessed severer shelling, heavy artillery fire including mustard gas shells.

I believe that there weren't very good ways of getting information to the family of the soldier that died at war. As in the case of George Redman Featherstone his mother, Emily Elizabeth Featherstone, had to write at least half a dozen letters requesting such things as death certificate, information on his death and her son's personal effects.¹

¹ Information from the Red Cross Wounded and Missing Files.

Havre.

1st. June. 1918.

24th. Australian M. G. C.

Featherstone, G. R. 440.

X. October 19/1917. Dets. D/B.

I saw him killed in the trench at Ypres on October 19th. by a shell he was in a dug out at the time & was blown out. We buried him the next day. He was about 5 feet 8, seemed rather delicate, fair, clean-shaven.

Inf:- Gunner. J. Green. 3395.
24th. Aust. M. G. C.
Australian Camp.
Bouillon.

CW9.

Havre

1st June 1918.

Aust. M.G.C. 24. Coy.

Featherstone G.R. No. 440.

X. 19th Octr 1917. Det D/B.

He was killed by a shell at Zonnebeks, near Passchendaele. I helped to bury him and put a cross on his grave with his name on it. He was buried at the back of the trench almost opposite a French cemetery on the opposite side of the road. I do not know anything about him in civil life, and did not know him when he was with us.

Inf:- Driver H.V.O. Harriner No. 418.
Aust. M.G.C. 24. Coy.
No. 14 Conv. Depot.
Trouville.

HJB.

8th Mac. Tunn Coy.

FEATHERSTONE, G.R.
L/Cpl. No. 440

19. Oct. 1917.

"I knew Casualty. He was a man about 5' 9", well built, medium complexion about 24 years of age. Casualty was working a machine gun in support lines, Ypres. An H.E. shell exploded near Casualty, killing him instantly. I was 3 yards away at the time the shell exploded, and I saw Casualty's body immediately afterwards. He was most severely wounded in the head, and chest, and he was buried just where he fell, and I saw his grave."

Informant:- J.M. Gleason
No. 433

Private address
Lystic Park,
Victoria.

2.5.19.

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU-MELBOURNE.

A.M.G.C. 24.

FEATHERSTONE, G.R. 440.

K. Oct 19th 1917. Dets D/B.

Featherstone only joined us at Chateau Belle on 17th Oct. I took him up to the front line and he hadn't been up there three hours when he was blown up - killed right out by a shell in the morning, before breakfast. Lieut Pent, the O.C. buried him, just away from the position, and I think a cross was put up.

Inf: Sgt W.J. Fookes. 461A.
No. 32 Stat Hosp.
BOULOGNE. 25.2.18.

JT

M

A.I.F.
24th. M.G.Coy.,
1ste 1st. Aus. Cyc. Btn.,

FEATHERSTONE, 440,
(Feteleerstone)
George Redman.

"Killed in Action 19.10.17".

No trace Germany.

Cert. by Capt. Mills. 10.10.19.

London.
22.10.19.

M.

In October of 1919 they are still unsure of exactly what happened to George Featherstone. This sheet shows that someone is checking to find out if he is in Germany, either as a POW (Prisoner Of War) or perhaps only in a German cemetery. It says "No trace Germany" which simply means that they could find no trace of him in Germany.

- (a) SERRE ROAD CEMETERY, HEBUTERNE, 6 1/2 miles N. of Albert.
 (b) BELVILLE WOOD CEMETERY, LONGUEVAL, 5 1/2 miles S. S.W. of Bapaume.
 (c) BEDFORD HOUSE CEMETERY ENCLOSURE NO. 4. ZILLEBEKE, 1 mile S. of Ypres.

GRAVES REGISTRATION UNITS.

EXHUMATIONS.

13/Bn (a) 5075

DAVIDSON Pte B. 22.8.16
 (Report Hebuterne 7.213/E)
 Plot 8. Row D. Grave 22.

9/Bn (b) 2571

DENKEL L/Cpl D.V. 23.7.16
 (Report Longueval 188.594/E)
 Plot 14. Row R. Grave 1.

A.I.F. (a)

DICKSON (N.T.) Insufficient Particulars.
 (Report Hebuterne 7.208/E)
 Plot 7. Row D. Grave 9.

7/Bn (b) 702

ELY L/Sgt. E.H. 18.8.16
 (Report Longueval 188.577/E)
 Plot 16. Row G. Grave 6.

24/M. G. C. (c) .440

FEATHERSTONE Pte G.R. 19.10.17
 (Report Zillebeke 64.340/E)
 Plot 16. Row D. Grave 6.

A. Coy. 2700

52/Bn (a)

GUNN Pte G.F. 3/4.9.16.
 (Report Hebuterne 7.219/E)
 Plot 8. Row F. Grave 27.

ORIGINAL IN FILE OF Pte. B. DAVIDSON, 13/Bn.

It says that George Redman Featherstone was buried right where he fell, but he is now buried at Bedford House Cemetery. This document shows that he was exhumed.

Remembering George Redman Featherstone.....

Emily Featherstone (mother) received George Redman Featherstone's effects on the 30th of September 1918. She received his wallet, disc (the disc was most likely a metal medallion that hung around his neck and had details such as his service number), notebook, photos, unit colours, drivers licence and a letter. These things were everything that was found on him or in his bag.

George Redman Featherstone is also remembered because his name is on the Mitcham War Memorial.

Emily Featherstone also received the war medals that George would have received had he have lived. The photograph below are the medals George was awarded. Left is the General Service Medal 1914/1918, the medal on the right is the Victory Medal 1914/1918.

On the page that follows is a copy of a Memorial Scroll that was issued to the men who died in the Great War. What it means is that they left their country and family, "all that was dear to them", to go fight a war so that others might live in freedom, and that his name should not be forgotten, he should be remembered for what he sacrificed.





HE whom this scroll commemorates was numbered among those who, at the call of King and Country, left all that was dear to them, endured hardness, faced danger, and finally passed out of the sight of men by the path of duty and self-sacrifice, giving up their own lives that others might live in freedom. Let those who come after see to it that his name be not forgotten.

George Redman Featherstone
Private 440
25th Coy

RECEIPT FOR MEMORIAL PLAQUE.

I hereby acknowledge having received Memorial Plaque No. No. 336808

Signature [Handwritten Signature]

Date _____

Witness _____

D.2034/1.22.—C.1034.—5M.

When both these forms are used

RECEIPT SLIP FOR MEMORIAL SCROLL.

Received from the Officer i/c Base Records, Department of Defence, one Memorial Scroll and King's Message, in connexion with the late No. 440, Private, G.R. Featherstone,

24th Machine Gun Coy.

(Signature) Emily G. Featherstone

(Date) August - 1st 1921

This slip to be returned to the Officer in Charge, Base Records, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, Victoria, within seven (7) days.

D.1076/7.21.—C.10262.

2 Hangerong Rd, Rose Hill, Vic

RECEIPT FOR VICTORY MEDAL.

Received from the Officer i/c Base Records, Army Headquarters, one Victory Medal in connexion with the late

No. 440, Pte. G.R. FEATHERSTONE,

24th Machine Gun Coy.

DECEASED SECTION

Signature G. G. Featherstone

MAR 29 1923

Date March 26th 1923

This slip to be returned to the Officer in Charge, Base Records, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, Victoria, within seven (7) days.

D.2040/4.22.—C.5123.

(19 Court St - Rose Hill)

These three receipts are to show that Emily Featherstone, mother, received the Memorial Plaque, (following page) the Memorial Scroll (previous page), and the Victory Medal 1914/1918. The General Service Medal, or more commonly referred to as the British War Medal 1914/1918 has no receipt.

Australian Imperial Force.

KIT STORE.



110 GREYHOUND ROAD,
HAMMERSMITH, LONDON,
W. 6.

TELEPHONES-- HAMMERSMITH 1900, 1901.
TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS-- "AIFKITS."

Inventory of Effects of- 440 Featherstone G.R. 24th Gns. Gun Coy. A.I.F.

Forwarded to- *Leona*
Mother.

Mrs. E. Featherstone,
Redmayne,
White Horse Road,
St Albans,
VICTORIA.

Effects.

Ex 3rd Echelon France (11379) 1.8.18.

Wallet, Disc, notebook, Photos, Unit colors, Driver's license
Letter.

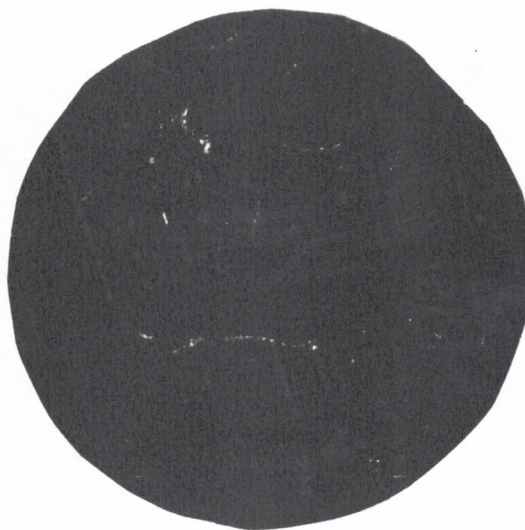
These are a list sent home to Emily Elizabeth Featherstone stating everything that she was going to receive, - all these things were found to belong to her son George Redman.

30491

D/S.

No. of Package

Checked by



This is a photograph of a Memorial Plaque just like George's mother would have received, - this is not the actual one that Emily Elizabeth Featherstone received. The Memorial Scroll and Plaque were both received up to five years after the war had ended.

Bedford House Cemetery, Zillebeke, Belgium.

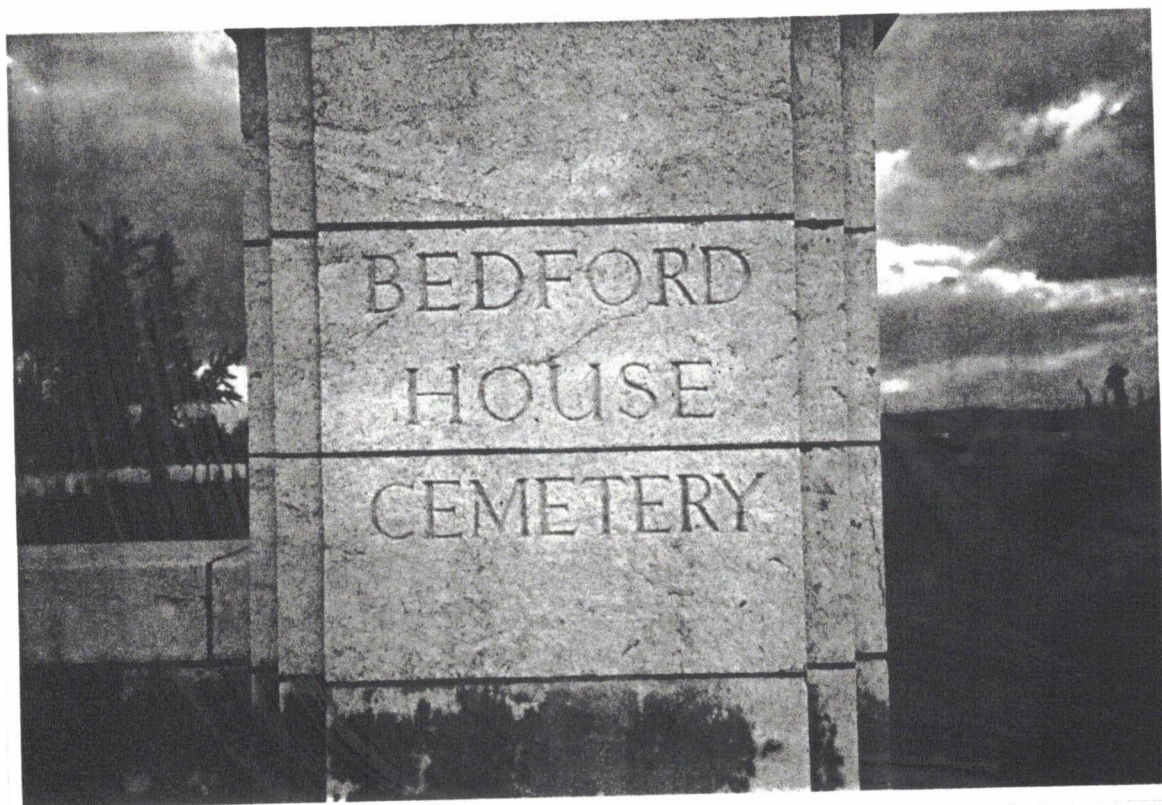
George Redman Featherstone is buried at the Bedford House Cemetery, sometimes known as Woodcote House in Belgium. His grave is in a plot at the far end of the cemetery; George's grave is third from the right in the front row.

The cemetery is about 1.5 miles south of the Ypres Salient, where George died. There used to be several enclosures, which were originally separate cemeteries, but now they have joined to make just the one cemetery. A water-filled moat separates some of the plots. The moat is North acting like a fence, and on the other sides a rubble wall surrounds the cemetery. A bridge was also erected over the moat by the Royal Engineers during the war and is still used today by gardeners and visitors. And charcoal pits were started in October, 1917. Shellfire caused damage to the bridge that is still visible.

Bedford House was the name given by the British Army to Chateau Rosendal, which was used by field ambulances and as Brigade HQ. The Chateau had hardly been touched by gunfire until January 1917 when it was severely shelled. The ruins can still be seen today in the cemetery. It never fell into enemy hands, but the house and trees were gradually destroyed by shell fire.

Bedford House was use throughout the Great War, but when peace was being discussed they brought in more soldiers to be buried, from the surrounding ares, so they had to make the cemetery larger.

The cemetery's records say that in the Bedford House Cemetery there are 3980 U.K., 328 Canadian, 194 Australian (one of which is George Redman Featherstone), 29 New Zealand, 18 South African, 19 Indian, 6 British West Indian, 2 German burials, and 27 memorials for the soldiers that they think may be buried in the cemetery. There are also 70 graves of British soldiers who died in the fighting in the area between 24-26 May 1940.



This is George Redman Featherstone's grave.
Inscribed on the bottom of his headstone says "I know that my redeemer liveth."
Which means that because he believes in God he will go to heaven. The inscription
on the bottom was always supplied by the next of kin and in George's case it was his
mother, Emily Featherstone, this shows that his mother has a strong Christian faith.





This photograph is looking back from George's grave to where the cross of sacrifice is situated.

Enclosure number 4 is where George Redman Featherstone is buried. It is the largest enclosure in the cemetery. The enclosure was used from June 1916 to February 1918. Bedford House Cemetery was used largely by the 47th (London) Division; and after the Armistice (stop the fighting in order to discuss peace) it was enlarged by 3,324 graves from other burial grounds and from the battlefields of the Ypres Salient.

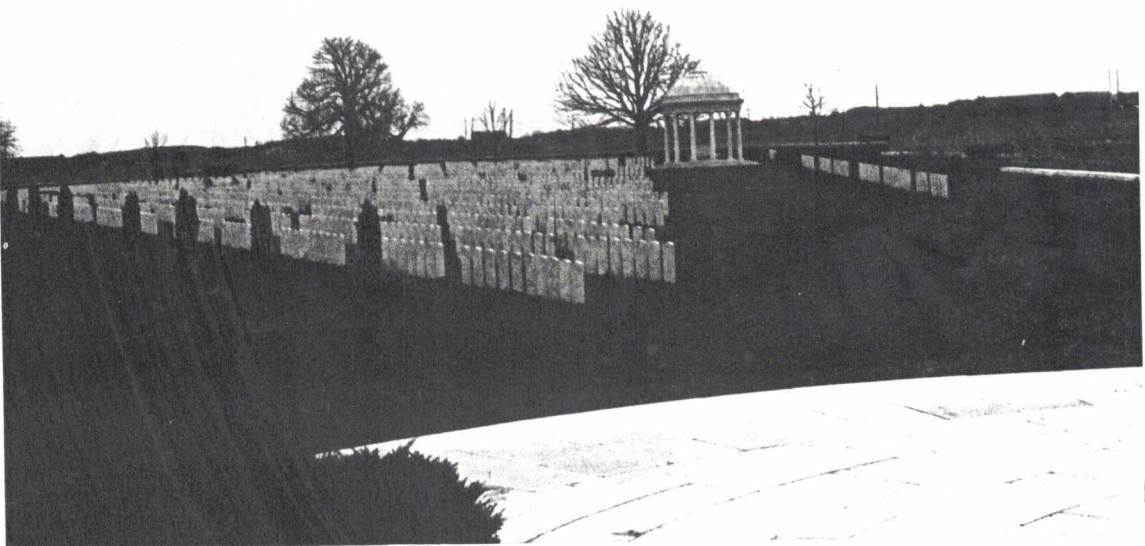
Although George Redman Featherstone was originally buried at the back of a trench in the support lines at Ypres, he was probably reburied after the Armistice along with the thousands of other men.

This is a photograph looking at Bedford House Cemetery from a different angle.

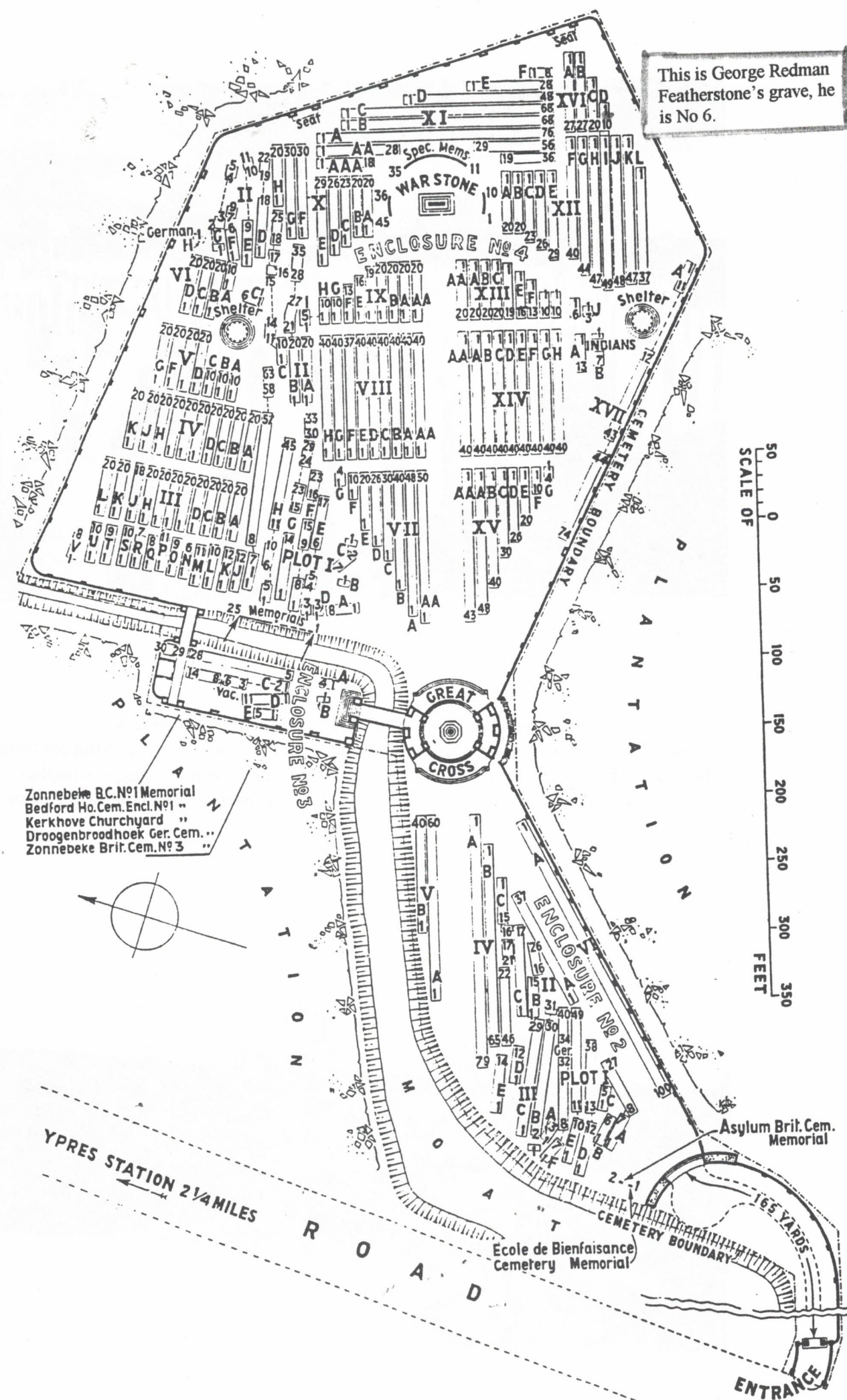




This is a photograph of the Bedford House Cemetery.
These two photographs were taken by different people, obviously at different times of the year. The photo above I received from Brian Featherstone (George's nephew) and the photograph below was sent to me from Mr Foster Summerson in Belgium.



This is George Redman Featherstone's grave, he is No 6.



Zonnebeke B.C. No 1 Memorial
 Bedford Ho. Cem. Encl. No 1
 Kerkhove Churchyard
 Droogenbroodhoek Ger. Cem.
 Zonnebeke Brit. Cem. No 3

Asylum Brit. Cem. Memorial

Ecole de Bienfaisance Cemetery Memorial

YPRES STATION 2 1/4 MILES

ENTRANCE

George Redman Featherstone's life before he joined the Australian Army.

George Redman Featherstone was born at Southwick, (Brian Featherstone told me he was born there although his enlistment form says he was born in Hastings) Sussex, England, on the 10th of August 1890. George was the eldest of five children. He had two brothers, Clarence and Edward, and two sisters, Edith and Freda. He was the son of William Frederick and Emily Elizabeth Featherstone.

From what Brian Featherstone (the nephew of George) told me he thinks that George Redman came out to Australia on his own some time prior to 1913. His mother, Emily, and his two sisters and one brother came out to Australia in 1913. His other brother remained in England with his father. George's brother was in the Royal Navy during the First World War and finally came out to Australia in 1924.

George lived at Redmayne, along White Horse Road, in Mitcham, Victoria, with his mother. But apparently he went to New South Wales where he was employed as a chauffeur/mechanic.

He was a member of the Church of England.¹



This photograph is of George Redman Featherstone with his brothers and sisters. He is the dark haired one at the rear of the group. From left to right the others are – Freda, Clarence, Edward and Edith.

¹ Information regarding George Redman's life before he joined the army is from Brian Featherstone, George's nephew.



This is a map showing all the cemeteries around Ypres (now called Ieper). Bedford House Cemetery is No.57. As you can see there is an obscene amount of large cemeteries in the area.

In Conclusion:

I think that although George Redman Featherstone died just under three hours of being at the support lines at Ypres he still would have witnessed many terrible things. George was killed before breakfast, and because this was an extremely common time of attacks (sunrise and sunset) he may have witness an attack just before he was hit. George Redman also arrived at the Western Front as winter was approaching, so again he would have witnessed the famous Ypres mud just starting to take hold.

George's mother Emily Featherstone moved from "Redmayne" White Horse Road Mitcham to 19 Court Street Box Hill, I have no reference as to whether the rest of her family moved with her.

In the Great War there were 60,454 men killed therefore this had to have and enormous impact on Australia. I think a major aspect of Australian life that would have been forced to change, is the way women were treated. Because during the war women were needed in the workplace so they were given the chance to prove that women were just as capable to do "man's jobs" as the men. I think when the men came back to Australia they would have got a terrible fright to find their wives, daughters, sisters and mothers in the workplace, and surviving.

There would have been an enormous change in life style because the men who returned were no longer physically or mentally fit.

For as long a period as five years George's next of kin, his mother, continued to receive information and awards regarding her son's death and service. And there are many copies of letters of her asking for things such as her son's personal effects and asking when he died because she had previously received incorrect information. I think that although it is important to provide the families of the soldiers that died with information etc. they should not make it a drawn out process, this would make the loss for the families more painful. Although it seems that they did a good job to supply Emily Elizabeth Featherstone with information and things to remember her son by, considering there were so many families all just as desperate as each other to find out how there son, husband or brother died.

I feel this assignment has been very beneficial towards learning more about the Great War. I now have a better understanding of what experiences soldiers would have gone through, how their families were involved after their death, and how they reacted to losing a son. I also now feel like I understand the impact of war more, even just from finding out the casualty figures.

At the start of this assignment I listed many of the reasons as to why so many young and not so young men signed up, I think it is important to realise that not so many men would sign up if there were to be another war. One reason for this is because people aren't as naive when it comes to war as the men that signed up for the Great War were. The reason for men signing if there was another was it would be for different reasons. For example, people would no longer feel that it was their patriotic duty to go and fight and they wouldn't feel pressured by what newspapers said.

In conclusion I feel that the Great War was a terrible loss of life and spirit, and an even more of a loss because no nation learnt from the horrible experience, because in a way they repeated history with the Second World War.

After completing this project I believe that I now have a much greater appreciation of the enormous sense of responsibility (they probably called it duty) that motivated all the men to enlist in the Great War. There is little doubt that the call to serve for "God King and Country" was a very powerful feeling to them. It is something that my generation I think finds hard to comprehend – why would people volunteer when the risk of being killed was so great? Maybe people lived much simpler lives then, and had a lot emphasis on rights. If war broke out today, I believe that not as many men would volunteer, or if as many did volunteer it would be for very different reasons. The only reason that I believe would still be around is the pressure from our society to join up. Perhaps this would be even stronger today because it seems to me that men are often avoiding looking scared in front of their friends and family. These days people are more educated about what happened in previous wars than what they were at the start of the century so I am fairly confident that no-one would feel like it was an adventure and that they could see the world. I think if war was to break out and involve Australia again, then the government would probably result to giving men money if they joined up for service. Although they did this in the Great War so in order to interest people in joining up they would probably have to offer more than ever before. Otherwise people are more likely to think that they should just continue on with their normal lives, that way they don't need to leave home and they don't need to risk getting killed. I think this because Australia's army already offers "free education and a guaranteed job" if you join the army for an allocated number of years therefore the idea is already there. Because many people today believe that Australia should become a republic and not have anything to do with Britain I am sure that there would be next to no people feeling like they should enlist because of the queen. In fact I think patriotic duty no longer exists in Australia, therefore it wouldn't matter how much Britain needed help I don't think any people would feel like it was their duty and responsibility to leave their homes. Also many people would feel like it wasn't their responsibility if the war wasn't in Australia therefore they wouldn't leave their home and go fight a war overseas.

However I do believe that we need to remember the sacrifices of the men like George Redman Featherstone and remember that many of the rights that we enjoy today are the result of the strong sense of responsibility that motivated so many people of past generations of Australians.