

Cheltenham Cemetery
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire
War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



53 PRIVATE

W. R. JERROM

AUST. MACHINE GUN CORPS

24TH APRIL, 1918

William Robert JERROM

William Robert Jerrom was born at Narrandera, NSW around 1890. (A birth was registered for a William Jerrom in 1887 in Sydney, NSW with mother's name of Kate – no father listed.)

According to a newspaper report in the *Narrandera Argus and Riverina Advertiser*, NSW on 3rd May, 1918, William Jerrom was adopted around the age of 7 years by his Uncle – George Jerrom

The 1913 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Murrumbidgee – Narrandera Polling Place, NSW recorded William Jerrom, Draper, of East Street. His adopted parents George Jerrom, Storekeeper & Alice Jerrom, domestic duties were recorded at Audley Street.

William Robert Jerrom was a 26 year old, single, Mercer from Audley Street, Narrandera, NSW when he enlisted at R.A.Ss. Grounds, Sydney, NSW on 20th March, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 53 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr George Jerrom, of East Street, Narrandera, NSW.

Private William Robert Jerrom was posted to 9th Brigade on 20th March, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to Machine Gun Company on 28th April, 1916.

Private William Robert Jerrom embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Benalla (A24)* on 1st May, 1916 with the 9th Machine Gun Company & disembarked in England on 10th July, 1916.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire & also in Dorset.

Private William Robert Jerrom proceeded overseas to France from England on 21st November, 1916. He disembarked at Havre, France on 22nd November, 1916.

Private William Robert Jerrom was sent sick to Hospital in France on 3rd January, 1917. He was admitted to 9th Australian Field Ambulance on 3rd January, 1917 with Mumps. Private Jerrom was transferred & admitted to 7th General Hospital at St. Omer, France on 3rd January, 1917. He was discharged to Base Details on 23rd January, 1917 & rejoined his Unit in the Field from Hospital the same day.

Private William Robert Jerrom was wounded in action on 2nd June, 1917. He was admitted to 9th Australian Field Ambulance on 2nd June, 1917 with GSW (gunshot wound/s) to leg. Private Jerrom was transferred & admitted to 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station on 2nd June, 1917. He was transferred to Ambulance Train on 3rd June, 1917 & admitted to No. 2 Australian General Hospital in France on 4th June, 1917 with GSW to right leg. Private Jerrom was transferred to England on Hospital Ship *Jan Breydel* on 7th June, 1917 from Boulogne with GSW to right leg & fractured right Fibula.

Mr G. Jerrom, East Street, Narrandera, NSW was advised on 14th June, 1917 that Private William Jerrom had been wounded.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private William Robert Jerrom contains a request by Pte W. A. Cochrane, 2049, 35th Battalion, A.I.F., to the Red Cross to locate the whereabouts of "his chum" Private Jerrom. The Red Cross located Pte W. R. Jerrom & advised Pte Cochrane that Private Jerrom was in the Military Hospital, Colchester suffering from a bullet wound of the leg. The Hospital Index recorded Private Jerrom had been admitted to Colchester Military Hospital on 7th June, 1917 with a bullet wound to leg. The Matron added that Pte Jerrom had a "*fractured leg and wound healed. Left Ardleigh Essex V.A.D. for Westham Camp Hut 42 Weymouth.*"

Private William Robert Jerrom was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot in England from Hudleigh on 26th July, 1917. The Hospital Admissions form records "*Bullet entered back of rt leg above ankle; fibula fractured. Now complains of weakness of leg. B1A II.*" (B1 A II or B1 A2 – unfit for service for 2 or 3 weeks).

Private William Robert Jerrom was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs from No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, Dorset on 6th October, 1917 & medically classified as B1 A2.

Private William Robert Jerrom was reclassified as B1 A4 (Medically fit – awaiting Dental completion) on 17th October, 1917 while at Perham Downs.

Private William Robert Jerrom was marched out to Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deverill, Wiltshire on 14th November, 1917 after being passed as dentally fit.

Private William Robert Jerrom proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 30th November, 1917 from Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deverill, Wiltshire.

Private William Robert Jerrom was marched in to M.G.C.B.D. (Machine Gun Company Base Depot) at Camiers France on 29th November, 1917 (Date as recorded on Casualty Form – Active Service). He was marched out to 9th Machine Gun Company from Camiers on 6th December, 1917 & rejoined his Unit in the Field on 8th December, 1917.

Private William Robert Jerrom was wounded in action (2nd occasion) - Gassed on 17th April, 1918. He was admitted to 11th Stationary Hospital at Rouen, France on 19th April, 1918 with gas poisoning. Private Jerrom was invalided to England on Hospital Ship *Grantully Castle* on 21st April, 1918.

Private William Robert Jerrom died at 11 pm on 24th April, 1918 at Cheltenham Area War Hospital, England from wounds – Gassed.

A death for William R. Jerrom, aged 29, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England.

Private William Robert Jerrom was buried at 4 pm on 29th April, 1918 in Cheltenham Cemetery, Gloucestershire, England – Plot number M. 9224 (Section M – Soldiers Plot) and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private William Robert Jerrom - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military Funeral. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack Flag, and surmounted by several beautiful wreaths which were sent by the deceased's father and mother, Australian Red Cross Society, and the St. John's V.A.D. Hospital Staff. Firing Party, Bugler were supplied by the Gloucester Volunteer Regt., pallbearers were supplied by the St. John's Ambulance detachment. Prior to the interment a service was held in the Roman Catholic Church of St. Gregory's Priory by the Rev. Father T. O'Shaughnessy. About 50 patients in the St. John's Hospital and about 20 members of the St. John's Ambulance followed the remains to the Cemetery. The grave will be turfed and an oak cross erected by the A.I.F. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private William Robert Jerrom contains three reports from Informants regarding his wounding – gassing in April, 1918:

- L/Corporal E. J. Earl, 1543, 3rd Machine Gun Battalion, 9th Company: *"Informant described Jerrom as about 5 feet 5 or 6 inches high, slight build, fair complexion, aged about 25. Informant states that they both belonged to 9th Company. On 17/4/18 the Company was in the line at Villers Bretonneux. A gas shell barrage was in progress from the enemy side and Jerrom and Informant were both gassed. Informant did not see Jerrom gassed, but saw him the same night when they were going up together to the Regiment Aid Post. Jerrom did not appear to be in a bad way, although Informant had no opportunity of speaking to him. They lost sight of each other at the Regiment Aid Post and Informant was surprised to learn later the Jerrom had died. Informant added that he knew him well and that he was well thought of by his mates."*
- L/Corporal W. T. Saunders, 515, 9th Machine Gun Company: *"Informant described Jerrom as about 5ft 6" high, medium build, very fair, aged 24. Informant states that they both belonged to 9th Machine Gun Company and on the same gun. on 17-4-18 the Company was in action near Villers Bretonneux. Jerrom was on the gun with Informant when a gas shell dropped alongside, with the result that both of them were gassed. They were not able to speak to each other. Jerrom was taken away before Informant, and it is believed that he was taken to England and died there. According to Informant Jerrom was a chap well thought of by his mates."*

- Private G. W. Howland, 1893, 9th Company: *"Informant described Jerrom as about 5' 7" high, rather broad build, very fair hair, aged 24, came from the country and worked in his father's store. Informant states that they both belonged to 9th Company. On 17/4/18 the Battalion was holding the line in the village of Villers Bretonneux. About 6 am a gas shell bombardment commenced. Jerrom went out into the street with Informant about 11 am. and both of them were gassed. Afterwards Jerrom spoke to Informant and did not seem too bad, but later on got worse. He was taken away before Informant, who never saw him again, but heard late that he had died. Both men had their masks on at the time they were gassed. According to Informant Jerrom was a fine fellow and well thought of by his mates.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private William Robert Jerrom also contains a letter from the Commandant, St. John Hospital, Gloucester Road, Cheltenham, England regarding Private Jerrom's death & funeral and reads: *"R Pte Jerrom 9th M.G.C., A.I.F. He was admitted to this hospital on April 22nd suffering severely from Gas Poisoning. From the first it was realised that he was extremely ill, and he was scarcely conscious enough to talk coherently. The Matron sent for the Priest and he came and ministered to Pte Jerrom and he was conscious enough to realize that his Priest was there, and he said he was glad to have him. Everything possible was done, but they could not save him. He died on April 24th, 1918. I wrote to his Mother and Fiancée, both before and after the Funeral, but I know the letter may never have reached them, and it is no trouble to tell you all I can. The Australian Government sent a special Representative from London to attend the Funeral, and we tried to do all we could to show honour to one of our splendid Colonial Soldiers.*

Members of the St. John Ambulance Brigade paraded in Uniform, and voluntarily acted as Bearers and Guards of Honour and they told me afterwards they regarded it as a privilege to do this. A large number of the patients also formed a Guard of Honour and the local volunteers sent a Firing Party and Bugler. I, and the Matron, Quartermaster, and Sister in charge of the case, the Secretary, the Australian Representative, and two Australian patients followed in carriages and we went fort to the Roman Catholic Church – two Priests officiated at the Service and Father O'Shaughnessy gave an address, referring very sympathetically to the absent relations and Pte Jerrom's Fiancée.

From St. Gregory's Church we went to the cemetery, about 2 miles away, where a piece of ground has been bought by the Australian Government and each soldier has a separate single grave. Father O'Shaughnessy took the remainder of the Service at the Grave side and three volleys were fired, and the last post sounded. Of course the Union Jack had been over the Coffin all the time, up to the Committal and the Australian Flag was draped over the end of the Hearse.

I enclose a list of the flowers. I felt sure the poor parents & his Fiancée would like to have sent some so I did this in their name & all the flowers really looked very beautiful. I sent two sets of photographs which were taken of the funeral to Australia, but of course they may not have reached. I enclose 2 copies by P.C.'s of this Hospital. If there is anything else you want to know, please do not hesitate to ask me, as I should only be too pleased to anything to show my sympathy for Pte Jerrom's relations.

The Grave will be cared for by the Girl Guides, and it is now marked with a white cross bearing the name, regt, No. & date on it. There are several other Australian Soldiers lying there now for that April convoy was chiefly of Australians most of whom were badly gassed & to our great regret we lost 3 splendid fellows."

Gunner William R. Jerrom, Machine Gun Section, A.F.A., of Audley Street, Narrandera, NSW, requested in his Will dated 24th April, 1916 that Mr George Jerrom, of Audley Street, Narrandera, NSW be appointed as Executor. He bequeathed to his sister – Miss Myra Jerrom & friend Miss L. McConville, Lammer Street, Narrandera, all his personal effects, Military Pay Pension and Decorations of any, together with Insurance Policy to the value of £200 with the Australian Mutual Provident Society.

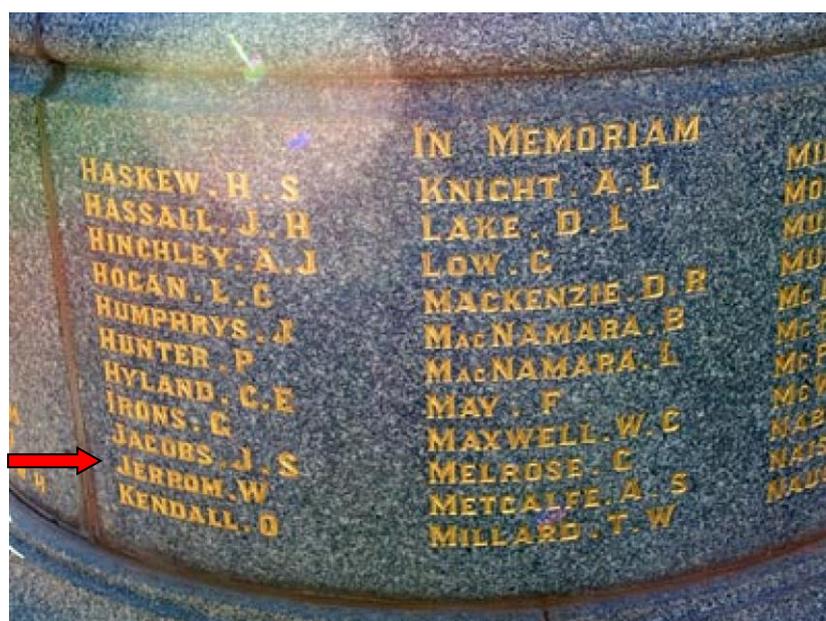
Private William Robert Jerrom was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Jerrom's adopted father – Mr G. Jerrom, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent March, 1922 & Plaque sent October, 1922 (see photo below).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private William Robert Jerrom – service number 53, of 3rd Bn., Australia Machine Gun Corps. No family details are listed.

W. Jerrom is remembered on the Narrandera World War One Memorial, located in Memorial Gardens, East Street, Narrandera, NSW.



Narrandera World War One Memorial (Photos from Monument Australia)



Private W. R. Jerrom is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 176.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(61 pages of Private William Robert Jerrom's 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



Memorial Plaque (also known as Death Penny) for William Robert Jerrom

(Photo courtesy of Michael Murray – great nephew)

Newspaper Notices

CASUALTIES

315th LIST

NEW SOUTH WALES

WOUNDED

Pte W. R. JERROM, Narrandera

(*Daily Advertiser*, Wagga Wagga, NSW, Australia - 26 June, 1917)

LOCAL WAR NOTES

AUSTRALIAN'S DEATH AT ST. JOHN HOSPITAL

The death occurred on Wednesday at St. John Hospital of William Robert Jerrom, aged 29, a private in the Machine-gun Corps of the Australian Imperial Forces, who enlisted in March, 1916, and went to France in April last year. He was badly gassed on the Somme on the 19th inst., and was brought to Cheltenham on the 22nd. His home was at Narrader, New South Wales.

(*Gloucestershire Echo*, Gloucestershire, England – 26 April, 1918)

FUNERAL OF AN AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER IN CHELTENHAM

(*Newspaper item – courtesy of David Drinkwater*)



(*Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic*, England – 11 May, 1918)

TRIBUTE TO "AUSSIES"

Anzac Day in Gloucester

The Gloucestershire Echo of May. 1 devotes a column to reports of the Anzac Day demonstrations, which were held the day before at Cheltenham, and in which Boy Scouts and Girl Guides took a prominent part. Beautiful wreaths were placed by the Scouts and Guides on the well-kept graves of 10 Australian soldiers, after the Deputy-Mayor gave a fervent address. The names of the 10 Australian were:— Pte. J. Warren, 5th Pioneer Battalion; Pte. S. G. Turner, 53rd Battalion; Pte. J. H. Fenton, 15th Field Ambulance; Sgt. W. R. B. Johnson, 15th Field Ambulance; Pte. A. R. Callaghan, 54th Battalion; **Pte. W. R. Jerrom, 3rd Machine Gun Battalion**; Pte. A. W. Stevens, 7th Battalion; Pte. R. W. Resso, 54th Battalion; Pte. H. C. Vale, 3rd Pioneer Battalion; Lce.-Cpl. P. J. Penketh, 17th Battalion (the wreath of the last named was deposited by Miss Hattersley Smith). The following is a copy of a letter sent to the next-of-kin to those Australian soldiers by the Cheltenham Remembrance Day committee (represented in the signatures by Aid. C. H. Margret, Acting Mayor and Mr. T. H. Packer, acting Secretary: — We felt sure that you will be pleased to know that on Cheltenham's Anzac Day, the graves of the 10 Australian soldiers who died in Cheltenham from wounds and other injuries received, in battle, and were buried in our beautiful cemetery, were visited and wreaths and flowers deposited thereon. In this way the memory of those sons of the Empire who have found a last resting place far from their homes, at the foot of the historic Cotswold Hills, will be kept fresh in the minds of Cheltonians. From our charmingly placed cemetery there are beautiful views of a long stretch of the hills and of the wide expanse of the vale of the Severn— indeed, there is no more charming or picturesque spot in the whole of the Western Shires. And bordering the cemetery are: — “A rise steeply sloping, a fence with stone coping, the last - we diverged round the base or the hill.”— The scene of Adam Lindsay Gordon's (a Cheltonion) famous poem "How We Beat the Favourite." Within sound are the “Chimes of sweet St. Mary's On far English ground,” and can be seen from it — “the mist of the Cotswold Hills Where I once heard the blast of the huntsman's horn, Not far from, the Seven rills.” —the source of the River Thames. The proceedings arranged by the Remembrance Day Committee commenced at the War Memorial — erected in memory of 1,400 men of Cheltenham, who, like their Australian comrades, “died that we might live.” To this spot were brought many wreaths and bouquets of flowers, which were conveyed to the cemetery — two miles away— by over 500 Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, a selected number of whom proudly carried large bouquets of red, white, and blue flowers— the national colours— and both wreaths and flowers were garnished with ribbons of the same colour, while a wreath sent by an Australian mother bore the black and green colours of the battalion to which her dead son belonged. The long procession headed by the bugle band of the scouts had a striking effect as it passed along the principal streets and timbered avenues, crowded by townsfolk, on its way to the cemetery. ... At the close of the proceedings the beautiful hymn, “Fight the good fight” was sung by the whole audience—more than 2,000 — the “Last Post” was sounded, and scarcely had its rallying echoes along the hillside died away when “God save the King” had been sung, and the simple, effective, yet reverent ceremony had come to an end, and the dead soldiers were “left alone in their glory.”

(*The Register*, Adelaide, South Australia – 19 July, 1922)

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)

A letter from Base Records, dated 15th July, 1921, to Mr G. Jerrom, East Street, Narrandera, NSW, advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of his son, the late Pte W. R. Jerrom, had not been answered & non-receipt of a reply within 21 days would have to be accepted as indicating that no further action was to be taken.

Private William Robert Jerrom does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Cheltenham Cemetery, Gloucestershire, England

(Also known as Bouncer's Lance Cemetery and Prestbury Cemetery)

This cemetery contains burials of both wars. The 110 First World War graves are mainly of men who died in the local voluntary hospitals. The burials are scattered except for a small plot of 10 Australian graves. The Second World War burials number 71, half of them forming a war graves plot in the eastern part of the cemetery. There are 2 Polish war burials and a further 4 Non World War service burials within C.W.G.C. care in this cemetery. Cheltenham Crematorium is situated within the cemetery and 28 servicemen and women of the Second World War whose remains were cremated there are commemorated on bronze panels within the crematorium cloisters.

(Information from CWGC)



Entrance to Cheltenham Cemetery, Gloucestershire *(Photo by julia&keld – Find a Grave)*



War Graves in Cheltenham Cemetery, Gloucestershire *(Photo from CWGC)*

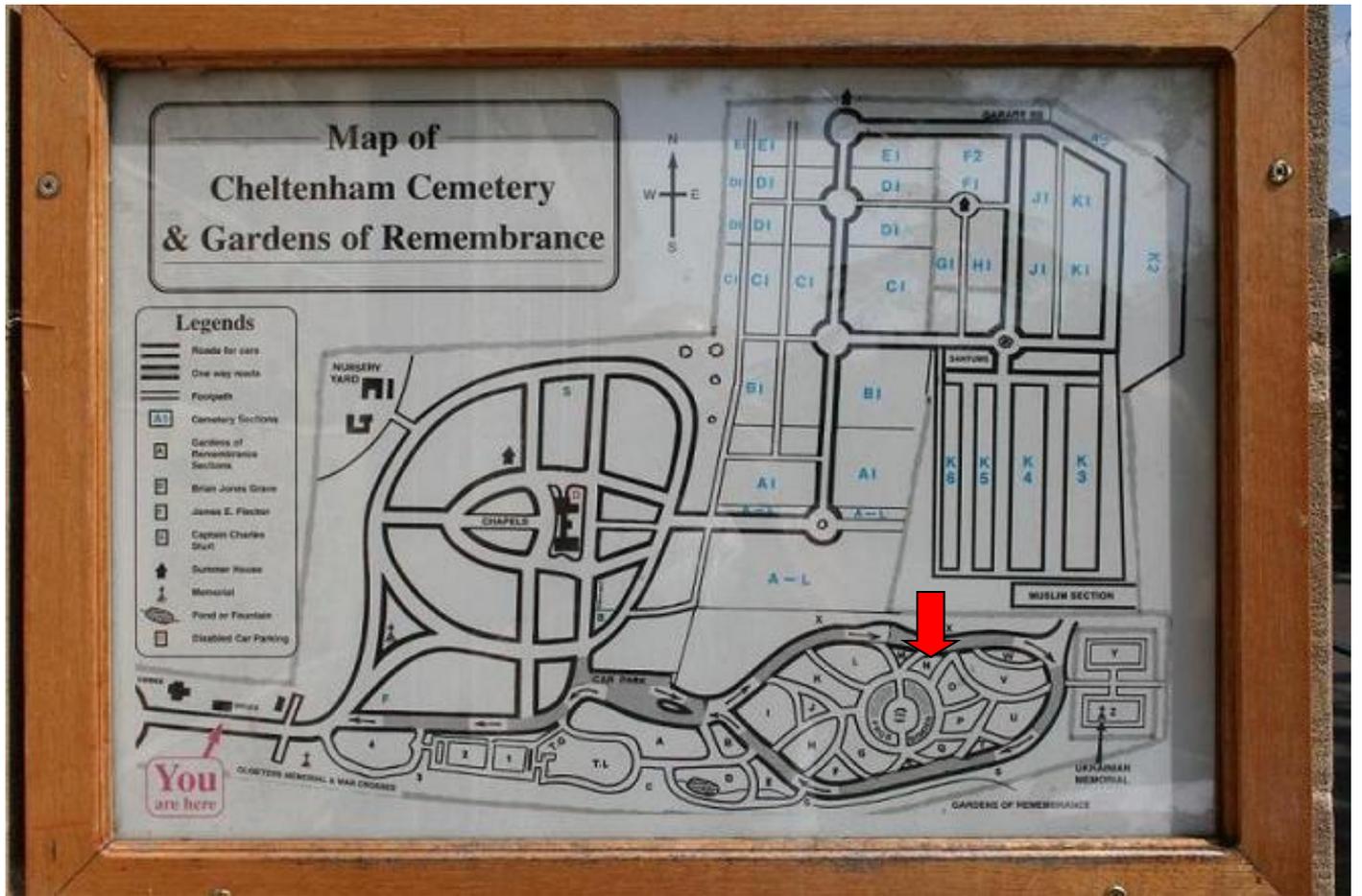


Cross of Sacrifice in Cheltenham Cemetery, Gloucestershire *(Photo by Philip Halling)*

Photo of Private W. R. Jerrom's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Cheltenham Cemetery, Gloucestershire, England.



(Photo by ColinA – Find a Grave)



Map of Cheltenham Cemetery, Gloucestershire (Photo by julia&keld – Find a Grave)