

Bulford War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2349 GUNNER

E. A. KNICKEL

AUST. FIELD ARTILLERY

24TH JULY, 1917

Ernest August KNICKEL

Ernest August Knickel was born at Alton Downs, near Rockhampton, Queensland on 16th December, 1890 to parents Johannes (John) & Frederica Knickel (nee Weist). Ernest Knickel was also known as Danny Knickel.

Ernest's father - Johannes (John) Knickel died on 23rd April, 1909 at Alton Downs, Queensland.

Ernest Knickel & his older brother, John Fred Knickel, both enlisted at Rockhampton with 15th Battalion on 17th September, 1914. Ernest Knickel was discharged on 12th November, 1914 under Section 15, A.I.F. Orders. Pte John Fred Knickel embarked from Melbourne on 22nd December, 1914.

Ernest Knickel was a 25 year old, single, Fencer from Alton Downs, Rockhampton, Queensland when he re-enlisted on 18th January, 1916 with the 5th Light Horse Regiment, 16th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2349 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Frederick H. A. Knickel of Alton Downs, Rockhampton, Queensland.

Pte Ernest August Knickel embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Mashobra* (A47) on 5th April, 1916 & disembarked in Egypt (date not recorded). Pte Knickel embarked from Alexandria. Pte Ernest August Knickel was transferred from 2nd Light Horse Training Regiment to Reserve Brigade Artillery Details at Tel-el-Kebir on 25th May, 1916. His rank was changed from Private to that of Gunner. He disembarked at Plymouth, England (no date recorded).

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.

Gunner Knickel was appointed Acting Corporal on 22nd August, 1916 at Australian Artillery Training Depot, Bulford, Wiltshire.

Acting Corporal Knickel was admitted to 1st Australian Dermatological Hospital, Bulford, Wiltshire on 28th April, 1917. Acting Corporal Knickel's rank reverted back to Gunner on his admission to Hospital on 28th April, 1917. He was transferred to Parkhouse on 24th May, 1917 & discharged to Convalescent Training Company, Bulford the same day. Gunner Knickel was discharged on 6th July, 1917 & marched out to R.B.A.A. at Larkhill, Wiltshire.

Gunner Knickel was marched out to Tidworth from Larkhill on 19th July, 1917.

Gunner Ernest August Knickel was admitted to the Military Hospital, Tidworth, Wiltshire on 20th July, 1917 with Bright's Disease.

Gunner Ernest August Knickel died at 8.40 a.m. on 24th July, 1917 at Military Hospital, Tidworth, Wiltshire from Bright's disease. Entries on Gunner Knickel's Casualty Form – Active Service reads "Deceased Jaundice Mil. Hosp, Tidworth 24-7-17" followed by another entry "Deceased Jaundice Mil. Hosp., Delete complete entry and in lieu thereof. Tidworth 24-7-17".

A death for Ernest A. Knickel, aged 26, was registered in the September quarter, 1917 in the district of Andover, Hampshire/Wiltshire.

Gunner Ernest August Knickel was buried on 25th July, 1917 in Bulford Church Cemetery, Wiltshire - Grave No. 8 Australian Reserve Section (CWGC Plot number 3. I. 8.) and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Gunner Knickel – *Coffin was good condition – stained wood. Gunner Knickel died suddenly. His death came as a shock to his comrades with whom he was very popular. His remains were buried with full Military Honours and were followed by all his late comrades. The funeral procession was preceded by the band of the New Zealand Forces from Sling Camp. He was laid to rest in the old churchyard of the Parish Church, Bulford, side by side with other Australians who died on Active Service.*

Gunner Ernest August Knickel was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Gunner Knickel's mother – Mrs F. Knickel (Scroll sent January, 1922 & Plaque sent August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Gunner Ernest August Knickel – service number 2349 as having served with Australian Field Artillery Details. He was the son of Mrs Fredericka Knickel, of Alton Downs, Rockhampton, Queensland.

Gunner E. A. Knickel is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 22.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

E. Knickel & his brother J. Knickel are both remembered on the Alton Downs War Memorial, located beside the Community Hall, 1569 Ridgellands Road, Alton Downs, Queensland.



Alton Downs War Memorial (Photos by Shirley & Trevor McIvor – Queensland War Memorials)

The original Bulford Church Cemetery Register has the date of death for Gunner E. A. Knickel incorrectly recorded. Base Records, Melbourne were aware of the error & in a letter to Mrs F. Knickel, mother of the late Gunner Knickel, dated 25th May, 1932, advised :” *It will be noted from the proof slip entry date of death has inadvertently been shown in error and should properly read “24th. July, 1917, and the discrepancy is being brought to the notice of the Commission with a view to ensuring the accuracy of the headstone inscription. It is regretted, however, that it will not be practicable to similarly amend the Register entry at this late juncture as the printed copies have already been prepared for publication.”*

(53 pages of Gunner Ernest August Knickel’s Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website. Gunner Knickel also has an 8 page Service Record file covering his enlistment & discharge in 1914).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



****Connected to Gunner Ernest August Knickel:**

Private John Fred Knickel, 305, 15th Battalion. Enlisted 17th September, 1914. Served at Gallipoli - Discharged medically Unfit with Rheumatism. Returned to Australia 5th February, 1916. Entitled to 1914 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal.



Gunner Ernest August Knickel



Newspaper Notices

TALLEST QUEENSLAND SOLDIER

Pte D. Knickel, of Pink Lily, is the second of the family to join the colours. Pte Knickel, who is attached to the Light Horse, has the distinction of being the tallest soldier who has enlisted in the Queensland forces since the outbreak of the war (says a Toowoomba contemporary). He is 6ft 10 ½ in in height, and is hard to boot. The next biggest man to him in the Queensland forces only makes 6ft 6½in. There is said to be a man at Broadmeadows (a Victorian), who can give Pte Knickel an inch, but with this exception Pte Knickel is probably the tallest soldier in the Australian Army.

(*Queensland Times, Ipswich, Qld* – Thursday 13 January, 1916)

Among Anzacs who are, or who have recently been on leave in London (says the "British Australasian" of 3rd August) are Lieutenant Richard F. Pickering (Brisbane), Gunner H. R. N. Stevenson (formerly Government land agent at Ipswich), Private E. A. Knickel (of Rockhampton), Sergeant Rayson (of Proserpine), and Private G. E. Brown (of Brisbane).

(*The Telegraph, Brisbane, Qld* – Saturday 15 January 1916)



A QUEENSLAND GIANT

Private E. A. Knickel, 6ft 11 in., the tallest soldier in the A.I.F.

(*The Queenslander, Brisbane, Qld* – Saturday 15 January 1916)

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

LIST No. 330

QUEENSLAND

DIED OF ILLNESS

E. A. Knickel

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Vic – Tuesday 14 August 1917)

THE WAR

CENTRAL QUEENSLANDERS ABROAD

Letters from Mrs H. G. Wheeler

Gunner E. J. Dillon reported the sad news of the death of his comrade, E. A. Knickel, known as the "Pink Lily Giant." He was taken suddenly ill on the 21st July and passed away at Tidworth Hospital on the 24th of July. Dillon says the news of Knickel's death came as a great shock to them all as they had had a letter from him just saying he was not feeling very well. He was buried with full military honours at Bulford Cemetery, and the coffin was carried by members of the Fifth Light Horse – his old regiment.

(*The Capricornian*, Rockhampton, Qld – Saturday 27 October, 1917)

LATE PRIVATE E. A. KNICKEL

Mrs J. Knickel, Laurel Bank-road, Alton Downs, near Rockhampton, has received the following letter, dated the 29th of July last, from Sister W. S. Baker, Tidworth Military Hospital, Tidworth:— "As you know by now, your son died last Monday. It appears that he had some inflammation of the kidneys, which jaundice aggravated. His kidneys stopped acting, and he became unconscious in a few hours. So far as I can find out, he had had jaundice for about ten days before coming in, and had lately been getting much thinner. He walked in and only complained of some pain in his back and of generally feeling tired. He just got very sleepy and never roused. One of the men is writing to you, too; but he was with us so short a time. He was one of the three who came in together, and he seemed the least ill of the three. The others are improving. He was only four days in hospital altogether. Nothing could have been done for him more than was done unless he had recognised what was the matter weeks before. Anyway, the first chill would probably have been fatal. All that I can hear from the men is that he was a "real good sport" and the second tallest man in all the armies. With much sympathy".

Mr J. Cameron, writing to Mr F. Knickel from Bulford Camp Salisbury Plain, on the 30th of July, says :— " You will be surprised to hear from me. I am sending you a photograph, the last of poor Dan also a photograph of the church and the young ladies who look after the Australian graves. It came as a great shock to us boys when we heard of his death. He was in my hut on Friday, the 20th of July, and he died on Tuesday the 24th of July, and was buried on Wednesday, the 25th of July with full military honours The New Zealand band played the "Dead March" and six of his mates in the same reinforcements formed the bodyguard and twelve of the boys formed the advance guard. Every body that could get away was there — something over 100. There are very few in the camp now as a big draft, left for France the week before. I am very sorry for his father and mother and sisters and yourself ; but I thought it would be very nice to see the church and the ladies who look after our boys' graves. Poor Dan was well liked by all the boys. Why I will tell you. He was the cook here, and if a man came in late he would always get him a feed. I never heard a man say a bad word against him. I do not know whether you knew me or not; but if I have the luck to return we will have a chat. Hoping you will accept my sincere sympathy."

Captain T. C. Robinson chaplain of the Australian Imperial Forces at Bulford Camp, writing to Mrs Knickel on the 30th of July, says : "Doubtless long ere this reaches you, you will have received the sad tidings of the death of your son, Ernest August Knickel. I thought, however, you might like to receive this letter from me in view of the fact that I am the chaplain who attended the funeral, He died in Tidworth Hospital from Bright's disease, and I am sure that

everything was done for his recovery and for his comfort. He was given a full military funeral. The gun which carried the mortal remains of your son was drawn by six beautiful black horses, and a sergeant rode ahead on a seventh black horse. The riders were all Imperial men. The band was from the New Zealand forces and was about twenty-six strong. Their playing was most impressive. Then about eighty men of the reserve brigade of Australian artillery followed, the firing party, of course, being at the head of the procession. The officer in charge and myself were at the rear, Your son is buried in Bulford parish cemetery, grave No. 8, in the special, Australian Imperial Forces' section, and the authorities will erect an oak cross upon the grave shortly. At the grave, after the beautiful service provided by our Church, the firing party fired three volleys and then three buglers sounded "The last post." Take comfort from this, knowing that he has done his duty and also that you will look to the God of all comfort and stablish your heart, and, by faith and prayer, look forward to a reunion on the other side of the grave."

(Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton, Qld – Thursday 22 November, 1917) & (The Capricornian, Rockhampton, Qld – Saturday 24 November, 1917)

ROLL OF HONOUR

KNICKEL - In fond and loving memory of Corporal Ernst A. Knickel, of Alton Downs, who died of illness at Yandice Military Hospital, Tidworth, on July 24th, 1917, aged 26 years.

At Rest.

(Inserted by his loving mother, brothers, and sisters.)

(Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton, Qld – Wednesday 24 July, 1918)

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 in Bulford Church Cemetery. 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)

Gunner E. A. Knickel does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Photo of Gunner E. A. Knickel's Headstone at Bulford Church Cemetery, Wiltshire.



(Photo courtesy of Andrea Charlesworth 2012)



Bulford Church Cemetery (*Photo courtesy of Andrea Charlesworth 2012*)