

**Botley Cemetery,
Botley, Oxfordshire, England
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



1665 PRIVATE

R. S. LANGLEY

38TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

29TH NOVEMBER, 1917

*Until The Day Break
And The Shadows Flee Away*

Robert Sanders LANGLEY

Robert Sanders Langley was born at Horsham, Victoria on 10th January, 1886 to parents Warwick and Eliza Langley (nee Sanders).

Robert Sanders Langley attended McKenzie Creek State School, Victoria.

The 1909, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915 & 1917 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Wannan, subdivision of Horsham South, Victoria recorded Robert Sanders Langley, Farmer from Drung Drung.

Robert Sanders Langley was a 30 year old, single, Farmer from St. Helen's Plains, via Horsham, Victoria when he enlisted at Horsham on 10th April, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Presbyterian & his next of kin was listed as his father – Mr Warwick Langley, St. Helen's Plains, via Horsham, Victoria. Robert Langley's younger brother – Herbert (Hervey) Alfred Langley, 24 year old Farmer had enlisted on 7th April, 1916.

Private Robert Sanders Langley was posted to 1st Reinforcements of 38th Battalion at Bendigo on 12th April, 1916 for recruit training.

Private Robert Sanders Langley, Service number 1665, embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Runic (A54)* on 20th June, 1916 with the 10th Infantry Brigade, 38th Infantry Battalion, 1st Reinforcements. He was admitted to Ship's Hospital on 25th July, 1916 with Measles & discharged on 2nd August, 1916. Private Langley disembarked at Plymouth, England on 10th August, 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.

Private Robert Sanders Langley was transferred to 10th Training Depot at Larkhill, Wiltshire, England on 18th August, 1916.

Private Robert Sanders Langley proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 22nd November, 1916.

Private Robert Sanders Langley was wounded in action on 12th October, 1917. He was admitted to 11th Australian Field Ambulance on 12th October, 1917 then transferred the same day to the 2nd Casualty Clearing Station. Private Langley was admitted to 6th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 14th October, 1917 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to left knee. He embarked for England on 5th November, 1917 on Hospital Ship *Grantully Castle*.

38th Battalion

The 38th Battalion was formed on 1 March 1916 at a camp established on the Epsom Racecourse at Bendigo in Victoria. Early training was disrupted by a severe outbreak of cerebro-spinal meningitis in the camp, as a result of which the healthy members were transferred to a camp at Campbellfield, where the Battalion had to be rebuilt from fresh reinforcements.

After training in both Australia and Britain, the 38th Battalion crossed to France in late November 1916 and moved into the trenches of the Western Front for the first time on 1 December. During the harsh winter of 1916-17 the 3rd Division was heavily involved in raiding the German trenches. In February 1917 the 38th Battalion provided 400 troops, with a similar party from the 37th Battalion, to form a special raiding "battalion". After several weeks of training this force staged a single 35-minute raid on the night of 27 February and was then disbanded.

The 38th fought in its first major battle at Messines, in Belgium, between 7-9 June 1917. It fought in another two major attacks in this sector - the battle of Broodseinde on 4 October, and the battle of Passchendaele on 12 October. Broodseinde was a success, reflecting careful planning and preparation, but the 38th still suffered 29 per cent casualties. Passchendaele, however, was a disaster, executed in haste amidst horrendous conditions brought on by torrential rain. It was the 38th's most costly operation of the war, resulting in 62 per cent casualties.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 38th Battalion

YPRES BATTLE No. 3

12th October, 1917 – 38th Battn was allotted the 3rd & final objective – a line beyond village of Passchendaele. The battn commenced approach march at 1045 pm on night of 11/12th. Soon after entering “K” track we came under enemy shell fire which continued intermittently until assembly lines were reached. Our casualties during this time were considerable, particularly in the neighbourhood of the junction of “K” track with sunken road (running Nth thro; D16C). A fair amount of gas shell was used by the enemy in the low lying ground NE of Judah House but owing to high wind the effect was not very marked.

The battn formed up on its tapes about 3 am in the following order: Two plats of “A” Coy (right) plus 2 Plats of “B” Coy (left) formed first wave, followed by “D” Coy as moppers up. The remaining plats of “A” and B Coys formed 2nd wave fold by “C” Coy as moppers up.

While waiting for zero hr enemy shelling was severe and many casualties resulted. When our barraged came down we advanced in rear of 40th battan but soon came under heavy machine-gun fire particularly from the sector on our left about BELLEVUE. One party under Lt. Munday worked its way across the RAVEBEEK and cleared three pill-boxes but was stopped by heavu rifle and M.G. fire and during the next night had to rejoin main body, which in the meantime had advanced to RED line, where 38th joined remnants of 37th & 40th. Casualties had been so severe that further advance was impossible especially as the New Zealand troops on our left had failed to get forward. Consequently the senior officer present MAJOR GIBLIN (40th battn) ordered a retirement to approx. jumping off line and consolidated there at about 3 pm. In conjunction with remainder of the brigade 38th battn held this line until relieved on night of 13/14th by 41st battn A.I.F., when 38th moved back to bivouac at HUSSAR FARM.

During the operations Battn battle H,Q. were in pill-box in BERLIN as also was R.A.P. Q.M. store and details were camped in field on right of YPRES-ZONNEBEKE ROAD. Following Officers took part in operations.....

Casualties during these operations were	K.	W.	M.	TOTAL
Officers	5	7	2	14
O.Ranks	6	263	99	368

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Robert Sanders Langley was admitted to 3rd Southern General Hospital, Oxford, England on 6th November, 1917 with G.S.W. to left knee - serious.

Private Robert Sanders Langley died on morning of 29th November, 1917 at 3rd Southern General Hospital, Oxford, England from Intestinal Haemorrhage following wounds received in action – G.S.W. to left knee. The Hospital Admissions form records the following: “Patient began to vomit several days before the end & suddenly went into collapse & died.”

A death for Robert S. Langley, aged 31, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Oxford, Oxfordshire, England.

Private Robert Sanders Langley was buried at 11.30 am on 1st December, 1917 in Botley Cemetery, Botley, Oxfordshire, England – Plot number I1.95 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private Robert Sanders Langley - *Coffin was good polished Elm with brass fittings. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military Funeral. The coffin was draped with the Australian Flag. Buglers and Pallbearers were supplied by the R.A.M.C. Staff of the General Hospital, Oxford. Captain Simmons of the General Hospital, Oxford, was present at the funeral. The grave will be turfed immediately, and an oak cross will be 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 Robert Sanders Langley contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of the relatives to obtain details into his wounds & another request was sent to obtain the details concerning his death and burial.

- A letter received from Administrator, 3rd Southern General Hospital, dated 23rd November, 1917: *“The above patient is suffering from GSW left thigh – which opened knee joint & chipped outer side femur. There is now a subacute arthritis (streptococcic) which is gradually subsiding. He is not now in a serious condition though prognosis is for a prolonged convalescence.”*
- A letter received from O.C., 3rd Southern General Hospital, Oxford dated 4th January, 1918: *“No. 1665 Pte R. S. Langley 38th A.I.F. was buried in Grave No. 1.95 at Botley Cemetery near Oxford. The Medical Officer who had charge of his case reports as follows:- This man was admitted to Surgical Ward 7 on Nov. 28th and died Nov. 29th 1917. He had a gunshot wound of knee which had apparently healed. Three days before admission he began to vomit which continued until his admission and vomits contained blood. On admission he was prostrated and internal haemorrhage was suspected as cause of death.”*

Private Robert Sanders Langley was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Langley's father – Mr W. Langley, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent April, 1922 & Plaque sent October, 1922).

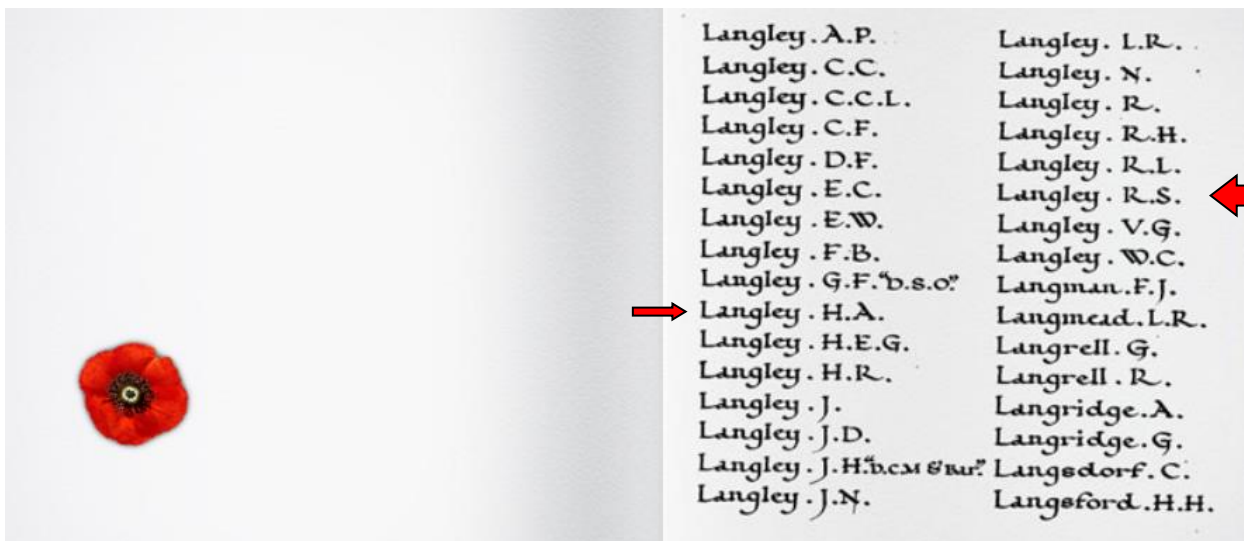
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Robert Sanders Langley – service number 1665, of 38th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Warwick and Eliza Langley, of St Helens Plains, Horsham, Victoria.

Private R. S. Langley is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 130.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

R. S. Langley & his brother H. A. Langley are remembered in the Book of Remembrance at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, Victoria.



(38 pages of Private Robert Sanders Langley'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



Connected to Private Robert Sanders Langley:

Younger brother - Private Hervey Alfred Langley -1664, 38th Battalion. Enlisted 7th April, 1916. Embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Runic* on 20th June, 1916. Killed in action 28th May, 1917. Remembered on Villers Bretonneux Memorial, France.



Newspaper Notices

Our Honor Roll

"The Horsham Times" is desirous of compiling a complete and reliable list of the names of men who have volunteered for military service since the beginning of the war....

Langley, R. S.

Langley, H. A.

.....

(*The Horsham Times*, Victoria – 20 October, 1916)

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

LISTS Nos. 360 AND 361

Victoria

WOUNDED

R. S. Langley, St. Helen's Plains

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 1 December, 1917)

In Memoriam

LANGLEY – In sacred remembrance of our dear friend, Roy Langley, who died at Horsham on December 11th, 1916; also of Hervey, who was killed in action on May 28, 1917, and Rob, who died of wounds in England on November 29.

Our Friends.

Their equal in this world is very hard to find.

-Inserted by A. and J. Purvis and M. Dunn

(*The Horsham Times*, Victoria – 11 December, 1917)

Brothers Give Their Lives



Robert Sanders Langley
Died of Wounds November 27, 1917.



Hervey Alfred Langley
Killed in Action May 28, 1917.

Sons of Mr and Mrs Warwick Langley, of St. Helen's Plains, who have given their lives in the cause of freedom. Both are natives of Norton Creek. They enlisted about two years ago.

(The Horsham Times, Victoria – 11 December, 1917)

THE 375th CASUALTY LIST

DIED OF WOUNDS

Private R. S. Langley, St. Helen Plain

(The Mildura Cultivator, Victoria – 29 December, 1917)

In Memoriam

LANGLEY – In sad and loving memory of Private R. S. Langley, who died of wounds received in France on 29th November, 1917; also of W. R. Langley, who died at Horsham on 11th December, 1916.

Deeply mourned and sadly missed.

There is a link death cannot sever;
Love and remembrance last forever.

-Inserted by their aunt and uncle, A. and J. Warrick.

(The Horsham Times, Victoria – 29 November, 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. 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)

Private R. S. Langley does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Until The Day Break And The Shadows Flee Away

Botley Cemetery, Botley, Oxfordshire, England

During the two world wars, the United Kingdom became an island fortress used for training troops and launching land, sea and air operations around the globe. There are more than 170,000 Commonwealth war graves in the United Kingdom, many being those of servicemen and women killed on active service, or who later succumbed to wounds. Others died in training accidents, or because of sickness or disease. The graves, many of them privately owned and marked by private memorials, will be found in more than 12,000 cemeteries and churchyards.

During the First World War, the 3rd Southern General Hospital (an Oxfordshire Territorial Unit) was housed in the Examination Schools and a number of other buildings in Oxford. Oxford (Botley) Cemetery contains 156 burials from the First World War, all in the war graves plot in section I/1. The cemetery was designated a Royal Air Force regional cemetery during the Second World War and was used by RAF stations in Berkshire and neighbouring counties. Practically all of the 516 Second World War burials (one of them unidentified) are in the war graves plot, which was extended from the section used during the First World War. The architectural features of the plot were designed by Edward Maufe, ARA. In addition to the Commonwealth war graves, Oxford (Botley) Cemetery contains almost 70 war graves of other nationalities.

There are eight Australian World War 1 War Graves.

(Information from CWGC)



Botley Cemetery *(Photos from CWGC)*



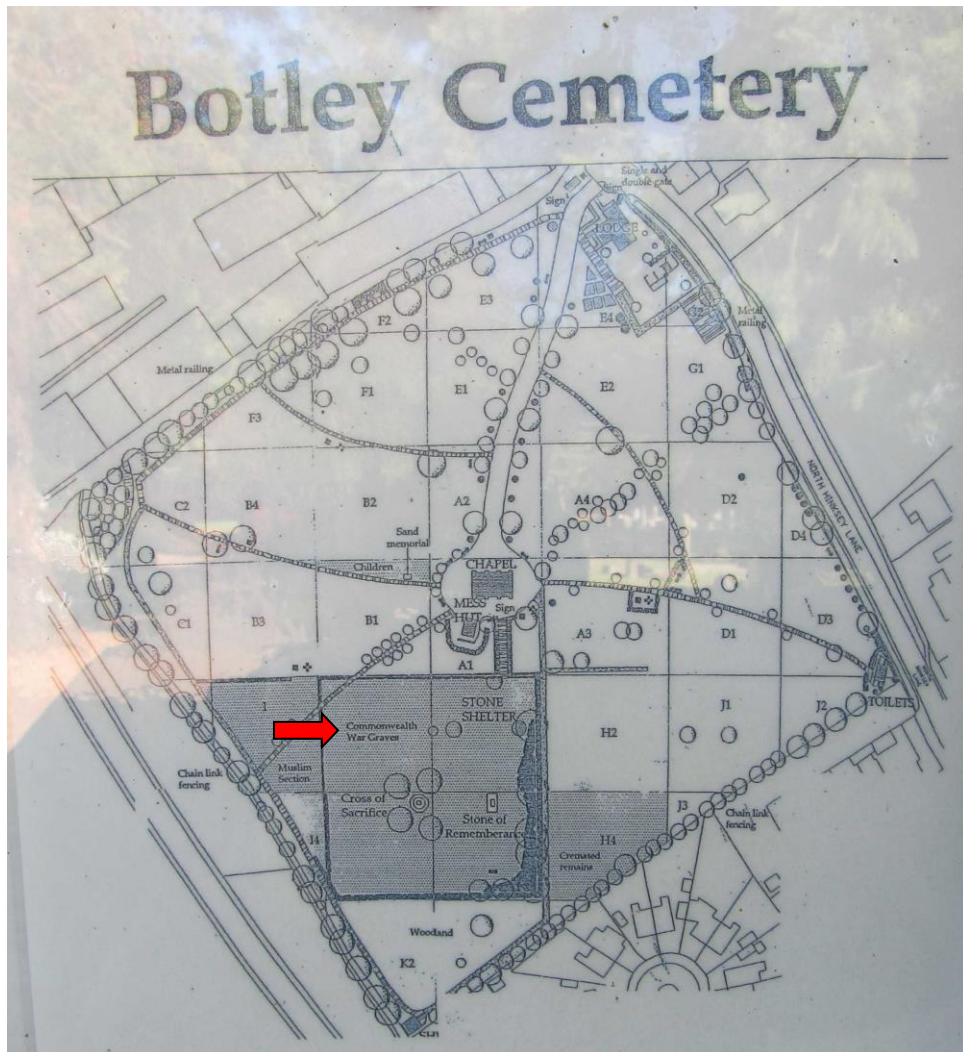
Photo of Private R. S. Langley's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Botley Cemetery, Botley, Oxfordshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of Allan Noble)



(Photo by Stephen Potts – Find a Grave)

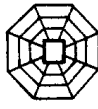


(maps by Kevin Smith – Find a Grave)



STONE OF
REMEMBRANCE

PLOT H. 3



CROSS OF
SACRIFICE

PLOT I. 2



SHELTER
REGISTER
BOX

PLOT H. 1

1914-1918
WAR
BURIALS

PLOT I. 1

GERMAN
BURIALS

GERMAN
BURIALS

ITALIAN
BURIALS

E
N
T
R
A
N
C
E

OXFORD (BOTLEY) CEMETERY

WAR GRAVES PLOT