



Anzac Day 1920



The following is a letter that was sent to the families of the 141 Australian Soldiers buried in Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire from the Organiser of the Anzac Day Pilgrimage at Durrington. A copy was located in the Service Record file of Pte Thomas Tait Blake, 2573, 1st Australian Pioneers, died 11th December, 1916. Buried in Plot # 128 of Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire.

Immigration Department
Victoria House,
Melbourne Place,
Strand, W.C.2, London.
28th May, 1920.

Dear Friend

You will be pleased to know that on Anzac Day, 1920, the graves of the 141 Australian Soldiers buried at Durrington, near Salisbury, were specially visited, and that on each were placed floral tributes, to which were attached a copy of the enclosed Memorial Card.

Throughout the United Kingdom, as in 1918 and 1919, great interest was taken in the Pilgrimage, and those who co-operated with me regarded it as a privilege to remember in this way the memory of the brave lads who gave their lives that we might live. At Durrington, the Rector (Rev. A. G. Ruddle), in his letter to me writes:-

“The Pilgrimage started from the Church headed by the Durrington Brass Band who kindly gave their services. A very large number of people attended. AT the Cemetery a short Memorial Service was held and the hymns “All people that on earth do well”. “O Christ who hast prepared a place” and “On the Resurrection Morning” were sung – the Rector gave a brief address on the words printed at the foot of the Memorial Card “Their names liveth for evermore”. After the Service, while the Band played

"To the Brave", flowers were laid on all the graves. I may say that on Easter Eve last Mrs Ruddle and Mrs E. Spreadbury laid flowers on all soldiers graves in the Cemetery.

Letters were written to the relatives of the first 36 Australian soldiers buried here and Memorial Cards sent to them."

The Rector would, I am sure, be pleased to hear from you.

My official duties are so pressing that I was very diffident about again organizing the Pilgrimage. With Mrs Sharp's assistance, however, it was undertaken, with the result that the Pulpit, Press and People of the Old Land united in successfully carrying out the Remembrance.

Mrs Sharp and I hail from Victoria. We were and are, however, equally interested in the soldier lads from other States, and to-day our kindly thought go out to you and others oversea who have been bereaved through the War.

Yours faithfully,

A. T. Sharp

Organiser, Anzac Day Pilgrimage.



