

**St. Peter & St. Paul Churchyard,
Deddington, Oxfordshire
War Grave**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



35 PRIVATE

W. L. FRENCH

11TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

10TH FEBRUARY, 1916 Age 25

William Loder FRENCH

William Loder French was born at Deddington, near Banbury, Oxfordshire, England to parents William Joseph and Emily French (nee Gibbs). His birth was registered in the March quarter, 1892 in the district of Woodstock, Oxfordshire. William Loder French was more familiarly known as 'Loder'.

The 1901 England Census recorded William L. French as a 9 year old, living with his family at Council Street, Deddington, Oxfordshire. His parents were listed as Joseph W. French (Farmer & Assistant Overseer, aged 35, born Duns Tew, Oxfordshire) & Emily French, aged 35, born Deddington, Oxfordshire). William was the eldest of four children listed on this Census. Other listed were – John M. French (aged 8, born Deddington, Oxfordshire), Gladys E. French (aged 2, born Deddington, Oxfordshire) & Margaret A. French (aged 1, born Deddington, Oxfordshire).

William Loder French attended Deddington Church of England School.

The 1911 England Census listed William Loder French as a 19 year old Butcher's Apprentice boarding at 51 Kenilworth Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. William Loder French was living in a one roomed dwelling. Also listed at the same address, in a 5 roomed dwelling, were James Hawkes (Boot Maker, aged 78) & his wife of under one year, Sarah Jane Hawkes (aged 63) & her father – George Kirkham (Army Pensioner, aged 96).

[The 1911 England Census listed William's family living at Council Street, Deddington in an 8 roomed Dwelling. His parents were listed as Joseph William French (Farmer & Assistant Overseer, aged 45) & Emily French (aged 45). Joseph & Emily French had been married for 20 years & had 4 children, all still living. The remaining 3 children were still living at home in the 1911 Census – John Maurice French (Builder's Clerk, aged 17), Gladys Emily French (At School, aged 12) & Madge French (At School, aged 11). Also living with the family were John French – father of Joseph (Widower, Farmer (retired), aged 88), Maurice Peacock – nephew (Assistant on Farm, aged 17) & a Servant – Kate Wheeler (aged 17).]

A "Wm Loder French", Farmer, aged 21, was a passenger on *Scharnhorst* which arrived at the port of Fremantle, Western Australia on 27th February, 1913. He had boarded at Antwerp.

William Loder French was a 22 year old, single, Butcher when he enlisted on 21st August, 1914 with the 11th Infantry Battalion "A" Company of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 35 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr W. J. French, of Council Street, Deddington, Oxfordshire, England. William Loder French stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served for 4 years with Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars (Yeomanry Regiment).

Private William Loder French was posted to 11th Battalion on 21st August, 1914.

Private William Loder French embarked from Fremantle, Western Australia on HMAT *Medic* (A7) on 31st October, 1914. They anchored for two days before actually sailing on 2nd November, 1914.

Private William Loder French embarked from Alexandria on H.M.T. *Suffolk* on 2nd March, 1915 to join M.E.F. Mediterranean Expeditionary Force at Gallipoli Peninsula. From the War Diary of 11th Battalion "23 Officers and 868 O.R. embarked on H.M.T. "SUFFOLK" for unknown destination – left quay at 9.16 am.10.10 am – Sealed orders opened – destination ascertained to be the island of LEMNOS."

11th Battalion

The 11th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the A.I.F. during the First World War. It was the first battalion recruited in Western Australia, and with the 9th, 10th and 12th Battalions it formed the 3rd Brigade.

The battalion was raised within weeks of the declaration of war in August 1914 and embarked for overseas after just two weeks of preliminary training. It arrived in Egypt to continue its training in early December. The 3rd Brigade was the covering force for the ANZAC landing on 25 April 1915 and so was the first ashore at around 4:30 am. Ten days after the landing, a company from the 11th Battalion mounted the A.I.F.'s first raid of the war against Turkish positions at Gaba Tepe. Subsequently, the battalion was heavily involved in defending the front line of the ANZAC beachhead. In August, it made preparatory attacks at the southern end of the ANZAC position before the battle of Lone Pine. The 11th Battalion continued to serve at ANZAC until the evacuation in December.

War Diary – 11th Battalion

25th April, 1915 – 4.30 am – Landed on beach 1 mile south of Fisherman's Hut, Gallipoli Peninsula.

Landed under heavy musketry & machine gun fire and stormed the cliffs about 300 feet high. Pushed back the Turks and occupied the position.

25th April, 1915 & 26th April, 1915 - Occupied forward ridge about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from beach & entrenchment.

Owing to disorganization consequent on landing on different parts of the beach and being mixed up other units it was impossible to get the battalion together as the men were engaged in small parties right along the whole line of trenches.

Capt. R. W. Anneas was killed on the morning of the 25th whilst storming the cliffs.

During Sunday and Monday trenches were dug under heavy fire from the enemy but a line of defence was established.

Casualties were very heavy but it was impossible to ascertain the number as the mixed units were fully employed on the defensive works and could not be withdrawn.

28th April, 1915 – *The engagement has continued without cessation the enemy showing considerable activity on the left flank. On this afternoon Capt. C. A. Barnes was killed in the trenches. Col. McLaurin C.O. 1st Brigade was killed.*

During this evening portions of the battalion were withdrawn from the firing line and assembled at the beach.

(11th Battalion Information & the War Diary from The Australian War Memorial)

Private William Loder French was admitted to 2nd Field Ambulance while at Gallipoli. He was taken to 1st Australian Casualty Clearing Station at Anzac with diarrhoea on 25th July, 1915 then transferred to Gallipoli Peninsula on 28th July, 1915. Pte French was transferred to Mudros on 29th July, 1915 on Hospital Ship *Nouralia*. Pte French was admitted to 2nd Australian General Hospital at Ghezireh on 4th August, 1915.

A Medical Report was completed on Private William Loder French on 11th September, 1915 while at Ghezireh, Cairo. Pte French was suffering from Colitis which first occurred while at Anzac Gallipoli on 5th July, 1915. He "suffered from severe diarrhoea with blood & mucus while in the trenches, was put on light duty 12.7.15 & getting worse & weaker. He was sent away & admitted to No. 2 G. H. Cairo in a weak condition. The patient fluctuated for a while from normal T. to 102 F. other settled down to a severe febrile course of colitis. He is much weakened & not yet convalescent." The Report states that the cause of the disability (Colitis) was from Active Service – Diet & Exposure. Pte French's present condition was described as "Patient has still a slight temperature 99 F. at night. He is weak, anaemic and does not gain strength rapidly. He is not fit to resume duty without a complete rest & change." The Medical Board recommended a change to England as his parents resided there. The disability was not permanent but probable duration was 6 months.

Private William Loder French was invalided to England on 23rd September, 1915 on Hospital Ship *Karoola*.

Private William Loder French was admitted to War Hospital at Reading, Berkshire, England on 5th October, 1915 suffering from Dysentery. He was discharged on 12th October, 1915.

Extracts from Deddington Deanery Magazine (1914-19) relating to the men who served:

November 1915

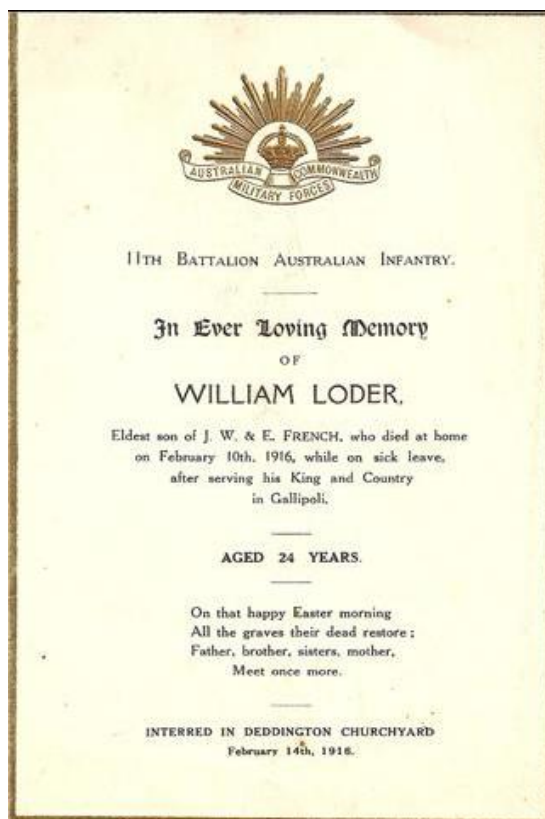
Loder French – Welcome Home.

Private William Loder French died on morning of 10th February, 1916 at Council Street, Deddington, Oxfordshire (the home of his parents) from Cerebro Spinal Fever. A report from Officer in Charge of Military Records, London to

The Officer in Charge of Records, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia stated that *“Private French had been on sick leave from Bostall Heath Camp.”*

A death for William L. French, aged 24, was registered in the March quarter, 1916 in the district of Woodstock, Oxfordshire, England.

Private William Loder French was buried at 2.30 pm on 14th February, 1916 in St. Peter & St. Paul Churchyard, Deddington, Oxfordshire, England and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. A burial report was completed by Lieutenant R. G. Bennett, 8th Battalion, A.I.F., who attended the funeral – *“As order, I attended the funeral of No. 35 Private William Loder French of 11th Bn., which took place at Deddington, Oxford, at 2.30 pm on Monday 14th instant. The burial place is in the church yard of the Church of England, Deddington. The graves are not numbered. The officiating clergyman was the Revd. Thomas Boniface, vicar of Deddington. A firing party from this depot under Sergt. L. Kildahl was in attendance. There is nothing further to report.”*



Funeral Service Front Cover

(Photo with permission from John C. French & Tim Harry & Deddington [OnLine](#))

Private William Loder French requested in his Will, dated 4th April, 1915 while on H.M.T. *Suffolk*, that *“in the event of my death I leave my deferred pay to be equally divided between my two (2) sisters (Gladys & Madge) & my brother (Maurice) & the remaining money's to my parents Mr & Mrs W. J. French Council St., Deddington, Oxfordshire, England.”*

Private William Loder French was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte French's father - Mr W. J. French, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque sent February, 1922).

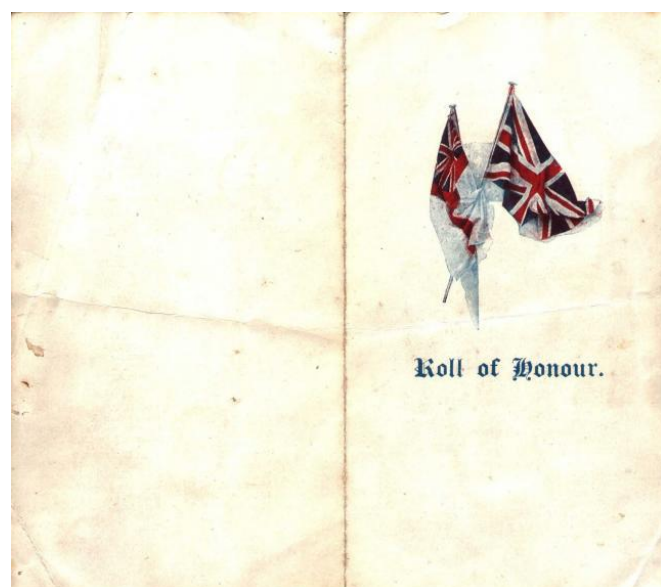
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private William Loder French – service number 35, aged 25, of 11th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of William Joseph and Emily French, of Council Street, Deddington.

Private W. L. French is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 62.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

L. French is remembered on the Roll of Honour leaflet which is undated but probably compiled sometime in 1917.



ROLL OF HONOUR (*revised*).

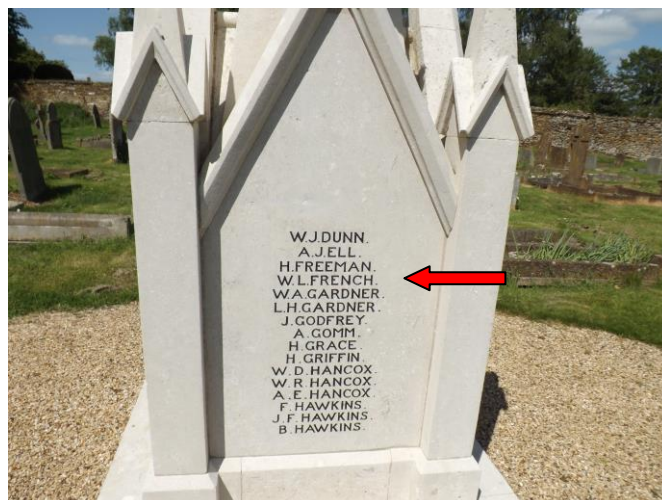
REFERENCE—*a.* Killed in Action. *b.* Wounded. *c.* Discharged.

DEDDINGTON.	Compton, John	Hicks, E.	Smith, J.b	Whitton, D.
Adams, G.	Course, W.	Hicks, H.	Smith, W. G.	Wilkins, W.a
Allen, W.a	Cowley, F.	Higham, J.	Smith, W. O.	Wilkins, W.
Austin, C.	Cowley, Jacob	Hiorns, E.	Smith, W.	Williams, A.
Beesley, J.b	Cowley, John	Hiorns, John	Stimpson, E.	Williams, B.
Beesley, R.	Cowley, Jas.	Hiorns, Jos.	Stockford, E.	Williams, F.
Bennett, M.	Davis, F.	Hiorns, S.	Stone	Williams, J.
Berridge, J.	Davis, G.	Hodges, G.c	Sturch, H.c	Yerbury, A., sen.
Berry, F.	Dodswell, B.	Holiday, T.a	Sykes, B.	Yerbury, A.
Berry, W.	Dodswell, W.	Holiday, W.	Sykes, F.	
Bleisoe, B.	Dunn, W.	Hopcraft, D.b	Sykes, G.a	CLIFTON.
Rise, D.	Durrant, F.	Hopcraft, F.	Sykes, G. D.	Adey, A.
Bolton, E.	Ell, A.	Hopcraft, S.	Sykes, Jos.	Bennett, G.
Bowler, G.b	Ell, C.	Hore, H.	Sykes, John	Biffin, S.
Bowler, L.	Field, E.	Hutt, A.	Sykes, R.a	Bolton, J.
Brookes, W.	Finch, F.	Hutt, F.a	Sykes, Ro.	Bolton, R. E.
Browning, E.a	Freeman, H.b	Hunt, A.	Sykes, S.	Bolton, W. F.a
Callow, A.b	French, L. (dead)	Jennings, W.	Sykes, T.c	Callow, R.
Callow, A.	French, M.	Jones, L.	Sykes, W.	Castle, A.
Callow, C.a	Gardiner, H.	Kelley, F.	Taylor, E.	Clark, H.
Callow, F.	Gardiner, A. (dead)	Large, C.	Taylor, V.b	Fincher, W.
Callow, J.	Gardiner, H.	Lewis, J.	Taylor, P.	Fox, S.
Callow, P.	Gardiner, W.c	Laker, T.	Thornhill, A.	Garrett, F.
Callow, R.	Gibbs, C.	Malcher, H.b	Thornhill, L.	Godfrey, J.a
Cambray, A.	Gibbs, W.	Manchip, H.	Tomkinson, H.	Gomm, A.
Canbray, B.	Gilkes, C.b	Mayo, F.	Tustain, A.b	Harper, A.
Carvill, P.	Gilkes, G.	Mayo, P.b	Tustain, F.a	Harris, A.
Carvill, W.	Gilkes, R.b	Miller, H.b	Tustain, M.a	Hickson, E.
Castle, A.c	Gregory, F.	Mitchell, W.b	Tustain, S.	Meadon, G.
Castle, G.a	Griffin, H.	Mobley, E.	Tustain, T.	Finfold, P.
Castle, J.	Grace, H. (b.c.m.) dead	Morton, L. W.	Tustain, W.b	Quarterman, J.
Checkley, H.b (dead)	Green, H. T.	Mundy, J. F.	Twissell, B.	Quarterman, T.
Checkley, W.	Hall, S.	Page, F.	Twissell, E. (dead)	Warren, J. (b.c.m.)b
Cherry, E.c	Hancox, A.	Page, W.	Vincent, R.	
Chislett, A.	Hancox, E.	Paginton, E.	Warren, J.b	HEMPTON.
Chislett, N.	Hancox, R.a	Payne, S.c	Watts, J.	Austin, A.
Churchill, H.	Hancox, W.a	Rees, L.b	Weaver, H.	Clutterbuck, E.
Churchill, P.	Hands, A.c	Regan, D.b	Wheeler, B. (dead)	Clutterbuck, F.
Churchill, W.	Hands, L.b	Sanders, F.	Wheeler, Jas.c	Nichols, L.
Clarke, F.b	Harmsworth, J.	Sanders, W.	Wheeler, Jas.	Spencer, A. (dead)
Clarke, G.b	Harper, W.a	Shirley, R.	Wheeler, R.	White, H.
Clarke, R.	Harper, H.	Smith, A.	Wheeler, W. E.	White, J.
Collect, H.	Hawkins, F.a	Smith, G.c	Whetton, H.	

Total ... 209

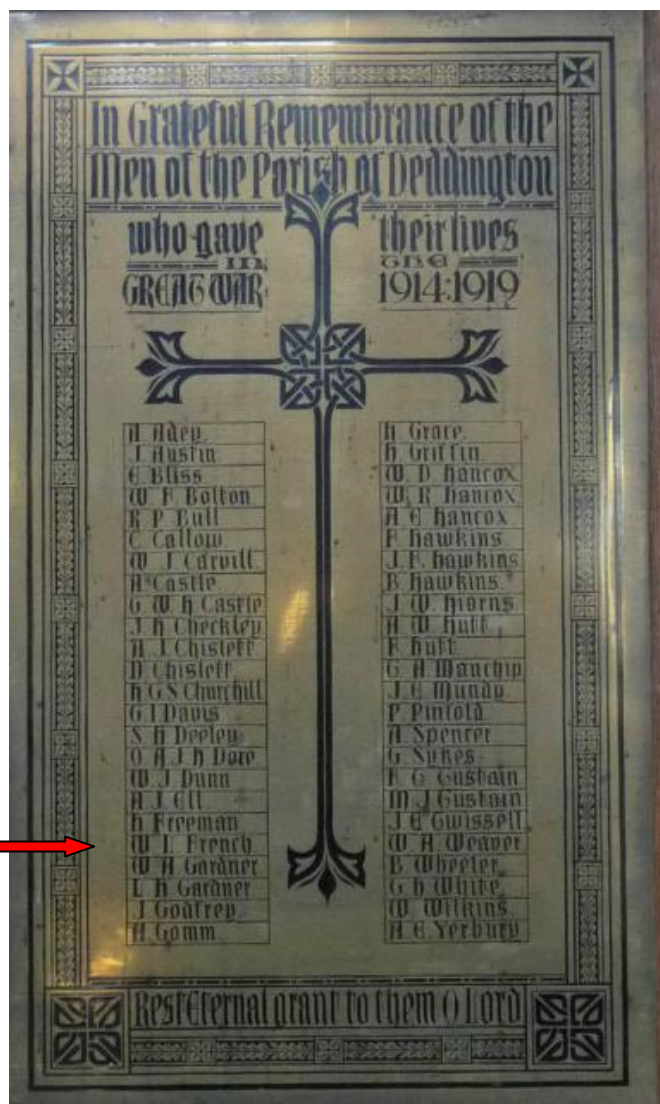
(Photo with permission from Deddington [OnLine](#) – provided by Albert Halper)

W. L. French is remembered on the Deddington War Memorial which is located in the grounds of St. Peter and St. Paul Church, Church Street, Deddington, Oxfordshire.



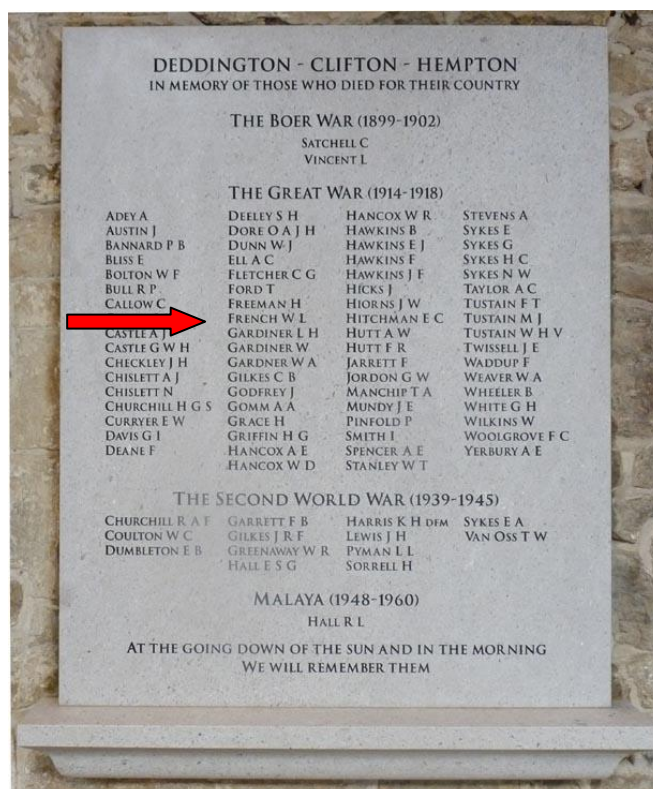
Deddington War Memorial (Photos by David Larkin)

W. L. French is remembered on the Deddington Brass Memorial Plaque which is located within St. Peter and St. Paul Church, Church Street, Deddington, Oxfordshire, on the north wall of the nave.



(Photo with permission from Deddington [OnLine](#))

W. L. French is remembered on the Deddington War Memorial Plaque which is located within St. Peter and St. Paul Church, Church Street, Deddington, Oxfordshire.



(Photo with permission from Deddington [OnLine](#))

Private W. L. French's Original Wooden Cross Grave Marker is held inside St. Peter and St. Paul Church, Church Street, Deddington, Oxfordshire.



Battlefield Cross for Pte W. L. French (Photo with permission from Deddington [OnLine](#))

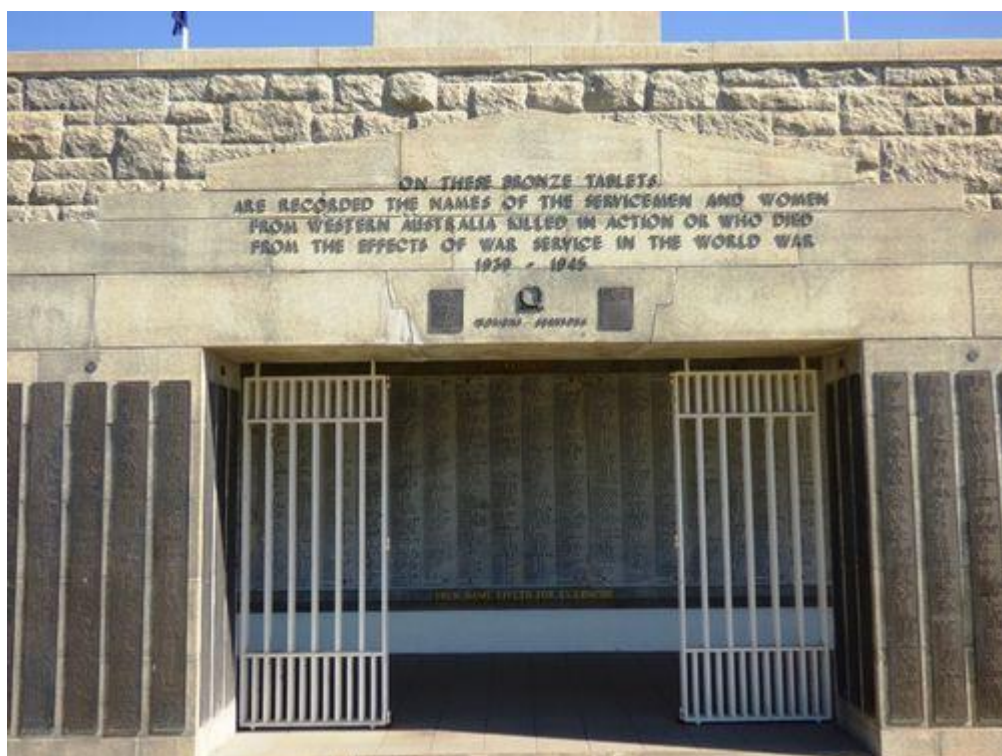
W. L. French is remembered on the Western Australia State War Memorial which is located at the top of Kings Park and Botanic Garden escarpment, ANZAC Bluff. Fraser Avenue, Perth, Western Australia. The memorial was developed around an 18 metre tall obelisk as the principal feature, which is almost a replica of the Australian Imperial Force Memorials erected in France and Belgium.

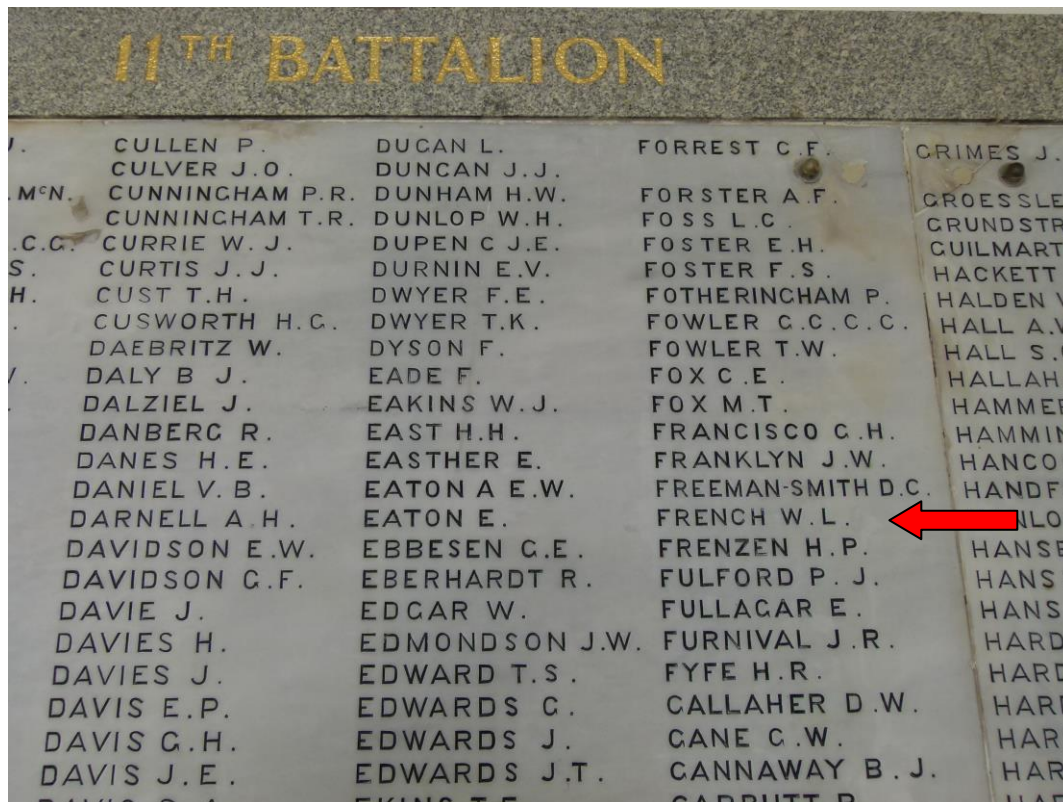
The heavy concrete foundations are supplemented by heavy brick walls which enclose an inner chamber or crypt. The walls surrounding the crypt are covered with The Roll of Honour; marble tablets which list under their units the names of more than 7,000 members of the services killed in action or as a result of World War One.



**Western Australia State War Memorial Cenotaph, Kings Park (above)
& (below) The Crypt with the Roll of Honour names**

(Photos from Monument Australia – Kent Watson/Sandra Tattersall/Graeme Saunders)





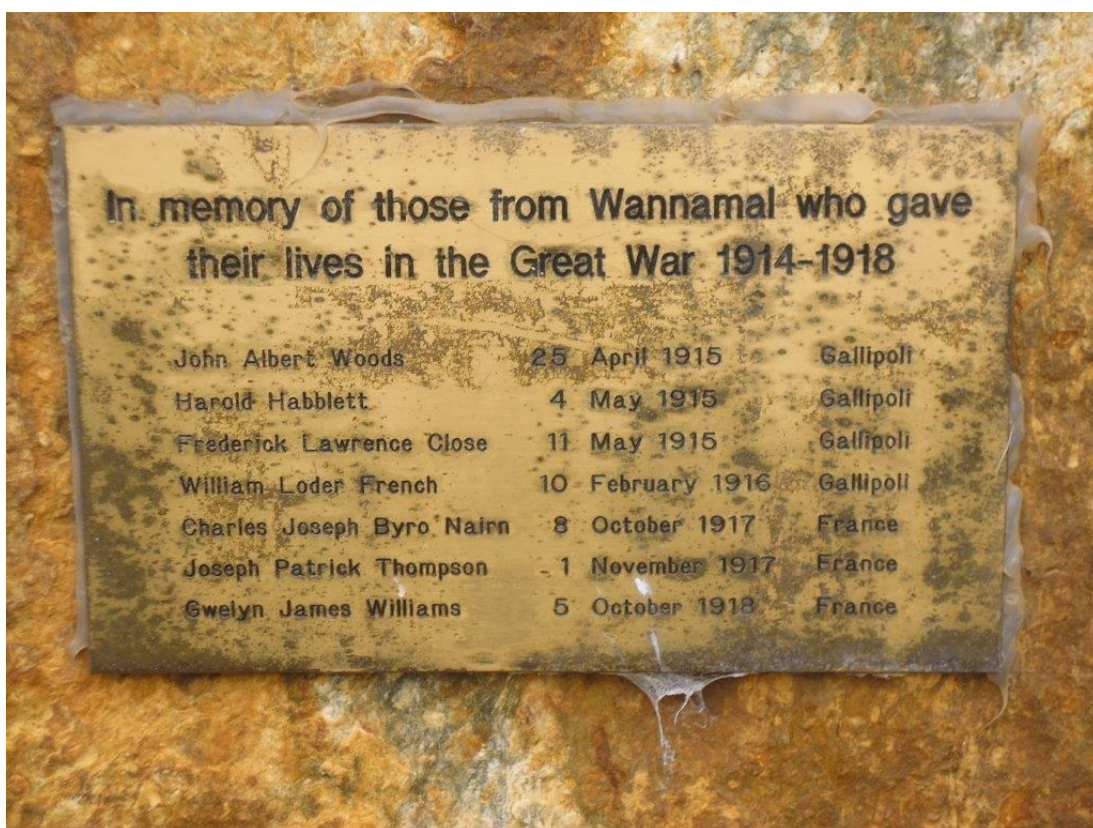
The 11th Battalion Panel & below entrance to The Crypt (Photos courtesy of Gordon Stuart)



William Loder French is also named on the Wannamal Memorial, located in the Wannamal Cemetery, Western Australia.



Wannamal Memorial (Photos kindly provided by Ruth Loudon)



(56 pages of Pte Private William Loder French'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) & National Archives





Left to right: Gladys, Maurice, William, Emily, Loder and Margaret, probably at the farm, about 1905

(Photo with permission from Deddington [OnLine](#))



Private William Loder French

(Photo with permission from John C. French & Tim Harry & Deddington [OnLine](#))

Newspaper Notices

MILITARY FUNERAL OF AN AUSTRALIAN

The death occurred here on Thursday, from an attack of meningitis, of Private W. Loder French, aged twenty-four, of the 11th Battalion, 1st Division, Australian Infantry, who had been invalided to the mother country from Gallipoli to assist in the recovery from an attack of enteric and dysentery, contracted on the peninsula, and treated at Cairo. Deceased had recovered sufficiently to leave the rest camp at Abbey Wood and visit his home at Deddington at the end of last year, and was apparently becoming convalescent until suddenly seized with the malady as stated, and to which he speedily succumbed, although everything was done to save his life as far as the medical skill was able. The deceased who was the eldest son of Mr and Mrs W. J. French, went to Australia some three years ago, and was one of the first to enlist on the outbreak of war, attesting at Perth, Western Australia. He trained at Blackboy Hill, and sailed from Fremantle with the first division, encamping near the Pyramids, then to the Greek Island of Lemnos, which was used as a base, and from there on H.M.S. London at midnight on April 24th for the peninsula, and took part in that terrible landing of the "Anzac" on the morning of the 25th. Deceased's boat was the first to reach the shore, and men were falling all round, but they drove the Turks out of the scrub at the point of the bayonet, and for the three following days they lay in their saturated uniforms and existed on sea-soaked biscuits, and were without water. Deceased was in several bayonet charges after this, in which he had many miraculous escapes from bursting shells, eventually receiving a slight wound in the leg. He fell victim to dysentery, and was sent to the Australian Hospital at Cairo, a bad attack of enteric following. He arrived in England in October last, at the War Hospital at Reading, and afterwards came home. He next went to Abbey Wood for light duty, where he contracted a severe cold in Christmas week. Private French was one of four survivors of a company which left Australia, and he has an only brother, Trooper J. Maurice French, serving with the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars in France. Deceased was respected by all, and many were the expressions of regret and sympathy received by his parents and sisters. The Vicar (Rev. T. Boniface) performed the last rites, the service, except the committal prayers, being said in the church, owing to the inclement weather. Mr A. Thornewill (lay reader) read the lesson. The floral tributes were numerous. The coffin was covered with the Union Jack, and a firing party and buglers, comprising fifteen Australians from the camp at Abbey Wood, all of whom had served at Gallipoli, paid their last respects to one of their bravest boys by firing the customary volleys and sound "The Last Post." The High Commissioner for Australia was represented by Captain J. Leaper Fisher, and the Australian Forces by Lieutenant R. G. Bennett. The funeral arrangements were carried out by Mr P. H. Bennett.

(Banbury Guardian, Banbury, Oxfordshire, England - 17 February, 1916)

Mr and Mrs W. J. FRENCH and Family wish to return their sincere thanks to their many friends for the kind expressions of sympathy in the loss of their son.

Castle End Farm,

Deddington

15th February, 1916.

(Banbury Guardian, Banbury, Oxfordshire, England - 17 February, 1916)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

144TH CASUALTY LIST

DEAD

W. L. French, 11th Battalion (England), died of illness (previously reported ill)

(The West Australian, Perth, Western Australia – 22 February, 1916)

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)

Pte W. L. French does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

St. Peter & St. Paul Churchyard, Deddington, Oxfordshire, England

St. Peter & St. Paul Churchyard, Deddington contains 6 Commonwealth War Graves – 5 from World War 1 & just 1 from World War 2.



(Photo from CWGC)

Photo of Pte W. L. French's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. Peter & St. Paul Churchyard, Deddington, Oxfordshire, England.



(Photo with permission from Deddington [OnLine](#))