

## Wedderburn Jacka Park Soldiers Memorial



Jacka Park War Memorial.jpg



Wedd 2.jpg



Wedd 1.jpg



Wedd 3.jpg



Wedd 4.jpg



Wedd 5.jpg



Wedd 6.jpg



Wedd 7.jpg



Wedd 8.jpg

### Location

Jacka Park, High Street and Chapel Street, Wedderburn, LODDON SHIRE

### Municipality

LODDON SHIRE

### Level of significance

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### Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

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Hermes Number 126406

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

The memorial is a marble statue of a World War I soldier on a granite pillar and granite base with 4 granite wings on a circular flagstone base. The digger stands easy holding a rifle, faces west and is supported by a representation of a tree trunk. There is a flagpole on the north side. The entrance gates to the park form part of the memorial.

West face  
THE GREAT WAR  
1914 - 1919  
Soldiers' names

On section below  
WEDDERBURN'S  
TRIBUTE  
TO ITS SOLDIERS  
WHO WENT OVERSEAS

Bronze shield on base  
IN MEMORIAM

THEIR NAMES SHALL LIVE FOR EVERMORE

South face  
Soldiers' names

East face  
Soldiers' names

North face  
Soldiers' names

Western pillar of entrance gates  
1914 - 18.  
DEDICATED  
TO THE  
MEMORY  
OF

Eastern pillar of entrance gates  
CPT.  
ALBERT  
JACKA  
V.C.  
M.C. & BAR.

## Historical Australian Themes

Remembering the fallen

## Usage/Former Usage

Commemoration

## Veterans Description for Public

The Wedderburn Jacka Park Soldiers Memorial was erected to commemorate soldiers of the First World War. The memorial is a marble statue of a First World War Digger on a granite pillar and granite base, with four granite wings on a circular flagstone base. The Digger stands easily holding a rifle, faces west and is supported by a representation of a tree trunk. There is a flagpole on the north side. The entrance gates to the park form part of the memorial and are inscribed with "1914-18 Dedicated To The Memory of Cpt. Albert Jacka V.C. M.C. & BAR." The pillars are also inscribed with "The Great War 1914 - 1919" with a list of Soldiers' names from the Wedderburn area and the epigraph, "Their Names Shall Live For Ever More." Jacka received the first Victoria Cross to be awarded to the AIF in the First World War.

Albert Jacka was born near Winchelsea but moved to Wedderburn when he was five. He landed at Anzac Cove on 26 April 1915. At 3am on 19 May, the Turkish forces attacked just about the entire front line above Anzac Cove. The Australians repelled the Turks, except at Courtney's Post, where the ground favoured the Turks. At about 4am, the Turkish soldiers entered part of Courtney's trenches, forcing the Anzacs to withdraw. The Turkish soldiers were blocked to the south by soldiers of the 14th Battalion, and to the north by Lance Corporal Albert Jacka, 22. Lieutenant Keith Crabbe asked Jacka if he could retake the trench. The attempt he made failed, and resulted in two of the three men who joined Jacka being injured in the counter-attack. A second attempt was made, with Crabbe creating a diversion while Jacka worked his way around the Turks' flank.

Jacka entered the trench, shot five men and bayoneted two others. Jacka's first words to Crabbe were, "I managed to get the beggars, sir" (Bean 1941). It was for this action that he was awarded the Victoria Cross and became a national hero. John Wren gave him a gold watch and £500, and he featured on recruiting posters and magazine covers.

After being commissioned as second lieutenant in early 1916, Jacka and the 14th Battalion were at Pozieres in August. He was awarded the Military Cross at Bullecourt on 8 April 1917 when he led a night reconnaissance party into no-man's-land to inspect enemy defences before an Allied attack against the new German line. He penetrated the wire at two places, reported back, then went out again to supervise the laying of tapes to guide the infantry. The work was virtually finished when two Germans loomed up. Realising that they would see the tapes, Jacka knew that they must be captured. He pulled his pistol; it misfired, so he rushed on and captured them by hand.

A few months later, at Messines, he led his company in capturing a field gun. In Polygon Wood, Jacka was praised for his role in rallying the troops. In May 1918, he was badly gassed and evacuated to England. A member of the 14th Battalion wrote:

He deserved the Victoria Cross as thoroughly at Pozieres, Bullecourt and at Ypres as at Gallipoli...The whole AIF came to look on him as a rock of strength that never failed. We of the 14th Battalion never ceased to be thrilled when we heard of ourselves referred to...by passing units on the march as "some of Jacka's mob." (Rule 1999)

A large crowd, including the Governor General, greeted his ship when it berthed at Melbourne in 1919, and a convoy of eighty-five cars with Jacka at its head drove to the town hall where men from the 14th Battalion welcomed their famous comrade. He was demobilised in January 1920.

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*