

# Durrington War Graves



*Lest we Forget*

## World War I



**6327 QMT. SERJT.**

**J. R. KENNEDY**

**24TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**26TH FEBRUARY, 1917 Age 35**

*Loved Son*

*Of J. & H. Kennedy*

*Fossway Farm Kyneton*

*Thy Will Be Done*

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Qmt. Serjt. J. R. Kennedy is located in  
Grave Plot # 213 of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

## James Robert KENNEDY

James Robert Kennedy was born in 1881 at "Fossway" Greenhill, Kyneton, Victoria to parents Hugh and Jane Kennedy (nee Bagnall). He was a 35 year old, single, Farmer from East Metcalfe, Victoria when he enlisted on 30<sup>th</sup> August, 1916 with the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, 18<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 6327 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Janet Kennedy, Hodgkinson Street, Bendigo, Victoria (father deceased). James Kennedy had previously served with 5<sup>th</sup> Victorian Contingent - Africa

Private James Robert Kennedy embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Hororata* (A20) on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 29<sup>th</sup> January, 1917. According to a letter from Base Records to Mrs J. Kennedy, "Private J. R. Kennedy held the rank of "Acting Sergeant" for the voyage only and reverted back to "Private" on disembarkation – which rank he held up to date of death."

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.

Records show "Reverts to the Ranks" on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 1917 & so from that date James Robert Kennedy revert back to the rank of Private.

Private James Robert Kennedy was marched in to 6<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion at Larkhill, Wiltshire from Australia on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 1917.

Pte/ Q.M.S.\* James Robert Kennedy was sent sick to Fargo Military Hospital from 6th Training Battalion, Larkhill, Wiltshire on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1917 & admitted the same day with Bronchitis.

(\* Even though in his records it stated that James Robert Kennedy was to revert back to rank – meaning he should have been recorded as "Private", several records still referred to him as "Q.M.S." – Quartermaster Sergeant, or "Acting Sergeant".)

Q. M. S. James Robert Kennedy died at 2.45 p.m. on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1917 at Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire from Broncho Pneumonia.

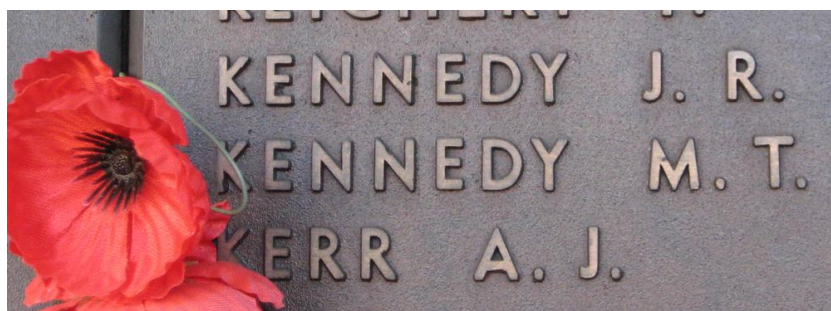
A death for James R. Kennedy, aged 36, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

Q. M. S. James Robert Kennedy was buried on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1917 at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire – Plot number 213 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing File for Pte James Robert Kennedy contains a letter from the Assistant Matron of Fargo Military Hospital, which reads:

*"Died of Pneumonia – Sgt. Kennedy was admitted to hospital 1.2.17 condition reported serious 25.2.17. Died at 2.45 p.m. on 26.2.17 of Bronchitis. Buried at Durrington, Wilts 1.3.17. Grave No. 213 Right hand side of path."*

Quartermaster Sergeant J. R. Kennedy is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 102.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

J. R. Kennedy, along with his brother T. H. Kennedy, are both remembered on the Kyneton Honour Roll for World War 1, located in the Town Hall at 129 Mollison Street, Kyneton, Victoria.



*(Photo from Victorian War heritage Inventory)*

J. R. Kennedy, along with his brother T. H. Kennedy, are both remembered on the Kyneton War Memorial, Victoria.



Kyneton War Memorial (Photos from Carol's Headstone [Photographs](#))

"Acting Sergeant"/ Private James Robert Kennedy 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 Pte Kennedy's mother – Mrs J. Kennedy (sent December, 1921 & June, 1922)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Quartermaster Sergeant James Robert Kennedy - service number 6327 as being 35 years old & served with 24th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Mrs Jane Kennedy, of Hodginson Street, Bendigo, Victoria. Born at Fossway, Greenhill.

A War Pension was granted to Jane Kennedy, widowed mother of late Q.M.S. James Robert Kennedy, in the sum of 40/- per fortnight from 14<sup>th</sup> December, 1917.

(72 pages of Qmr. Sergt. James Robert Kennedy'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*

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[Connected to Quartermaster Sergeant James Robert Kennedy:](#)

Lieut. Thomas Henry Kennedy, 38<sup>th</sup> Battalion – brother, killed in action 15<sup>th</sup> April, 1918. He was buried at Ribemont Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France. Lieut. Kennedy was awarded the Military Cross in 1917. (London Gazette – 18 July, 1917. Australian Gazette – 8 November, 1917).

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## Newspaper Reports

### WELCOMES HOME

KYNETON -A social to welcome home five members of the Fifth Contingent - Privates J. R. Kennedy, J. T. Kennedy, Cunningham, Parsell, and Gallagher --was held on Wednesday evening in Mr. J. Swanston's barn at Green Hill. As the five returned soldiers all came from the locality, there was an attendance of about 450 at the social, which was presided over by Mr. R. I. Argyle, M.L.A., Messrs. M'Cay, M. H. R., E. D. Williams, and Lawson, M.L.A., were also present, and delivered speeches. Lieut.-Colonel M'Cay presented each of the soldiers with a gold medal, suitably inscribed, and subscribed for by the residents of Green Hill and vicinity.

*(The Argus, Melbourne- Friday 16 May, 1902)*

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### DIED ON SERVICE

KENNEDY - Died of pneumonia, at Fargo Military Hospital, England, 26th February, 1917, Q. M. Sgt. James Robert Kennedy, 18th Rein., 24<sup>th</sup> Batt., of Tara, Queensland, second son of Mrs. Kennedy, of Hodgkinson Street, Bendigo, and the late Hugh Kennedy, of "Fosway," Green Hill, Kyneton, aged 35 years.

*(The Argus, Melbourne- Tuesday 6 March, 1917)*

## DIED FROM ILLNESS

### QUARTERMASTER-SERGEANT JAMES R. KENNEDY

On Friday evening Mrs. Hugh Kennedy, of Hodgkinson-street, was informed by the Defence department that her son, Quartermaster-Sergeant James R. Kennedy, aged 34 years, had died of pneumonia at the Fargo Hospital on 26th February. He was one of three sons of Mrs. Kennedy who are serving the Empire in the present war, and was Mrs. Kennedy's second son. Her third son, Platoon-Sergeant Thomas H. Kennedy, is with the 38th Battalion in France, and her fourth son is in the Aviation Corps, and at present at Point Cook. Their father was Mr. Hugh Kennedy, of Fossway, Greenhill, Kyneton. Both Q.M.-Sergeant James R. Kennedy and Platoon-Sergeant Thomas H. Kennedy served in the Boer war. Q.M.-Sergeant Kennedy left Australia on 27th November, and was last heard of from Durban. It is apparent that he had not reached the front. No intelligence of his illness had reached Mrs. Kennedy, and the news of his death was naturally a great shock to Mrs. Kennedy and the family, whose chief anxiety has naturally been with regard to the deceased's brother in France. Prior to enlisting Q.M.-Sergeant J. R. Kennedy was engaged on the land in Queensland. Much sympathy is felt for Mrs. Kennedy and family, and at St. Andrew's Church yesterday the Rev. G. B. Murphy made feeling reference to the loss and commended the bereaved family to the prayers of the congregation.

*(Bendigonian, Bendigo, Victoria- Thursday 8 March, 1917)*

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## CASUALTY LIST – No. 279

### VICTORIA – DIED OF ILLNESS

A. Sgt. J. R. Kennedy

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW- Friday 16 March, 1917)*

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## MOSTLY ABOUT PEOPLE

Sergt. T. H. Kennedy

Mrs Kennedy, of 53 Hodgkinson-street, Bendigo, late of Greenhill has received word from the Defence Department that her son, Sergt. T. H. Kennedy, of the 38th Battalion has been wounded in France. He is a brother of the late Quartermaster Sergt. J. R. Kennedy, who died in a military hospital in England.

*(Kyneton Guardian, Victoria - Tuesday 20 March, 1917)*

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## DIED FROM ILLNESS

LATE Q.M.S. JAMES R. KENNEDY.

Mrs. J. Kennedy, of Hodgkinson-street, has received the following letter in reference to the death from pneumonia of her son, Q.M.S. James R. Kennedy, on 26<sup>th</sup> February:—

"Officers' Training School, Tidworth Barracks, Salisbury Plain, Sunday, 4/2/17.

Dear Mrs. Kennedy,—After an absence of about three weeks from Larkhill, I to-day visited the camp for a few hours, and was shocked to hear that your son Jim had passed away during the week as a result of pneumonia. I hope that you will not regard as an intrusion upon your grief my expression of deepest sympathy for you in what must be a very bitter experience. Jim, as Q.M.S., was in constant intercourse with me, both during his stay at Royal Park and while on the voyage, and I can truth-fully say had endeared himself to us all by his quiet capableness and his constant thought for the comfort of the men. We all knew him for a straightforward, clean-living man, who by his manner of life set an example to younger and more unstable characters. All ranks in our unit realise that we have suffered a great loss. At a time like this, when so many have offered themselves for their country's service, it may be some consolation to those whose dear one has made the supreme sacrifice to know that he played his part as a man in the very best sense of the word. Again expressing our deep sympathy with you and yours in your great loss.—I am, very sincerely, A. Wilcock. Lieut."

*(Bendigo Advertiser, Victoria- Wednesday 16 May, 1917)*

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## KYNETON DISTRICT HONOUR ROLL 1914 – 1918

THOSE WHO HAVE FOUGHT FOR FREEDOM'S CAUSE.'

"The debt of gratitude which we owe to the nation's defenders can never be repaid, either by this or future generations; yet the acknowledged gift of the obligation in various forms and in a multitude of places throughout this broad land purifies our ideas and brings us all together in sympathy of sentiment and, unity of purpose."-W. McKinley.

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Pte J. R. Kennedy

*(Kyneton Guardian, Victoria - Tuesday 25 June, 1918)*

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### 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 at Durrington War Graves 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)*

Quartermaster Sergeant J. R. Kennedy does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*Loved Son Of J. & H. Kennedy Fossway Farm Kyneton. Thy Will Be Done*

Photo of Quartermaster Sergeant J. R. Kennedy's Headstone at Durrington War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire.



(Photo © Ian King - with permission)