

Durrington War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



2653 PRIVATE

J. WOOLLEY

44TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

16TH FEBRUARY, 1917

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte J. Woolley is located in Grave Plot # 201
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

James WOOLLEY

James Woolley was born at Seymour, Victoria in 1877 to parents James & Mary Woolley (nee McCarthy).

James Woolley married Sarah Leggett in 1900 in New South Wales. A birth was registered for Alice Woolley, parents James & Sarah Woolley in 1900.

James Woolley was a 39 year old, married, Wood Chopper from Western Australia when he enlisted at Kalgoorlie, Western Australia on 1st May, 1916 with the 44th Infantry Battalion, 5th Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 2653 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Sarah Woolley, G.P.O., Perth, Western Australia. Her later address was 22 Elizabeth Street, North Perth, Western Australia.

Pte James Woolley embarked from Fremantle on HMAT *Argyllshire (A8)* on 9th November, 1916 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 10th January, 1917.

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.

Pte James Woolley was marched in from Australia to 11th Training Battalion on 10th January, 1917.

Pte James Woolley was admitted to Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire on 3rd February, 1917 with Influenza. He was reported with Bronchitis severe on 10th February, 1917 & his wife was notified by Telegram.

Private James Woolley died on 16th February, 1917 at Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire from Bronchitis. (All the forms contained in Pte James Woolley's Service Record file state the date of death as 16th February, 1917 – however the final form contained in all Service Record files has "Broncho Pneumonia correct date of death 17/2/17." Pte Woolley's file does not contain the Hospital Admission form – so this cannot be verified.)

A death for James Woolley, aged 39, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

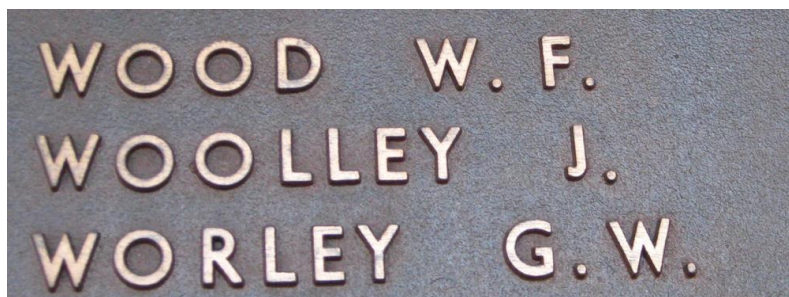
Private James Woolley was buried on 20th February, 1917 at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire – Plot number 201 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

A letter written by the brother of Pte James Woolley – Charles Woolley, dated 7th August, 1919, was sent to Base Records enquiring into the whereabouts of his brother Pte James Woolley as he had not heard from him since he enlisted. A reply was sent one week later advising that Pte James Woolley had died on 16th February, 1917 & a photograph was sent of Pte Woolley's grave.

Mrs S. Woolley, the widow of the late Pte James Woolley was not locatable for a number of years. In February, 1920 she contacted Base Records asking for the personal effects & belongs of her late husband. These items had been sent to Mrs Woolley but had been returned unclaimed on July, 1917.

The effects of the late Pte James Woolley were forwarded to The Public Trustee in Sydney, NSW as they were administering the estate of the late Pte James Woolley.

Private J. Woolley is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 139.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Pte James Woolley 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 Woolley's widow – Mrs S. Woolley (sent December, 1921 & July, 1922)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private James Woolley – service number 2653 as being 39 years old & served with 44th Battalion Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

(53 pages of Pte James Woolley'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

Newspaper Reports

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

275TH OFFICIAL LIST

ILL

J. Woolley, Perth, seriously

(The Daily News, Perth, Western Australia – Tuesday 27 February, 1917)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

276TH CASUALTY LIST

DEATHS

J. Woolley (Perth), died of illness, previously reported seriously ill.

(The West Australian, Perth – Saturday 3 March, 1917)

SOLDIERS' PERSONAL EFFECTS

CLAIMANTS REQUIRED

Personal effects of the following members of the Australian Imperial Force are held by the Officer in Charge of Base Records, Melbourne, for which claimants are required:

.....2653 Pte J. Woolley, 44th Btn;

(Western Argus, Kalgoorlie, Western Australia – Tuesday 10 September, 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 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)

Pte J. Woolley does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Photo of Pte J. Woolley's Headstone at Durrington War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire.



(Photo © Ian King - with permission)