

Durrington War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



6866 PRIVATE

J. M. COOK

12TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

25TH JANUARY, 1917 Age 34

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte J. M. Cook is located in Grave Plot # 159
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

John Meyrick COOK

John Meyrick Cook was born at Caveside, Deloraine, Tasmania on 16th November, 1883, to parents Thomas Knight Cook & Mary Beach Cook (nee Roberts). He was a 32 year old, single Farmer from Deloraine, Tasmania when he enlisted on 11th June, 1916 with the 12th Infantry Battalion, 22nd Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 6866 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his sister – Miss Maida Beach Cook, Caveside, via Deloraine, Tasmania.

Pte John Meyrick Cook was appointed Acting Corporal on 1st October, 1916 while at 1st Depot Battalion, Claremont, Tasmania.

Acting Corporal John Meyrick Cook embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Ulysses (A38)* on 25th October, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 28th December, 1916.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. These were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Acting Corporal John Meyrick Cook reverted back to rank of Private once he landed in England – on 29th December, 1916 & was marched in to 3rd Training Battalion at Durrington Camp, Wiltshire from Australia.

Pte John Meyrick Cook was admitted sick to Fargo Military Hospital on 20th January, 1917.

Pte John Meyrick Cook died of Bronchitis at 8.15 a.m. on 25th January, 1917 at Fargo Military Hospital. This was later revised to died of Broncho-pneumonia.

A death for John M. Cook, aged 32, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

Pte John Meyrick Cook was buried on 27th January, 1917 in Durrington Cemetery – plot number 159 and has a Commonwealth War Graves headstone.

Private J. M. Cook is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 65.

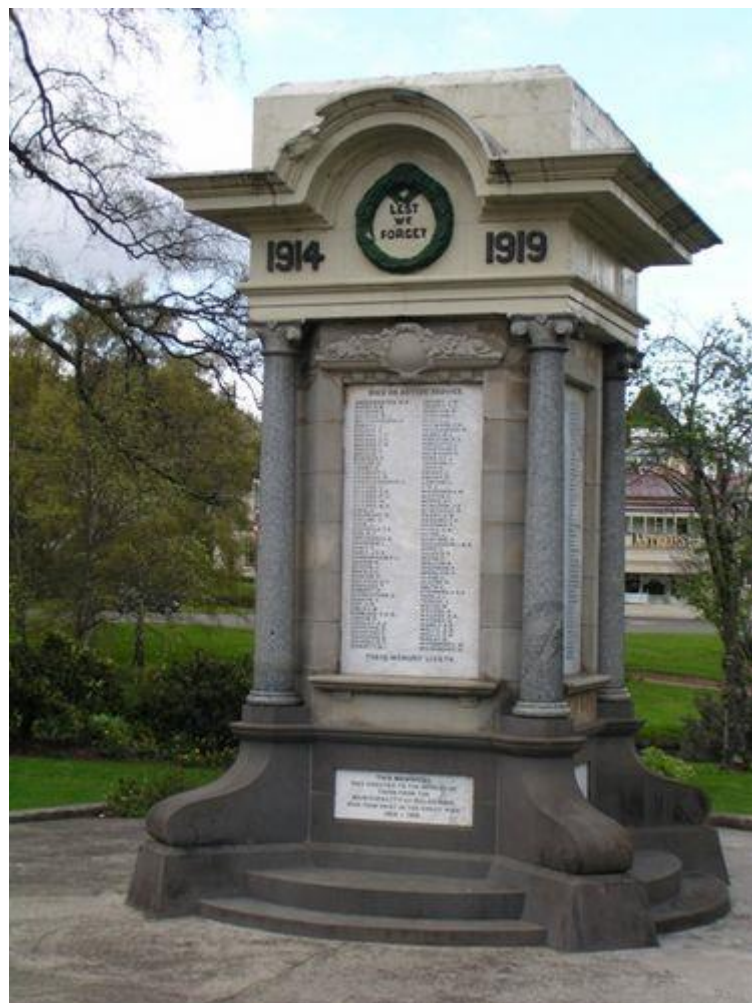


(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

J. Cook is also remembered on the Deloraine War Memorial (north-west face) located at Emu Bay Road & West Barrack St, Deloraine, Tasmania.



(Photo from Monument Australia)

Pte John Meyrick Cook was entitled to British War Medal only as he did not enter a Theatre of War. A Memorial Plaque was also sent to Pte Cook's next-of-kin – his sister Miss Maida B. Cook (March, 1922). In a letter from Base Records, dated 28th June, 1921, Base Records advised Miss M. B. Cook that: *"I have endeavoured to get into touch with the custodian of his ex-nuptial child without success so, in the circumstances, am prepared to recommend that these items be handed over to you but only on the distinct understanding that they will be preserved with due care as memorials of the deceased's services and produced to this Department at any time upon receipt of its demand should a claim be received on behalf of the late soldier's son which is upheld by the Minister."*

In a letter from Clement Byard J.P. dated 13th May, 1921 regarding the late Pte J. M. Cook - *".....In regard to the reputed son of the late soldier; it certainly is a matter for doubt whether it is his son or no; as the mother is a bad case, and the child may belong to anyone. We therefore strongly object to either pension, or medals going in this direction....."*

A War Pension was granted to Stanley John Cook, son (Ex-nuptial) in regards to late Pte John Meyrick Cook in the sum of 15/- per fortnight from 30th March, 1917 with Ivy Warren of Longford the Trustee (mother of Stanley John Cook). A War Pension was granted to Maida Beach Cook of "Moss Vale" Chudleigh, Tasmania, sister of late Pte J. M. Cook in the sum of 20/- per fortnight from 12th April, 1917. A War Pension was rejected for Cecil William Smith of "Moss Vale" Chudleigh – foster brother of late Pte J. M. Cook on the grounds he was not a dependant. A War Pension was also rejected for Nellie Emma Cook, niece (ex-nuptial) of late Pte J. M. Cook on the grounds she was not a dependant.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John Meyrick Cook – service number 6866 as being 34 years old & served with 12th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Thomas Knight Cook & Mary Cook.

(63 pages of Pte John Meyrick Cook's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll) & National Archives

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Newspaper Reports

TASMANIAN CASUALTIES

DIED OF ILLNESS

PTE J. M. COOK, Caveside. – 25th Jan. 1917

(The North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times, Tasmania Friday 9 February, 1917)

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. M. Cook does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

A letter from Base records, dated 30th July, 1921, to Miss M. B. Cook (sister) reads : “.....It is noted you desire the Star of David inscribed on the permanent memorial, but I would point out that this is the emblem of the Jewish faith, and as the above named soldier is a member of the Methodist Church, it is thought you would prefer the Cross incised.”

Another letter from Base Records, dated 6th July, 1921, to Miss M. B. Cook advises that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription of the late Pte J. M. Cook’s headstone had not been answered.

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



(Photo © Ian King - with permission)