

Durrington War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



5895 PRIVATE

J. W. MATHEWS

28TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

23RD DECEMBER, 1916 Age 26

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte J. W. Mathews is located in Grave Plot # 133
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

John William MATHEWS

John William Mathews was born near Port Augusta West, South Australia to parents James Thomas Mathews & Mary Ann Mathew (nee Pickford). His birth was registered in 1887 in the district of Frome, South Australia.

John W. Mathews married Louisa L. Stevens in 1916 in the district of Dundas, Western Australia.

John stated he was a 26 year old, married Grocer from Norseman, Western Australia when he enlisted on 22nd June, 1916 with the 7th Infantry Brigade, 28th Infantry Battalion, 16th Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 5895 & his religion was Wesleyan. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Louisa Lillian Mathews of Norseman, Western Australia.

Pte John William Mathews embarked from Fremantle on HMAT *Suffolk (A23)* on 13th October, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 2nd December, 1916.

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.

Private John William Mathews was marched in to 7th Training Battalion at Rollestone, Wiltshire on 16th December, 1916.

Private John William Mathews was admitted to Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire on 19th December, 1916.

Private John William Mathews died at 1 a.m. on 23rd December, 1916 at Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire from Broncho Pneumonia.

A death for John W. Mathews, aged 27, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

Private John William Mathews was buried on 27th December, 1916 at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire – Plot number 133 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Private J. W. Mathews is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 114.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Pte John William Mathews 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 Mathews' widow – Mrs L. L. Mathews (sent December, 1921 & July, 1922)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John William Mathews – service number 5895 as being 26 years old & served with 28th Battalion Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

(39 pages of Pte John William Mathews 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

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Newspaper Reports

IN MEMORIAM

MATHEWS - In loving memory of our dear brother, Private Jack Mathews, who died in England December 23, 1916, whilst on his way to the front. Manly, unselfish, and brave.

-Inserted by his loving brother and sister-in-law, Jim and Ida Mathews, 13 James-street, Fremantle.

(The West Australian, Perth – Monday 24 December, 1917)

ROLL OF HONOUR – CASUALTY LIST NO. 262

WESTERN AUSTRALIA – DIED OF ILLNESS

J. W. Mathews, Norseman, 23/12/16

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – Friday 12 January, 1917)

DEATHS

MATHEWS – On December 23, 1916, at Military Hospital Fargo, Salisbury Plains, Private John William, of broncho-pneumonia; aged 27 years, dearly loved husband of Louise Lilian Mathews, Ramsey-street, Norseman.

At his country's call
Loved by all who knew him.

*(Kalgoorlie Miner, Western Australia – Friday 16 March, 1917) &
(Western Argus, Kalgoorlie, Western Australia – Tuesday 20 March, 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)

A letter from Base Records, dated 22nd July, 1921, to Mrs L. L. Mathews, Norseman, W.A. advises that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of the late Pte J. W. Mathews had not been answered & non-receipt of a reply within 21 days would have to be accepted as indicating that no further action was to be taken.

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

Photo of Pte J. W. Mathews' Headstone at Durrington War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire.



(Photo © Ian King - with permission)