

Durrington War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



1279 PRIVATE

W. J. SUPPLE

37TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

22ND SEPTEMBER, 1916

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte W. J. Supple is located in Grave Plot # 107
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

William James SUPPLE

William James Supple was born at Tallangatta, Victoria in 1897 to parents James and Alice Ann Supple. He was an 18 year old, single, Labourer from Cravensville, Victoria when he enlisted on 13th March, 1916 with the 10th Infantry Brigade, 37th Infantry Battalion, "D" Company of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 1279 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr James Supple, Cravensville, via Tallangatta, Victoria.

Pte William James Supple embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Persic* (A34) on 3rd June, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 25th July, 1916. Pte Supple had been admitted to Ship's Hospital on the voyage to England with measles from 10th July – 13th July, 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.

Pte William James Supple sent to Brimstone Bottom Hospital from Headquarters, Tidworth, Wiltshire on 13th September, 1916 with measles. He was reported seriously ill with Measles on 20th September, 1916. He was reported dangerously ill on 22nd September, 1916.

Private William James Supple died on 22nd September, 1916 at Brimstone Bottom Isolation Hospital, Tidworth, Wiltshire from Measles & Pneumonia. Another Australian soldier – Pte Donald McMillan Spicer who also embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Persic* also died at Brimstone Bottom Isolation Hospital, Tidworth, Wiltshire from Measles & Broncho Pneumonia but 2 days later – on 24th September, 1916. Both soldiers are buried next to each other in Durrington Cemetery, Pte Spicer in Grave no. 108.

A death for William J. Supple, aged 19, was registered in the September quarter, 1916 in the district of Pewsey, Wiltshire.

Private William James Supple was buried on 25th September, 1916 at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire – Plot number 107 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing File for Pte W. J. Supple contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of the family of Pte Supple regarding his last hours & place of burial. A reply by the Sister in Charge D. Block, Military Hospital, Tidworth, Hants reads:

"He had Broncho Pneumonia after Measles. He suffered rather much with his breathing, as previous to his last illness he had some nasal trouble which did not help matters as he was unable to breathe through his nose freely. I was with him when he died and he died very peacefully, at the last, he had no pain. The day before he died was very trying for him as he had to struggle to get air into his lungs as the Bronchil tubes were so blocked and the strain was too much for the heart. The Chaplain told me he would write to his people, as I was so busy at the time, we had so many bad cases and before I had time to write I took Diptheria and Pneumonia myself and by the time I was better it had quite slipped my memory. I am writing a letter of sympathy to his mother also particulars. He was buried at Durrington Cemetery 28.9.19 Grave No. 107."

Private W. J. Supple is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 129.

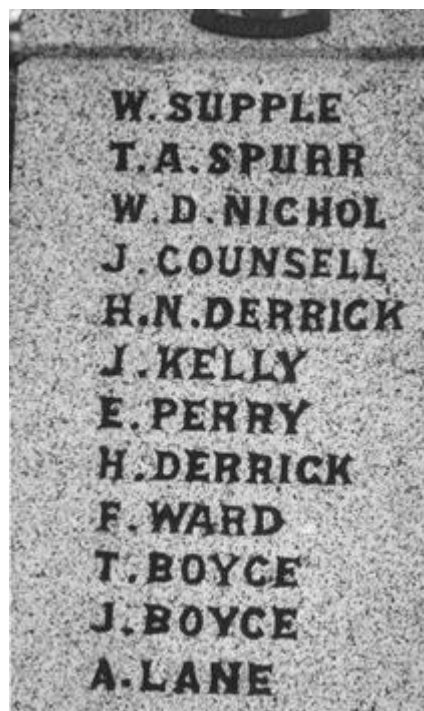


(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

W. Supple is also remembered on the Tallangatta Valley War Memorial located at Cravensville Road, Tallangatta Valley, Victoria.



Tallangatta Valley War Memorial (Photo from Victorian War Heritage Inventory)

Pte William James Supple 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 Supple's father – (sent March, 1922 & July, 1922)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private William James Supple – service number 1279 as having served with 37th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of James and Alice Ann Supple of Cravensville, Tallangatta, Victoria.

A War Pension was granted to Alice Ann Supple, mother of late Pte William James Supple, in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 4th December, 1916.

(45 pages of Pte William James Supple'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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Newspaper Reports

CASUALTIES – 233RD LIST

VICTORIA

DIED OF ILLNESS

Pte W. J. Supple

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – Friday 13th October, 1916)

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

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



(Photo © Ian King - with permission)