

# Durrington War Graves

## World War 1



*Lest We Forget*



822 PRIVATE

**ALBERT THOMAS BRIGGS**

37TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

21ST JANUARY, 1917 Age 29

*In Memory Of*

*The Dearly Loved Son Of*

*Mr & Mrs Briggs Of Tawonga*

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Private Albert Thomas Briggs is located in  
Grave Plot # 157 of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

## Albert Thomas BRIGGS

Albert Thomas Briggs was born at Yackandandah, Victoria around 1888.

Albert Thomas Briggs was a 28 year old, single, Labourer from Tawonga, Victoria when he enlisted at Wangaratta on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1916 with the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion "C" Company of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 822 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Thomas Briggs, Tawonga P.O. via Yackandandah, Victoria.

Pte Albert Thomas Briggs embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Persic* (A34) on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 25<sup>th</sup> 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 Briggs was admitted to Brimstone Bottom Hospital on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 1916 from Headquarters Tidworth, suffering from "Aubella" – (probably should be Rubella as a later communication states "previously reported seriously ill – Measles"). He was reported as progressing favourably on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 1916 & Convalescent on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1916.

Pte Albert Briggs was marched out to 10<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion at Larkhill, Wiltshire on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 1917.

Pte Albert Briggs was admitted sick to Fargo Military Hospital on 21<sup>st</sup> January, 1917.

Pte Albert Thomas Briggs died at 8.15 p.m. on 21<sup>st</sup> January, 1917 of double pneumonia at Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire.

A death for Albert T. Briggs, aged 28, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

Pte Albert Thomas Briggs was buried on 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1917 at Durrington Cemetery in grave number 157.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing File included with Pte Albert Thomas Briggs Service Record file includes a letter from the Assistant Matron, Fargo Military Hospital, Salisbury Plain & reads:

*Pte A. T. Briggs 37<sup>th</sup> Battn. A.I.F. was admitted to this hospital on Jan. 20<sup>th</sup> suffering from double pneumonia, with the disease well advanced, an admission he was seriously ill and he gradually became unconscious and died at 8.15 p.m. Jan. 21<sup>st</sup> 1917. He was buried at Durrington, Wilts, grave No 157 on right hand side of cemetery path. Pte Law – a friend of Pte Briggs – was with him just before he died and I believe wrote to his relatives that week, also the Sister of the ward wrote too. I well remember Pte Briggs he did not suffer a great deal after he came to hospital for he became unconscious soon after admission and only lived just over a day. Will you please convey to his relatives our heartfelt sympathy.*

A War Pension was granted to Annie Maria Briggs, mother of deceased Pte Robert Thomas Briggs 822, in the sum of £1 per fortnight as from 26<sup>th</sup> March, 1917.

Pte Albert Thomas Briggs was entitled to British War Medal only. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Briggs' father – Thomas Briggs of Kiewa Road, Wodonga, Victoria (March, 1922 & August, 1922)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Albert Thomas Briggs – service number 822 as being 29 years old & served with 37th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Thomas and Annie Maria Briggs of Tawonga, Victoria.

Private A. T. Briggs is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 128.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)

\* E. Briggs was a younger brother of Albert Thomas Briggs. Private Ernest Briggs (823) died on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1917, aged 22. Killed in Action. Remembered on Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium. Albert & Ernest enlisted on same day – 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1916.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Albert Briggs is remembered on the Tawonga State School Honour Roll (First World War) along with his brothers – Ernest (Killed in Action) & James, located at Tawonga Primary School, Kiewa Valley Highway, Tawonga, Victoria.



Tawonga State School Honour Roll

(47 pages of Pte Albert Thomas Briggs' 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, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives*



## **Newspaper Reports**

### **TAWONGA**

Two local lads have died on service. Mr A. Briggs went into hospital after landing and has since died and Mr Geo. Boon was shot at the front.

*(Albury Banner and Wodonga Express, NSW Friday 2 February, 1917)*

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### **CASUALTIES – 270<sup>th</sup> List**

VICTORIA - DIED OF ILLNESS

Pte A. T. Briggs

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW Saturday 3 February, 1917)*

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### **CASUALTY LIST**

The Defence Department on Friday last issued the 270<sup>th</sup> casualty list, containing 882 names. Of these 280 are wounded and there were 137 deaths. The names of the following district soldiers appear in this list:-

Private A. T. Briggs, Tawonga, died of illness.

*(Ovens and Murray Advertiser, Beechworth, Victoria Wednesday 7 February, 1917)*

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### **DIED ON SERVICE**

BRIGGS – In fond and loving memory of our dear son and brother, Private Albert Thomas Briggs, who died in Fargo Hospital, England, on the 21<sup>st</sup> January, 1917, aged 29 years.

Friends may think that we have forgotten,  
When they sometimes see us smile,  
But they little know the sorrow  
That smile hides all the while.  
His loving smile and kindly ways  
Are pleasant to recall;  
He always had a kindly word,  
And died beloved by all.

-(Inserted by his loving mother, father, sisters and brothers, of Tawonga)

*(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria Thursday 24 May, 1917)*

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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*)

Pte Albert Thomas Briggs does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*In Memory Of The Dearly Loved Son Of Mr & Mrs Briggs Of Tawonga*



**Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire** (*Photo by Dave Healing 2013*)

Photo of Pte Albert Thomas Briggs' Headstone at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire.



*(Photo © Ian King - with permission)*