

**Netley Military Cemetery,
Hampshire, England
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



852 PRIVATE

J. F. CHRISTMAS

26TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

30TH AUGUST, 1916 Age 25

Not Lost Or Forgotten

He Has Only Gone Before

John Frater (Jack) CHRISTMAS

John Frater Christmas was born at Launceston, Tasmania on 21st December, 1889 to parents Henry Rothwell Christmas and Jane Ann Christmas (nee Stewart, formerly Flowerday).

John Frater Christmas attended Glen Dhu State School, Tasmania.

John F. Christmas, of Granville Street, Launceston, Tasmania was registered as a Driver of a Motor Vehicle during the month of October, 1912. (*Police Gazette, Tasmania 1 November, 1912*).

Henry Rothwell Christmas, father of John Frater Christmas, died on 16th February, 1914 at Launceston, Tasmania, Australia.

John Frater Christmas was a 25 year old, single, Electrician from Launceston, Tasmania when he enlisted at Claremont, Tasmania on 25th March, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 852 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Jane Ann Christmas, of Launceston, Tasmania. John Frater Christmas stated on his Attestation Papers that he had been convicted for a minor offence – trespassing. He also stated that he had previously been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service due to his chest measurement. John Frater Christmas also stated he had served for 8 months with the Launceston Rifle Club.

Private John Frater Christmas was posted to 26th Battalion for recruit training.

Private John Frater Christmas embarked from Brisbane, Queensland on HMAT *Aeneas (A60)* on 29th June, 1915 with the 7th Infantry Brigade, 26th Infantry Battalion, "C" Company".

Private John Frater Christmas embarked from Alexandria on 4th September, 1915 to join M.E.F. (Mediterranean Expeditionary Force) at Gallipoli Peninsula.

Private John Frater Christmas was admitted to 13th Casualty Clearing Station on 19th October, 1915 at Gallipoli Peninsula. He was transferred to 1st Australian Light Horse Field Ambulance at Anzac on 20th October, 1915 with Dysentery. Pte Christmas was transferred to Hospital Ship *Nevasa* at Gallipoli Peninsula on 20th October, 1915 to Mudros then admitted to St. John's Hospital at Malta on 27th October, 1915. He was transferred to Ghain Tuffieha Convalescent Camp on 30th November, 1915.

Private John Frater Christmas embarked from Malta on H.T. *Bormu* for Egypt on 26th January, 1916 as he was fit for active service.

Private John Frater Christmas rejoined his Battalion at Ismalia on 21st February, 1916.

Private John Frater Christmas proceeded to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) from Alexandria on 15th March, 1916 & disembarked at Marseilles, France on 21st March, 1916.

26th Battalion

The 26th Battalion was raised at Enoggera, Queensland, in April 1915 from recruits enlisted in Queensland and Tasmania, and formed part of the 7th Brigade. It left Australia in July, and, after training in Egypt, landed at Gallipoli on 12 September. At Gallipoli, the 26th played a purely defensive role and at various times was responsible for the defence of Courtney's and Steele's Posts, and Russell's Top. It withdrew from the peninsula on 12 December.

After another stint in Egypt, the 7th Brigade proceeded to France as part of the 2nd Australian Division in March 1916 in concert with the 28th Battalion; the 26th mounted the first trench raid undertaken by Australian troops on the Western Front on 6 June. The Battalion fought in its first major battle around Pozieres between 28 July and 7 August.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private John Frater Christmas was temporarily attached to 7th Brigade Machine Gun Company in France on 16th April, 1916.

Private John Frater Christmas was wounded in action in France on 5th August, 1916. He was admitted to 44th Casualty Clearing Station on 6th August, 1916 then transferred to Ambulance Train. Pte Christmas was admitted to No.2 Stationary Hospital on 23rd August, 1916 & invalided to England from Havre on 24th August, 1916 on Hospital Ship *Marama* with gunshot wounds to head.

Private John Frater Christmas was admitted to the Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, Hampshire, England on 25th August, 1916 dangerously ill with gunshot wounds to head. The Hospital Admission forms records the following information: “ *Hit by He three weeks ago. There is a small opening in mi frontal region and the skiagram shows radiating fractures and numerous fragments in the brain. The wound was enlarged and the abscess drained. The cerebro spinal fluid was turbid. He gradually failed with paralysis of the respiratory centre.*”



Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley

Private John Frater Christmas died on 30th August, 1916 at Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, Hampshire, England from wounds received in action in France – gunshot wounds to head.

A death for John F. Christmas, aged 26, was registered in the September quarter, 1916 in the district of South Stoneham, Hampshire, England.

Private John Frater Christmas was buried in Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire, England – Plot number C.E. 1843 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

A War Pension was granted to Jane Ann Christmas, c/o G.P.O., Launceston, mother of the late Private John Frater Christmas in the sum of 40/- per fortnight from 14th November, 1916.

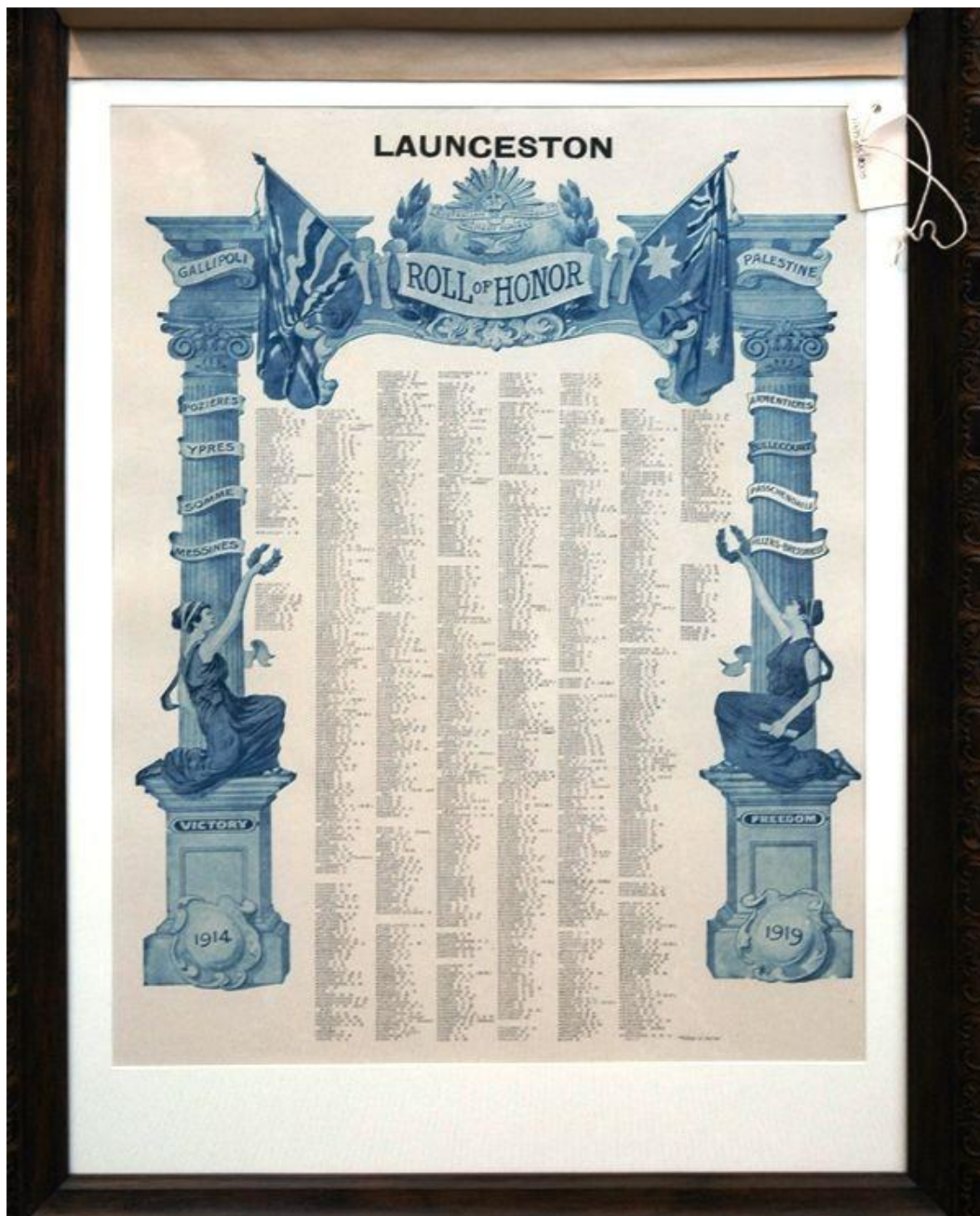
A photograph of the grave of the late Private John Frater Christmas was sent to his mother – Mrs J. A. Christmas at Granville Street, Launceston in September, 1918 but was returned. Base Records, Melbourne then contacted the D.A.A.G. requesting an address for Mrs J. A. Christmas. The 6th Military District replied that Messrs Ritchie Parker,

Alfred Green & Co., Solicitors, Launceston were acting on behalf of the next-of-kin in winding up his Estate. Base Records then wrote to the Solicitors in Launceston requesting the latest address of Mrs Christmas.

Private John Frater Christmas was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Christmas's widowed mother - Mrs J. A. Christmas, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent August, 1921 & Plaque sent July, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John Frater Christmas – service number 852, aged 25, of 26th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Henry Rothwell Christmas and Jane Ann Christmas, of Launceston, Tasmania.

J. Christmas is remembered on the Launceston Roll of Honour, located in Queen Victoria Museum, History Department, 2 Invermay Road, Inveresk, Tasmania.



Launceston Roll of Honour (Photos from Monument Australia – Arthur Garland)



Launceston Roll of Honour

Private J. F. Christmas is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 107.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(69 pages of Private John Frater Christmas' 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



Private John Frater Christmas



Newspaper Notices

Roll of Honour

Tasmanian Casualties

News received by Mrs J. A. Christmas, of Granville-street, Launceston, is to the effect that her son, Lance-Corporal John F. Christmas, had been reported dangerously ill from gunshot wound in the head.

(Examiner, Launceston, Tasmania – 26 August, 1916)

DEATHS

CHRISTMAS – At Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, England, Lance-Corporal John F. Christmas, aged 27, third son of the late H. R. Christmas, Granville-street, Launceston. For King and country.

(Examiner, Launceston, Tasmania – 14 September, 1916)

PERSONAL NOTES

Mrs J. B. Christmas, of Granville-street, Launceston, has received word of the death of her son, Lance-Corporal John V. Christmas, at the Royal Victoria Hospital at Netley. The deceased, who was 27 years of age, received a gunshot wound in the head and had previously been reported dangerously ill.

(Daily Telegraph, Launceston, Tasmania – 15 September, 1916)

Casualty Lists 218, 219

Tasmania's Roll of Honour

Died of Wounds

Pte J. F. Christmas (L'ton) 30/8/16

(North-Eastern Advertiser, Scottsdale, Tasmania – 26 September, 1916)

IN MEMORIAM

CHRISTMAS – In loving memory of J. F. (Jack) Christmas, who died from wounds received in France, 30th August, 1916.

He did his best, he gave his all to see our victory won,
And ere they laid him down to rest, he said "God's will be done,
And no loved one must grieve for me, they'll know where I am gone,
I'll only sleep to wake again on that great Judgement dawn."

-Inserted by his mother and brother Tom.

(Daily Telegraph, Launceston, Tasmania – 30 August, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

CHRISTMAS – In loving memory of our dearly loved brother, J. F. (Jack) Christmas, who died August 30th, 1916, of wounds, in Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, England.

"Rest well, brave heart," we softly say;
"Ye who for us your life lay down;
The angels know your grave to-day,
And weave for you the victor's crown."

-Inserted by his loving sisters, Olive and Grave, and brother, Tom (on active service).

(Examiner, Launceston, Tasmania – 30 August, 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. 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)

Private J. F. Christmas does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Not Lost Or Forgotten

He Has Only Gone Before

Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire, England

Netley Military Cemetery is a permanent military cemetery, the property of the Ministry of Defence. The cemetery was at the back of the Royal Victoria Military Hospital and was used during both wars for burials from the hospital. The cemetery contains 637 First World War burials but only 35 from the Second World War. In addition to the Commonwealth graves, there are a number of war graves of other nationalities including 69 German graves dating from the First World War.

(Information & photos from CWGC)



Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire





Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire (Photo above - Andrea Charlesworth; below - darealjolo)



Photo of Private J. F. Christmas's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire, England



(Photo by Andrea Charlesworth)



Original Cross markers – Netley Military Cemetery