

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



Lest We Forget

World War 1



3309 L. CPL

M. G. EVANS

45TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

24TH JUNE, 1917 Age 20

And Her Child

Was Caught Up Unto God

And To His Throne

Murdoch/Murdock Godfrey EVANS

Murdoch Godfrey Evans was born at Heathcote, Victoria in 1896 to parents Thomas Godfrey Evans and Ellen Mary Evans (nee Cummings).

Murdoch Godfrey Evans was a 20 year old, single, Labourer from Heathcote, NSW (address as per Embarkation Roll) when he enlisted at Liverpool, NSW on 19th July, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 3309 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs E. M. Evans, Playne Street, Heathcote, Victoria. An Application for Enrolment for Active Service was completed by Murdoch Godfrey Evans, stating his address as Barham, NSW. His special qualifications were listed as “good horse rider.”

As Murdoch Godfrey Evans was under the age of 21, his parents needed to sign their consent for their son to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force for active service abroad. Ellen Mary Evans, mother of Murdoch Godfrey Evans, wrote & signed a letter on 28th May, 1915 “*I hereby give my full consent to my son (Murdoch Godfrey Evans aged nineteen years to enlist as a volunteer for active service with the Expeditionary Force.*” (Note – it is unsure if Ellen Mary Evans wrote Murdock or Murdoch as the name could be read as either “k” or “h”.)

(Note: most of the forms in the Service Record file for Pte M. G. Evans have his name as Murdoch, others have it as Murdock. The AWM Roll of Honour has his name listed both ways; while the Embarkation Roll has his name as Murdock. The CWGC also has his name as Murdock.)

Private Murdoch Godfrey Evans (listed as Murdock on Embarkation Roll) embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Port Lincoln (A17)* on 12th October, 1915 with the 4th Infantry Brigade, 13th Infantry Battalion, 11th Reinforcements.

13th Battalion

The 13th Battalion AIF was raised from late September 1914, six weeks after the outbreak of the First World War. The battalion was recruited in New South Wales, and with the 14th, 15th and 16th Battalions formed the 4th Brigade, commanded by Colonel John Monash.

The Brigade embarked for overseas in late December. After a brief stop in Albany, Western Australia, it proceeded to Egypt, arriving in early February 1915. Australia already had an AIF division there, the 1st. When the 4th Brigade arrived in Egypt it became part of the New Zealand and Australian Division.

The 4th Brigade landed at ANZAC Cove late in the afternoon of 25 April 1915. From May to August, the battalion was heavily involved in establishing and defending the ANZAC front line. In August, the 4th Brigade attacked Hill 971. The hill was taken at great cost, although Turkish reinforcements forced the Australians to withdraw. The 13th also suffered casualties during the attack on Hill 60 on 27 August. The battalion served at ANZAC until the evacuation in December.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the battalion returned to Egypt. While in Egypt the AIF was expanded and was reorganised. The 13th Battalion was split and provided experienced soldiers for the 45th Battalion. The 4th Brigade was combined with the 12th and 13th Brigades to form the 4th Australian Division.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Murdoch Godfrey Evans was allotted & proceeded to join 45th Battalion from Zeitoun on 6th March, 1916 from 13th Battalion Reinforcements. He was taken on strength of 45th Battalion on 6th March, 1916 from 13th Battalion.

Private Murdoch Godfrey Evans was admitted to No. 2 Australian Stationary Hospital at Tel-el Kebir on 14th March, 1916 with Venereal disease – Gonorrhoea. He was transferred to 1st Australian Dermatological Hospital at Abbassia on 15th March, 1916 with Mumps then transferred to No. 3 Auxiliary Hospital on 20th March, 1916 with Mumps. Pte Evans was transferred on 8th April, 1916 to Quarantine Hospital. He was discharged to Details at Tel-el-Kebir on 22nd April, 1916.

Private Murdoch Godfrey Evans was allotted to 12th Training Battalion at Tel-el-Kebir on 24th May, 1916.

Private Murdoch Godfrey Evans embarked from Alexandria on *Huntspill* on 7th June, 1916 & disembarked at Marseilles, France on 14th June, 1916.

Private Murdoch Godfrey Evans was taken on strength of 45th Battalion on 18th July, 1916 from 4th Divisional Base Depot.

Private Murdoch Godfrey Evans was written up on 2nd November, 1916 in the Field for being Absent from Tattoo & being in Armiens, a prohibited town, without permission. He was awarded 14 days F.P. No. 2 (Field Punishment).

Private Murdoch Godfrey Evans was wounded in action on 7th June, 1917. He was admitted to 3rd Stationary Hospital at Rouen, France on 9th June, 1917 with gunshot wounds to groin, left hand & left wrist. He was transferred to England on the Hospital Ship *Aberdonian* on 12th June, 1917.

45th Battalion

The 45th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 2 March 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Approximately half of its new recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 13th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 13th, the new battalion was composed mostly of men from New South Wales.

As part of the 12th Brigade of the 4th Australian Division, the 45th Battalion arrived in France on 8 June 1916, destined for the Western Front. It fought in its first major battle at Pozieres in August, defending ground previously captured by the 2nd Australian Division. After Pozieres the battalion spent the period until March 1917 alternating between duty in the trenches and training and rest behind the lines, first around Ypres in Belgium, and then in the Somme Valley in France.

The 45th Battalion was in reserve for the 4th Division's first major action of 1917 'the first battle of Bullecourt' and was not committed to the attack. It was, however, heavily engaged during the battle of Messines in June, and suffered commensurate casualties.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 45th Battalion

7th to 11th June, 1917 – Bn engaged in Messines operations as per appendix I attached.

....

During the whole engagement our losses were very heavy, they were as under:-

Officers Killed8

Officers Wounded8 (This included 1 Officer believed Killed)

Other Ranks Killed92

Other Ranks Wounded.....344

Other Ranks missing50

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Lance Corporal Murdoch Godfrey Evans was admitted to the Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, Hampshire, England (no date recorded).

Lance Corporal Murdoch Godfrey Evans died in the afternoon of 24th June, 1917 at Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, Hampshire, England from wounds received in action in France – Gunshot wounds to wrist & groin.



Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley

A death for Murdoch Evans, aged 21, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of South Stoneham, Hampshire, England.

Lance Corporal Murdoch Godfrey Evans was buried at 3.30 pm on 26th June, 1917 in Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire, England – Plot number N. 391 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Lance Corporal Murdoch Godfrey Evans - *Coffin was good polished Elm with brass fittings. The deceased soldier was buried with Military Honours. The coffin was draped with the "Union Jack". The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside. Several Australian comrades from the Hospital attended the funeral. No relatives were present at the funeral. Temporary oak cross will be erected by the Commonwealth Military Authorities.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Lance Corporal Murdoch Godfrey Evans contains a letter from Sister G. C. Moxon, Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley which reads: *"Died of wounds – He was admitted into 34 A. Ward in this hospital on June 13th, 1917 with G.S. Wounds of L. Groin thigh and wrist – his condition being very serious as the wounds were septic. I regret to be unable to tell you much about him as soon after his arrival here, he became delirious and rapidly grew worse – he passed away 3.25 pm on the 24th. I am so sorry not to be able to tell you some little thing about him but being unconscious nearly all the time there is little to tell. I wrote a letter to Mrs Evans, Playne Street, Heathcote, Victoria, Australia but there was little to tell her at the time. We always hope for the best of course these dreadful days of war, but he really grew rapidly worse and all was done for him that could possibly be done. I am sorry for his people and only wish I could say something more. He passed away very peacefully at the end and was buried with Military Honours."*

In a reply to a letter sent by Base Records, Mrs E. M. Evans, of Playne Street, Heathcote, Victoria, wrote on 30th August, 1920 that Lance Corporal M. G. Evans was her son *"His father is living, his present address is Thomas Godfrey Evans, Knowsley, Victoria. It may be as well for me to inform you that I was forced to leave my husband through his drunkenness & cruelty nearly fifteen years ago since that time he has not contributed to the support of Lance Corporal M. G. Evans or myself."*

Lance Corporal Murdoch Godfrey Evans was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to L. Cpl Evans' mother – Mrs M. Evans, as decided by Base Records having received information from L. Cpl Evans' mother. (Scroll sent September, 1921 & Plaque sent January, 1922).

Thomas Alexander Evans, of High Street, Heathcote, Victoria applied for the Gallipoli Commemorative Medallion & Lapel Badge on 18th July, 1967 in respect of the service of his late brother - Lance Corporal Murdoch Godfrey Evans & declared he was the only brother of the late Murdoch Godfrey Evans. A letter was written (undated) by Thomas A. Evans stating "As there is some people trying to obtain this medal under false pretences these two R.S.L. members could give you any information. They are Ken McLennan, President & Bill Perry, Secretary." In a letter written by T. A. Evans (undated) reads in part ".....I have already filled in the form which you sent to me on the 18th Sept 67 & received the Medal for which I thank you."

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Lance Corporal Murdoch Godfrey Evans – service number 3309, aged 20, of 45th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Thomas Godfrey Evans and Ellen Mary Evans, of Playne St., Heathcote, Victoria, Australia.

Lance Corporal M. G. Evans is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 139.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

The Heathcote War Memorial, located in front of RSL Hall, High Street, Heathcote, Victoria does not list individual names.



Heathcote War Memorial (Photo from Monument Australia – Graeme Sanders)

(52 pages of Lance Corporal Murdoch Godfrey Evans' 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



Newspaper Notices

During last week end the Rev. W. Bennett, of Heathcote, was called upon to convey the sad news to Mrs Evans, of Playne street, of the death of her son, Lance-Corporal Evans, who died from wounds on the 23rd June; also to inform Mrs Tibbitts, of Tooborac, of the death of her brother, Private H. Harnell, who died on the 9th June.

(The Mclvor and Rodney Advertiser, Heathcote, Victoria – 5 July, 1917)

OFFICIAL CASUALTY LIST

The 321st and 322nd lists of casualties sustained by Australian troops abroad were made available yesterday.

NEW SOUTH WALES

DIED OF WOUNDS

L.-Cpl. MURDOCH GODFREY EVANS, Heathcote, V., 24/6/17

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 12 July, 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)

Lance Corporal M. G. Evans does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

And Her Child Was Caught Up Unto God And To His Throne

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 Lance Corporal M. G. Evans' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire, England.



(Photo by Andrea Charlesworth)



Original Cross markers – Netley Military Cemetery