

**Tidworth Military Cemetery,  
Tidworth, Wiltshire, England**

**War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**3642 PRIVATE**

**M. FITZ**

**13TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**8TH DECEMBER, 1918**

## Mathew (Mat) FITZ

Mathew Fitz was born at Pyrmont, Sydney, New South Wales around 1892 to mother Kathleen Fitz.

*[Note: no record of a birth could be located on New South Wales Births, Deaths & Marriages website]*

Mathew Fitz was aged 24 years & 11 months, single & a Wheeler from King Street, Newcastle, New South Wales when he enlisted at Newcastle, New South Wales on 10th July, 1917 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Roman Catholic & his next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Kathleen Fitz, Maitland, NSW.

Private Mathew Fitz was posted to Recruits at Show Ground Camp, Sydney, New South Wales on 10th July, 1917. He was transferred to "A" Company, 1st Depot Battalion at Liverpool, NSW on 13th July, 1917. Private Fitz was transferred to 10th Reinforcements of 56th Battalion (no date recorded).

Private Mathew Fitz's Hospital Admissions form recorded he was admitted to Liverpool Field Hospital (Sydney, NSW) on 15th August, 1917 with Malaise (Dyspepsia) & discharged on 16th August, 1917. He was re-admitted on 22nd August, 1917 until 24th August, 1917 with "Gastritis & Chronic appendicitis?" & discharged to Light Duty for 1 week. Private Fitz was re-admitted on 27th August, 1917 with Dyspepsia & discharged on 6th September, 1917 & re-admitted again with Dyspepsia from 5th to 8th October, 1917.

Private Mathew Fitz, Service number 3642, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Euripides (A14)* on 31st October, 1917 with the 56th Infantry Battalion, 10th Reinforcements & disembarked at Devonport, England on 26th December, 1917.

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 Mathew Fitz was marched in to Hurdcott, Wiltshire, England on 27th December, 1917 from Australia.

Private Mathew Fitz was written up for an Offence while posted at 14th Training Battalion, Codford, Wiltshire, England – AWL (Absent without Leave) from midnight on 20th March, 1918 until 7 pm on 22nd March, 1918. He was awarded a total forfeiture of 4 days pay on 25th March, 1918.

### 56th Battalion

The 56th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 14 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 4th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 4th, the 56th was predominantly composed of men from New South Wales. The battalion became part of the 14th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.....

*(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

Private Mathew Fitz proceeded overseas to France on 1st April, 1918 via Dover from 14th Training Battalion at Codford, Wiltshire to reinforce 13th Battalion. He was transferred from 56th Battalion to 13th Battalion on 1st April, 1918. Private Fitz was marched in to Overflow Camp at Calais, France on 1st April, 1918 then marched out to his Unit on 4th April, 1918. Private Fitz was taken on strength of 13th Battalion in France on 17th April, 1918.

Private Mathew Fitz was wounded – Gassed in France on 9th May, 1918. He was admitted to 12th Australia Field Ambulance on 9th May, 1918 then transferred to Casualty Clearing Station. Private Fitz was transferred & admitted to 11th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 11th May 1918 with Gas poison. He embarked for England on Hospital Ship *Panama* on 18th May, 1918 with Gas Poisoning.

## 13th Battalion

.... The 13th Battalion, along with most of the 4th Brigade, suffered heavy losses at Bullecourt in April when the brigade attacked strong German positions without the promised tank support. The battalion spent much of the remainder of 1917 in Belgium advancing to the Hindenburg Line.....

*(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

### War Diary – 13th Battalion

*13th Battalion Order No. 89 – Headquarters 8th May, 1918:*

*The 13th Battalion will be relieved tomorrow night 9/10th May by 45th Bn, and on completion will move to AUBIGNY line and will occupy this line.....*

*(Extract of War Diary information from the Australian War Memorial)*

Private Mathew Fitz was admitted to Northampton War Hospital, Duston, Northampton, England on 19th May, 1918 – Gassed (shell). The Hospital Admissions form recorded he was admitted to Auxiliary Military Hospital, Barry Road (?), Northampton on 19th May, 1918 & was transferred to Northamptonshire War Hospital, Duston on 1st June, 1918 until 12th July, 1918 with persistent Aponia (loss of voice).

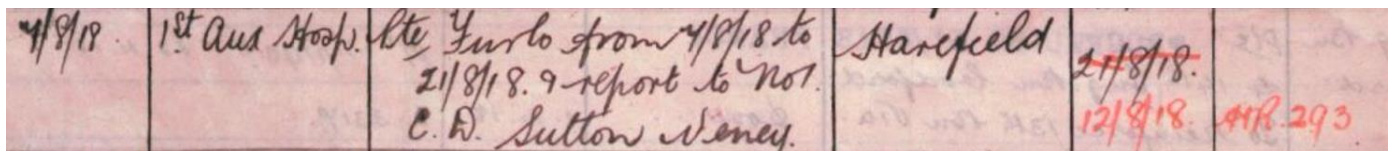
Base Records wrote to Mrs K. Fitz, Maitland, NSW, mother of Private Mathew Fitz, on 30th May, 1918 to advise that Private M. Fitz had been gassed – classed as wounded. She was advised on 7th June, 1918 that Private M. Fitz had been admitted to Northampton War Hospital, England on 19th May, 1918 – Gassed.

Private Mathew Fitz was on Furlo from 12th to 26th July, 1918 & was then to report to No. 4 Command Depot at Hurdcott, Wiltshire.

Base Records wrote to A.A.G. 2nd Military District, Sydney, NSW advising that “communications addressed to Mrs K. Fitz, Maitland, NSW who is registered as next-of-kin of No. 3542 M. Fitz, 10th Rfts, 56th Battalion, have been returned unclaimed. If nothing later is available from District records, kindly arrange for the press to insert a notice asking for the above to communicate with the Officer in Charge, Base Records, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, at the earliest possible moment.”

Private Mathew Fitz was admitted to Kitchener Military Hospital, Brighton on 21st July, 1918 – cause N.Y.D. (not yet determined) while on Leave. The Hospital Admissions form recorded he had Trench mouth. He was transferred to 1st Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield on 3rd August, 1918 with Vincents Angina (listed on Purport card as “agina”).

Private Mathew Fitz was on Furlo from 7th August, 1918 to 21st August, 1918 (Note: 21st was crossed out & replaced in red with 12th) & was then to report to No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.



Private Mathew Fitz was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, on 12th August, 1918 & medically classified as B1 A2(fit for Overseas Training Camp in 3 – 4 weeks).

Private Mathew Fitz was written up for an Offence while posted at No. 1 Command Depot, Sutton Veny - A.W.L. (Absent without Leave) from midnight on 17th September, 1918 & returned at 6.40 pm on 18th September, 1918. He was awarded a forfeiture of 7 days pay on 23rd September, 1918.

Private Mathew Fitz was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny on 23rd September, 1918 from Warminster, Wiltshire. He was admitted to 1st A.D.H. (Australian Dermatological Hospital) at Bulford, Wiltshire on

26th September, 1918 - N.Y.D. (not yet determined). Private Fitz was discharged from Bulford on 28th September, 1918 to Convalescent Training Depot at Parkhouse, Wiltshire – Total VD period – 3 days.

Private Mathew Fitz was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny on 12th November, 1918 from Convalescent Depot at Parkhouse. He reported sick (ingrown toenail) to Group Clearing Hospital at Sutton Veny on 13th November, 1918

Private Mathew Fitz was sent sick to Group Clearing Hospital at Sutton Veny on 29th November, 1918 then transferred & admitted to Military Hospital, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on the same day with Influenza. He was later that day reported to be dangerously & seriously ill.

Private Mathew Fitz died at 02.15 am on 8th December, 1918 at Military Hospital, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, England from Influenza Pneumonia & Bronchitis.

A death for Matthew Fitz, aged 26, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire, England.

Private Mathew Fitz was buried on 12th December, 1918 in Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire, England – Plot number A. 58 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

*From the burial report of Private Mathew Fitz - Coffin was Elm. Brass mounts. Deceased was buried with full Military honors the coffin draped with the Australian flag being conveyed to the graveside on a Gun-carriage preceded by a Firing Party from the Australian Machine Gun Training Depot and the Band of the "Royal Scots Greys". Six Australians acted as Pall Bearers and a number of Officers N.C.O.'s and Men followed the remains and were present at the graveside ceremony. Headquarters, A.I.F. Depots in United Kingdom were represented at the funeral.*

Private Mathew Fitz requested in his Will, dated 4th October, 1917, that in the event of his death the whole of his property & effects be given to his friend Rene Brown, of Helensburgh, South Coast, New South Wales.

A Telegram was sent to Base Records, Melbourne, Victoria on 3rd January, 1919 to Victoria Barracks, Sydney, NSW advising that they were "*unable trace next of kin please delete press pending enquiries.*"

Base Records replied to A.A.G. 2nd Military District, Sydney, NSW on 4th January, 1919 "*...concerning No. 3642 Private M. Fitz, 13th Battalion, I have to inform you his name has been withheld from Press copies of Casualty List No. 455, and will appear in official copies only.*"

Communications sent to Mrs K. Fitz, Maitland, NSW from Base Records in 1918 & 1919 were returned unclaimed.

A package containing the personal effects of the late Private Mathew Fitz was sent to Rene Brown, Helensburgh on 11th July, 1919. She signed, as receipt of the package, on 18th July, 1919.

Base Records wrote to Miss Rene Brown, Helensburgh, South Coast, NSW on 26th September, 1919: "*Attached hereto is a photograph and description of the locality of grave of the late No. 3642 Private M. Fitz, 13th Battalion. I should be glad if you could inform me of the address of deceased's mother, as communications addressed to her – Mrs K. Fitz, Maitland, NSW, have been returned unclaimed.*"

The Savings Bank Department, Commonwealth Bank, Sydney, wrote to The Secretary, Department of Defence on 23rd October, 1919 regarding No. 3642 Private Mathew Fitz, 10/56th Battalion; "*We are advised the abovementioned soldier is now deceased. If you have received confirmation of this, we shall be glad if you will forward the usual certificate of Death, also please advise us the name of next-of-kin.*"

Base Records replied to The Superintendent, Savings Bank Department, Commonwealth Bank Sydney, on 3rd October, 1919 enclosing a certificate of report of death of the late No. 3642 Private M. Fitz, 13th Battalion. *“The name and address of next-of-kin is shown as Mrs Kathleen Fitz, Mother, Maitland, NSW. Letters addressed as above have been returned unclaimed.”*

Special Inquiry Officer E. O'Donnell, Provost Marshalls Office, Victoria Barracks, Sydney, NSW wrote the following report regarding the disposal of War Medals & Decorations awarded to the late No. 3642 Private M. Fitz, 13th Battalion, A.I.F.: *“I beg to report that I interviewed Mrs Irene Sneyd nee Miss Irene Brown, who resides at Club Lane Helensburgh, New South Wales, and she stated that she was sole beneficiary under the will of the above deceased soldier, to whom she was not related in any way. The only knowledge she had of him was that he was boarding at her mother's boarding house at Helensburgh for a short period about twelve months prior to his enlistment, and as far as she knew he was a single man and that his mother was deceased and his father living, but where she could not say. She further stated that before he enlisted he went to work at the Stanford Merthyr Colliery, Kurri-Kurri, New South Wales, and she showed me a letter written by him from Kurri-Kurri, but there was nothing in it stating that he had married. Although she recognises that she has no legal claim to the War Medals and Decorations of the late soldier as he did not specifically bequeath them to her in his will, she stated that she is desirous of obtaining them, should the Defence Department fail to find any of his blood relations, and accordingly signed the attached undertaking. I searched the Commonwealth Electoral Rolls for the State of New South Wales, and can find no trace of Mrs K Fitz referred to in the attached communication, and No War Gratuity was paid in consequence of the military service of the deceased soldier.”*

A form was signed by Irene Sneyd, of Club Lane, Helensburgh on 20th September, 1921 *“...do hereby desire to make claim for any War Medals and Decorations awarded to the late No. 3642 Private Mathew Fitz, deceased, and if given into my custody, I hereby undertake to carefully preserve same and will produce them to the military authorities upon demand should any person with a prior claim appear.”* The form was witnessed by E. O'Donnell.

Rene Sneyd, Walker Street, Helensburgh, wrote to Base Records on 17th January, 1924 with the following letter: *“I'm writing to ask you if I am entitled to War Gratuity, under the Will of the late Pte Mathew Fitz, Reg. No. 3642 13th Battalion. My name then was Rene Brown, but I have since married & I am now Mrs H. Sneyd. I wrote to Victoria Barracks, Sydney, some time ago about this & also about Mat Fitz's War Medals but I received no answer. There also was a gentleman called here to Helensburgh about the medals & I filled in a claim for them & heard no more about them since. So I should be very pleased if you will let me know as soon as possible.”*

Base Records replied to Mrs R. Sneyd, Helensburgh, on 23rd January, 1924 advising *“...the instructions under the Deceased Soldiers' Estates Act of 1918 prescribe that the War Medals, etc., issuable on account of the service of a deceased member of the A.I.F. must go the nearest surviving blood relation, in a certain order of relationship, unless good and sufficient reasons for varying the procedure are stated for the consideration of the Minister. The mementoes in connection with the late No. 3642 Private M. Fitz, 13th Battalion, have, there, been placed on the “Untraceable List” to be advertised in the Press throughout Australasia with a view to his blood relations being located.....”*

Base Records contacted Mrs K. Fitz, Maitland, New South Wales, on 2nd June, 1921 stating she was noted as the registered next of kin of the late No, 3642 Private M. Fitz, 13th Battalion & requested to know if there were any nearer blood relatives than herself & was specifically asked if his father was still alive due to the “Deceased Soldiers Estates Act 1918” which stated that the War Medals & Mementoes of a deceased soldier were to be handed in the following order of relationship – Widow, eldest surviving son, eldest surviving daughter, father, mother, eldest surviving brother, eldest surviving sister etc.

This letter was returned unclaimed to Base Records.

Private Mathew Fitz was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were supposed to be sent to the next of kin of the late Private Mathew Fitz but because no blood next of kin could be located the Medals, Scroll & Plaque etc were sent to “Untraceables” (Scroll & Plaque sent to Untraceables in November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Matthew Fitz – service number 3642, of 13th Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Private M. Fitz is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 69.



*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

(97 pages of Private Mathew Fitz'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) & National Archives*



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES**

#### **409TH LIST**

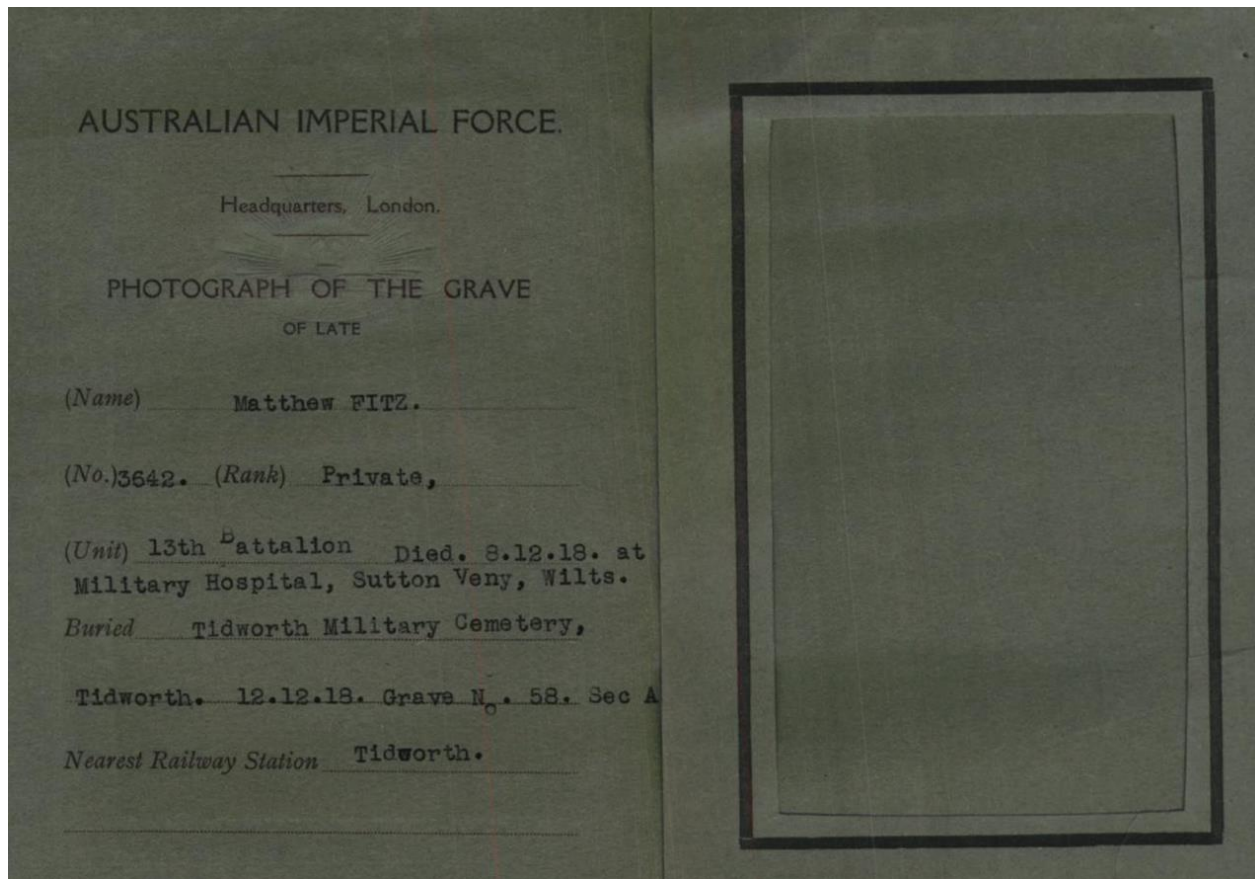
#### **WOUNDED**

Mathew Fitz (Maitland)

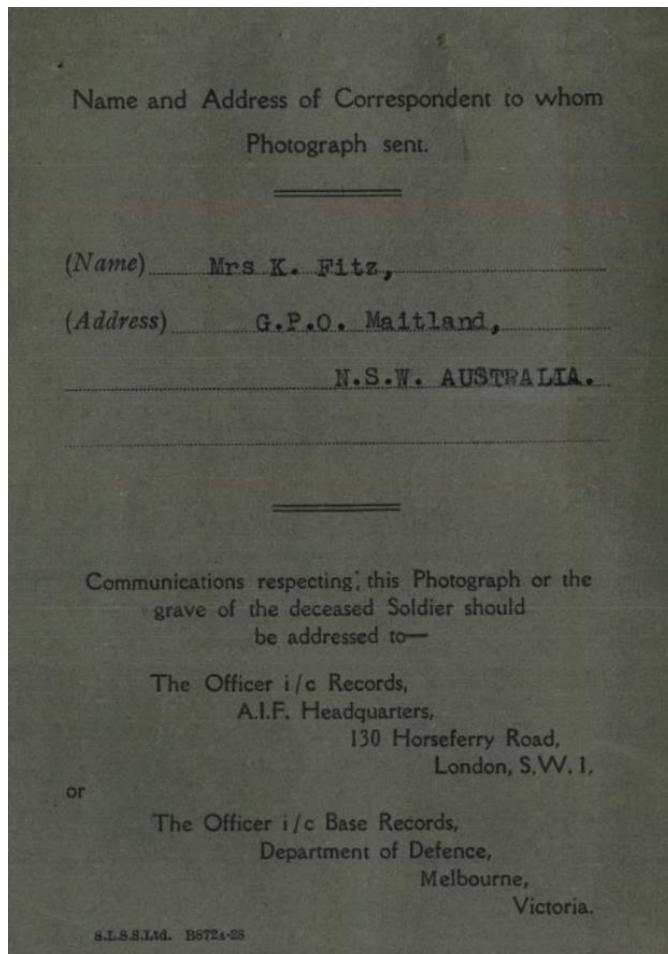
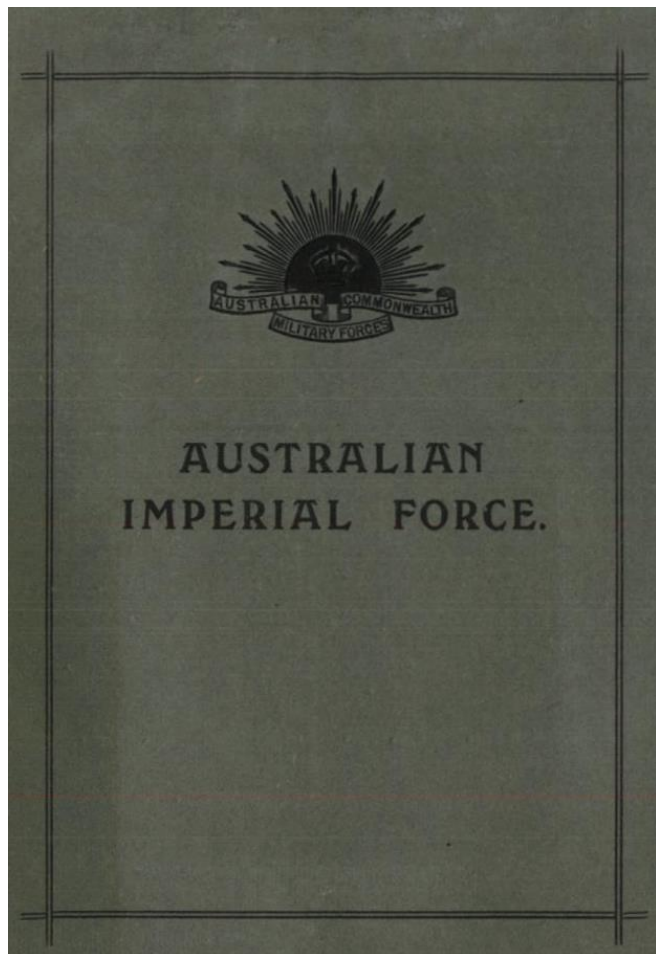
*(The Maitland Weekly Mercury, NSW – 22 June, 1918)*



Photograph of Original Grave Marker sent to next of kin



Middle of Folder



Front & Back cover of folder containing photograph of Grave Marker sent to next of kin



### 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 M. Fitz does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

### **Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire, England**

Tidworth Military Cemetery, which contains burials of both wars, was directly connected with training grounds on, or near, Salisbury Plain.

During the First World War, the cemetery was used for burials from Tidworth and Fargo Military Hospitals and the 417 graves, many of them of Australian or New Zealand servicemen, are scattered throughout the cemetery.

There are 106 Second World War graves in the cemetery, two substantial groups of which can be found in sections F and D. The rest are scattered.

The cemetery also contains 40 war graves of other nationalities, many of them Polish.

*(Information from CWGC)*



**Tidworth Military Cemetery** *(Photo by julia&keld – Find a Grave)*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00327

*The AIF Tidworth cemetery under snow. – March 1919.*

*Identified graves marked by a cross and headstone in the foreground*

*Front row: 50727 Private Rowland James Dickson, Australian Machine Gun Corps, died 14 October 1918.*

*Second row, left to right: 18282 Driver John Thalma Jackson, Details Australian Engineers, died 30 October 1917; 17445 Pte Roland Travers Woodville, Australian Army Medical Corps, died 13 September 1917; 31712 Gunner John Alexander McDonald, 15th Field Artillery Brigade, Australian Field Artillery, died 30 July 1917, aged 37, at Tidworth Military Hospital; 3062 Pte Even Thomas Kennedy, 3rd Australian Pioneers, died 7 August 1917.*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00481

### **Tidworth Military Cemetery – 12 June, 1919**

*A corner of the Australian cemetery. Front row, left to right: 5840 Private F. W. Heede, 25th Battalion died 3 June 1917; 7350 Private A. E. Campbell, 8th Battalion, died 2 August 1917; 1824 Driver A. C. Jones, 4th Company, Australian Machine Gun Corps, AADC, died 8 August 1917; 8009 Corporal W. J. Giles, Australian Tunnelling Company, died 17 March 1918.*



**Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire** *(Photo courtesy of John Prestidge)*



**Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire** *(Photo by Chris Talbot 2009)*



*(Photo courtesy of Portsmouth Remembers – Kevin)*

Photo of Private M. Fitz's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire, England.



*(Photo courtesy of Kevin – Portsmouth Remembers)*

