

**St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard,
Harefield, Middlesex, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



5118 PRIVATE

JOHN STOBART JOHNSON

3RD BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

22ND JUNE, 1917 Age 24

*In Memory
Of The Dearly Loved Son
Of Mr & Mrs Johnson*

John Stobart (Jack) JOHNSON

John Stobart Johnson was born at Merewether, near Newcastle, New South Wales in 1893 to parents Thomas William & Margaret Ellen Johnson (nee Stobart).

John Stobart Johnson attended school at Charlestown, New South Wales.

John Stobart Johnson was a 22 year old, single, Labourer from Fern Hill, Gosford, New South Wales when he enlisted on 27th September, 1915 at Holsworthy, Sydney, NSW with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Methodist & his next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs M. E. Johnson, of Fern Hill, Gosford, New South Wales.

Private John Stobart Johnson was posted to “B” Company, 3rd Battalion on 27th September, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred on 7th March, 1916 to 16th Reinforcements of 3rd Battalion.

Private John Stobart Johnson, Service number 5118, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on S.S. *Makarini* on 1st April, 1916 with the 3rd Infantry Battalion, 16th Reinforcements & disembarked at Suez on 2nd May, 1916.

Private John Stobart Johnson proceeded to France on 10th August, 1916 from 1st Training Battalion at Perham Downs, Wiltshire, England. (The Statement of Service form recorded he proceeded overseas to France on 9th August, 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.

[Note: There is no mention in Private Johnson's Service Record file of when he was transferred from Suez to England]

Private John Stobart Johnson was taken on strength of 1st A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 11th August, 1916. He proceeded to join his Unit on 27th December, 1916 & was taken on strength of 3rd Battalion in France on 30th December, 1916 from Reinforcements.

Mrs F. W. Hall, Cardiff, via Newcastle, N.S.W., wrote to Base Records on 14th March, 1917 with the following: *“Can you please inform me of whereabouts and condition of Private John Stobart Johnson (No 5118) 16 Rfts 3 Batt last heard of in France as I his sister have heard that he has been wounded.”*

Base Records replied to Mrs F. W Hall on 19th March, 1917 advising that *“no official Casualty report has been received here concerning your brother, No. 5118 Private J. S. Johnson, 3rd Battalion, but if you will forward to this office documentary evidence to the effect that he is wounded, upon receipt of same, and should action be warranted, investigations will be instituted, and the result in due course transmitted to next-of-kin.”*

Private John Stobart Johnson was wounded in action in France on 4th May, 1917. He was admitted to 6th Australian Field Ambulance on 5th May, 1917 & transferred the same day to 3rd Casualty Clearing Station with shrapnel wound/s to Back. Private Johnson was admitted to 2nd Canadian General Hospital at Le Treport on 8th May, 1917. He was transferred to Boulogne, France on 10th June, 1917 & embarked the same day on Hospital Ship *Jan Breydel* for England.

3rd Battalion

The 3rd Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. Like the 1st, 2nd and 4th Battalions it was recruited from New South Wales and, together with these battalions, formed the 1st Brigade.....

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the battalion returned to Egypt. In March 1916, it sailed for France and the Western Front. From then until 1918 the battalion took part in operations against the German Army, principally in the Somme Valley in France and around Ypres in Belgium. The battalion's first major action in France was at Pozieres in the Somme valley in July 1916. Later the battalion fought at Ypres, in Flanders, before returning to the Somme for winter.

The battalion participated in a short period of mobile operations following the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line in early 1917, but spent much of that year fighting in increasingly difficult conditions around Ypres.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 3rd Battalion

Report on Operations:

4.5.1917

At 0430 enemy attacked on extreme RIGHT and LEDT of my Battalion trench. He advanced up old communication trenches to within 30 – 40 yards and commenced throwing stick bombs. The fight lasted half an hour. We inflicted a number of casualties, estimated at 30 enemy killed. We took one prisoner.

Considerable sniping on both sides. Trenches improved and prepared for defence. At 1400 "D" Company bombed along O.G.2. from U.23.C.00.35. and established a Post at U.22.D.6.3. and joined up with the 1st Australian Battalion at U.22.D.6.2., strong resistance by enemy bombers and Machine Gun fire encountered. Many enemy killed.

At 2200 enemy attacked along whole of my front moving up along old communications trenches. Enemy approaching RIGHT Company ("A") within bombing range and were driven off after 30 minutes sharp fighting.

At same time our new Post at U.22.D.6.3. was heavily attacked and after 30 minutes fight ran out of bombs and were forced to retire to original line. It was found that enemy could advance under cover to within bombing range, so a Post was established at U.22.D.85.40. to cover approaches.

Enemy attack on centre of line did not get within 30 yards of our parapet.

Enemy shelled our trench heavily at 2130 to 2215; one shell cut H.P. Buzzer earth wires and our only communication to Brigade was by "Runner". H.P. Buzzer re-established at 2220.

Midnight 4th/5th Situation normal.

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Mrs M. E. Johnson, Fern Hill, Gosford, NSW, mother of Private John Stobart Johnson, was advised by Base Records on 24th May, 1917 that Private J. S. Johnson had been reported wounded. She was advised on 29th May, 1917 that Private J. S. Johnson had been admitted to 2nd Canadian General Hospital Treport France on 13th May, 1917 suffering from gunshot wound to back & injury to spine, severe.

Private John Stobart Johnson was admitted to Kitchener Military Hospital, England on 11th June, 1917 with Concussion, Dorsal Cord Paralysis below Hips & was reported to be dangerously ill. He was transferred to 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield, Middlesex, England on 18th June, 1917.

Mrs M. E. Johnson, Fern Hill, Gosford, NSW, mother of Private John Stobart Johnson, was advised by Base Records on 18th June, 1917 that Private John Johnson had been transferred to "Kitchiner Military Hospital, Brighton, England" on 11th June with concussion, dorsal cord paralysis below hips & his condition was listed as dangerous.

Private John Stobart Johnson died at 3.45 pm on 22nd June, 1917 at 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield Park, Harefield, Middlesex, England from wounds received in action in France – G.S.W. Spine & (secondary) ascending Pyelitis.

A death for John S. Johnson, aged 24, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Uxbridge, Middlesex, England.

Private John Stobart Johnson was buried on 24th June, 1917 in St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England – Grave No. 25. (Note: some forms have Grave No. 28 others have 28 crossed out & replaced with 25)

From the burial report of Private John Stobart Johnson - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was buried with full Military Honours. Band, Bugler, Staff and patients of the 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield, under the command of Major Dennis marched in the funeral procession. Firing Party furnished by the Administrative Headquarters A.I.F. London were in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Australian flag, and surmounted with several lovely floral tributes. The remains of the deceased soldier were borne to the graveside by members attached to the Staff of the 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield. Prior to the interment a service was held in the Parish Church, Harefield, by Chaplain Gregg MacGregor of the A.I.F. A member of the A.I.F. officiated at the Church organ. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside. Miss M. Johnson (Aunt) Nurses Hostel, Francis Street, London, W.C. was present at the funeral. Memorial is being erected by the Authorities of the 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield.*

This is now listed by CWGC as Plot number Aust. 25 and he has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private John Stobart Johnson contains a letter from Major Browne, Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield, which reads: *"The above soldier died at 3.45 pm 22.6.17. Cause of death – primary gunshot wound spine; secondary, ascending Pyelitis. He was buried in the Harefield Churchyard (Australian Section – Grave No. 27) on Sunday 24th June at 2 pm the burial service being conducted by Chaplain-Captain Gregg-MacGregor, who is attached to this Hospital. The Chaplain has written to the deceased soldier's next of kin, viz., Mother, Mrs Margaret Ellen Johnson, Fern Hill, Gosford, New South Wales. The Medical Officer in charge of the case was Capt Craig, but Pte Johnson was only at this Hospital for four days. A number of the late soldier's English relatives were informed of the death, and his Aunt, Miss M. Johnson, Nurses' Hostel, Francis Street, London, and another were able to attend the funeral, which was given, as is usual with Military Honours. There is a fund in existence at this Hospital subscribed to by Staff and patients, with the object of erecting Headstones to the memory of the Australian soldiers buried in the Harefield Churchyard. I may also mention that Captain Tarleton R.N. of Breakspears, Uxbridge, has generously arranged to have all the graves turfed, and guaranteed to keep them in order during his own and his children's lifetime."*

The Secretary of the Independent Order of Rechabites, Kurri Kurri, NSW, wrote to Base Records on 2nd July, 1917 requesting a Certificate of death of No. 5118 Private John Stobart Johnson, 3rd Battalion who had died on 22nd June, 1917 from gunshot wounds.

The Secretary of the Independent Order of Rechabites wrote to Base Records again on 4th October, 1917 advising *"I wrote you on the 2nd July, 1917 & received your acknowledgement of the same dated 9th July, 1917, for certificate of death of No 5118 Private John S. Johnson, 3rd Battalion which I have not yet received. If same is to hand please forward & oblige."*

Base Records replied to Mr T. Wells, Secretary, I. O. O. R. Rawson Street, Kurri Kurri, NSW on 10th October, 1917 enclosing a certificate of report of death of the late No. 5118 Private J. S. Johnson, 3rd Battalion.

Base Records contacted Mrs M. E. Johnson, Fern Hill, Gosford, New South Wales on 30th November, 1921 stating that she was registered on the records of the late No. 5118 Private J. S. Johnson, 3rd Battalion, as the next of kin but were enquiring 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.

Mrs Johnson replied to Base Records on 12th December, 1921 advising that his father was still alive & they were living at Cardiff. *"We did not notify you of our changed address from Fern Hill, Gosford to Cardiff."* Mrs Johnson advised their present address as *"Cardiff via Newcastle, N.S.W."*

Private John Stobart Johnson was entitled to British War Medal & Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Johnson's father - Mr T. W. Johnson, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent February, 1922 & Plaque sent August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John Stobart Johnson – service number 5118, aged 24, of 3rd Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Thomas William & Margaret Ellen Johnson, of Fern Hill, Gosford, New South Wales, Australia.

Private J. S. Johnson is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 37.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

J. S. Johnson is remembered on the Charlestown Public School 1914 – 1918 Roll of Honour, located in Charlestown Public School, Frederick & Smith Streets, Charlestown, NSW.



Charlestown Public School 1914 – 1918 Roll of Honour (Photo from War Memorial Register of NSW)

J. S. Johnson is remembered on the Gosford Cenotaph, located in Gosford Memorial Park, Mann Street and Vaughan Avenue, Gosford, NSW.

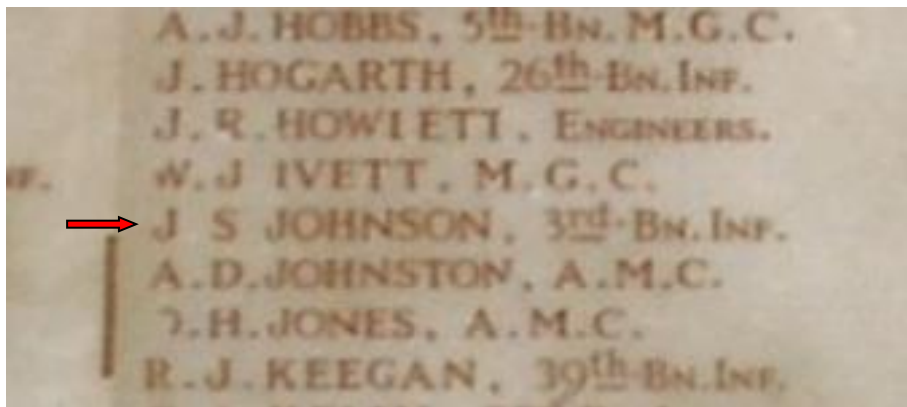


Gosford Cenotaph (Photo from War Memorial Register of NSW – Jason Connolly)

J. S. Johnson is remembered on the Australian Soldiers' Memorial in St. Mary the Virgin Church, Church Hill, Harefield, Middlesex, England.



Australian Soldiers' Memorial, Harefield (Photo from War Memorials Online – B. Wood)



(50 pages of Private John Stobart Johnson'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

Newspaper Notices

Killed in Action

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Private John Stobart Johnson, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas W. Johnson, of Gosford, was wounded in France on or before 9th May and a cable this week announced his death on 22nd June. Deceased soldier lad was 24 ½ years of age, and was born at Merewether, Newcastle. He enlisted from Gosford in September, 1915, and sailed on 1st April last year, landing in Egypt, England, and finally in France where, in the trenches, he spent last Christmas. After being wounded he was invalided to England and died in Kitchener's Military Hospital. We sympathise deeply with the bereaved parents and family in the loss of a son and brother who, at his country's call, gave his life, his best, his all.

(The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate, NSW – 5 July, 1917)

ROLL OF HONOR

JOHNSON— Private John Stobart, dearly loved eldest son and brother of Mr. and Mrs. T. W. Johnson and Family, wounded on or before 9th May, died 22nd June, 1917. Aged 24 years 6 months.

He gave his life, his best, his all.

ROLL OF HONOR

JOHNSON— In loving memory of our dear brother, Private John Stobart Johnson, who died from wounds on 22nd June, 1917, while on active service, aged 24 years and 6 months.

Far away from home and friends

In a hero's grave he lies.

Inserted by his affectionate brother-in law and sister, J. and J. Pateman.

ROLL OF HONOR

JOHNSON— In loving memory of Private Jack Johnson, who died of wounds, 22nd June, 1917.

A young life nobly ended.

Inserted by Jessie Pateman.

(The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate, NSW – 5 July, 1917)

Roll of Honour

JOHNSON – Private John Stobart Johnson, dearly loved eldest son and brother of Mr and Mrs T. W. Johnson and family, Gosford, wounded in France about May 9, died in England June 22, 1917; aged 24 years and 6 months, born Frederick-street, Mereweather.

He answered to is country's call,

He gave his life, his best, his all.

(Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, NSW – 7 July, 1917)

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

LIST NO. 323

NEW SOUTH WALES

DIED OF WOUNDS

Private John Stobart Johnson (Gosford), previously reported wounded.

(Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, NSW – 16 July, 1917)

ROLL OF HONOR

JOHNSON – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Private John Stobart Johnson (Jack), wounded in France, May 4th, 1917, died Harefield Hospital, England, June 22nd, 1917.

Our hearts for him are lonely,

We are lonely night and day;

We miss him, yes, we miss him,

More than words can say.

Inserted by his loving father and mother, brothers and sisters.

JOHNSON – In loving memory of our dear brother, Private John Stobart Johnson, died of wounds, June 22nd, 1917.

Oftimes our thoughts do wander

To a grave so far away;

Where they laid our loving brother,

Just twelve months ago to day.

Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Mabel and Fred Hall, and nephews.

JOHNSON - In loving memory of our dear brother, Private John Stobart Johnson, died of wounds, June 22nd, 1917.

We have lost him, we who loved him,

And, like others, must be brave;

But we know that he is sleeping

In a British soldier's grave.

Too dearly loved to be forgotten.

Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Jinnie and Jack Pateman, and nephew.

JOHNSON – In loving memory of Private J. S. Johnson, died of wounds, 22nd June, 1917.

Bravely he answered his country's call,

He fought and died for us all.

Inserted by his friend, Jessie Pateman.

(The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate, NSW – 20 June, 1918)

**Newspaper notices were also placed in 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1939

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 John Stobart Johnson does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

In Memory Of The Dearly Loved Son

Of Mr & Mrs Johnson

St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England

St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield contains 126 Commonwealth War Graves.

During the two world wars, the United Kingdom became an island fortress used for training troops and launching land, sea and air operations around the globe. There are more than 170,000 Commonwealth war graves in the United Kingdom, many being those of servicemen and women killed on active service, or who later succumbed to wounds. Others died in training accidents, or because of sickness or disease. The graves, many of them privately owned and marked by private memorials, will be found in more than 12,000 cemeteries and churchyards.

Harefield (St. Mary) Churchyard contains war graves from both world wars. There are 120 First World War graves, mostly those of Australians who died in No. 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Harefield Park. Uniquely, their graves are marked by scroll shaped headstones, chosen by the staff and patients at the hospital. In the centre of the Australian plot stands a memorial obelisk which was erected by Sir Francis Newdegate, late Governor of Tasmania and of Western Australia, and Mr. C.A.M. Billyard-Leake, of Harefield Park. The churchyard also contains six graves of the Second World War.

(Information & photos from CWGC)



St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield



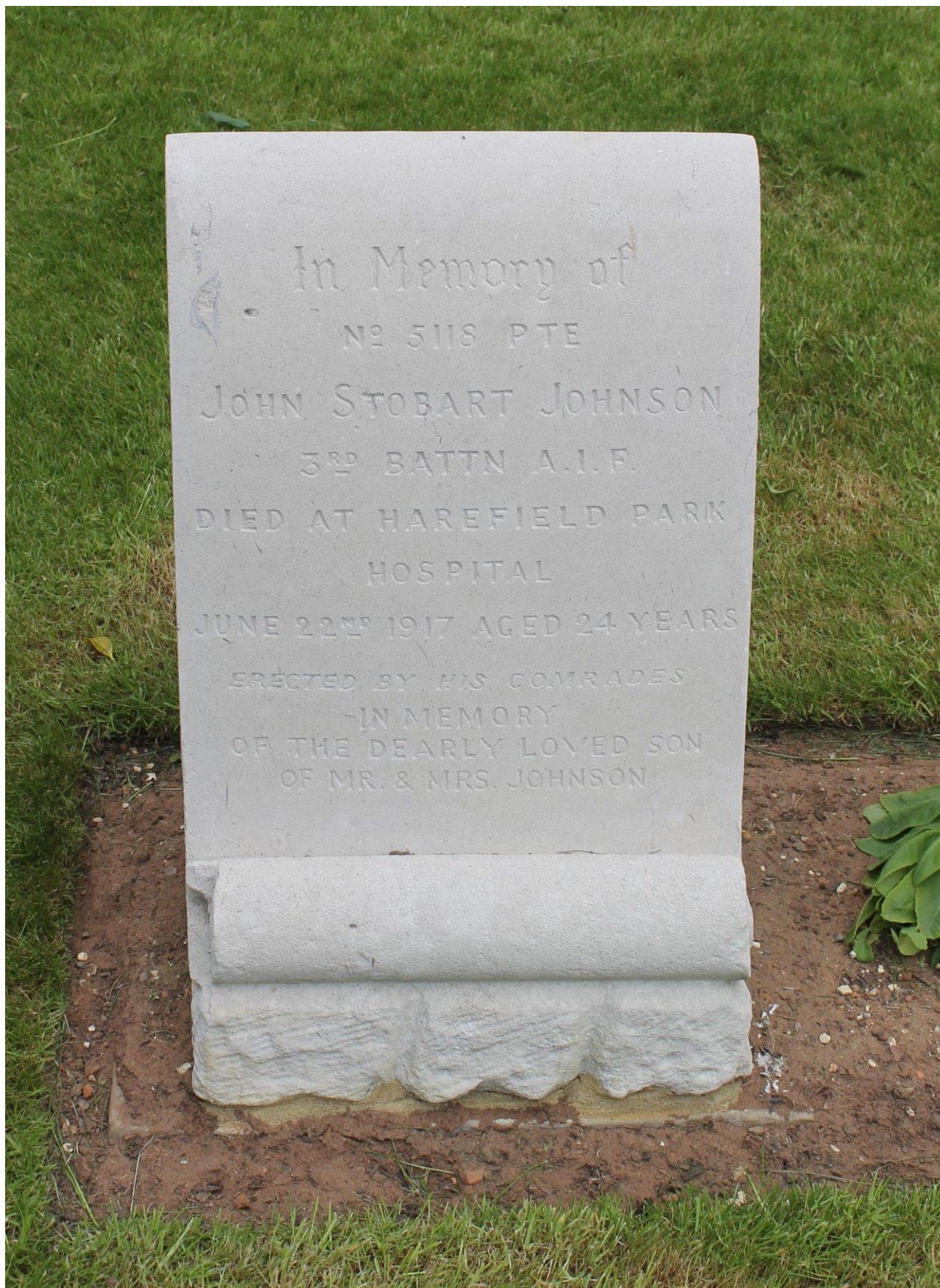


St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield



THE ANZAC CEMETERY, HAREFIELD, LAWRENCE, PHOTO

Photo of Private John Stobart Johnson's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England.



(Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)



St Mary the Virgin Church, Harefield (Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)



St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield (Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)



St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield (Photos courtesy of Peter Bennett)

