

# Durrington War Graves

## World War 1



*Lest We Forget*



**2367 PRIVATE**

**J. McPHEE**

**42ND BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**3RD FEBRUARY, 1917 Age 25**

*God Be With You*

*Till We Meet Again*

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte J. McPhee is located in Grave Plot # 175  
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

## John William McPHEE

John William McPhee was born at Dalby, Queensland in 1892 to parents John & Sarah McPhee.

John William McPhee was a 22 year old, single Labourer from Bell, Queensland when he enlisted at Enoggera, Queensland on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 1914 with 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 766 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Sarah McPhee of Bell, Queensland. John William McPhee had served 2 ½ years in Australian Light Horse at Bell.

Pte John William McPhee of E Company was charged on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 1914 for being absent from Company while on the March. The charge was admonished.

Pte John William McPhee embarked on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 1914. He joined his Battalion on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1915. He was wounded in action at the Dardanelles & reported missing at Gallipoli on 17<sup>th</sup> May, 1915. Pte McPhee was admitted to 17<sup>th</sup> General Hospital at Alexandria, Egypt on 20<sup>th</sup> May, 1915 with a Gunshot wound to finger (slight). He was transferred to No. 1 A. General Hospital at Heliopolis on 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1915 & then transferred to Convalescent Home at Helouan on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1915. A Telegram was sent to Mrs S. McPhee advising her that her son was wounded – not reported seriously & sent 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1915.

Pte McPhee was admitted to Hospital at Abbassia on 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1915 & transferred to be returned to Australia on H. T. *Wiltshire* on 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1915.

Pte McPhee returned to Australia aboard *Wiltshire* on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 1915 & returned to duty at Broadmeadows in Reserves on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 1915.

Pte John William McPhee was posted as a deserter on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1915. Pte John William McPhee was declared as a deserter under Army Act 72 by a Board convened at Broadmeadows on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 1916. Pte McPhee, it was stated, had illegally absented himself without leave at Broadmeadows on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1915 & was still absent on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 1916.

John McPhee re-enlisted under this name and was a 24 year old, single Labourer from Bell, Queensland when he re-enlisted at Toowoomba, Queensland on 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1916 with the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 2367 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Sarah McPhee of Bell, Queensland.

Pte John McPhee embarked from Brisbane on HMAT *Boonah* (A36) on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 1917. Whilst at sea, Pte McPhee was charged with refusing to obey an order given by a superior officer & for being absent without leave from 3 p.m. 14<sup>th</sup> December, 1916 – 3 p.m. 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1916. He was awarded a total forfeiture of 3 days' pay.

Pte John McPhee was admitted to Military Hospital at Devonport on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 1917 & discharged on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 1917 to Perham Downs.

Pte John McPhee was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Down.

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 John McPhee was marched in to 11<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion, Durrington, Wiltshire on 17<sup>th</sup> January, 1917. He was absent from duty without leave on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1917 & awarded 14 days confined to Barracks.

Pte John McPhee was sent sick to Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire on 27<sup>th</sup> January, 1917 & admitted the same day seriously ill with Pneumonia. Communication was sent to Mrs S. McPhee advising her that her son was seriously ill with Pneumonia.

Private John McPhee died on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 1917 at Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire from Pneumonia.

A death for John McPhee, aged 24, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

Private John McPhee was buried on 8<sup>th</sup> February, 1917 at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire – Plot number 175 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Pte John McPhee was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal as he had entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte McPhee's father – Mr J. McPhee (sent August, 1921 & July, 1922)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John McPhee – service number 2367 as being 25 years old & served with 42nd Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of John and Sarah McPhee of Eagle Farm, Bell, Queensland.

Private J. W. McPhee is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 135.



*(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)*



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

J. W. McPhee is also remembered on the Bell War Memorial located in Memorial Park, Bunya Highway, Bell, Queensland.

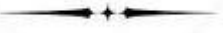


**Bell War Memorial**

(Queensland War Memorial Register -Photos by Shirley & Trevor McIvor)

(93 pages of Pte John McPhee'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 Reports

ROLL OF HONOUR – 273<sup>rd</sup> CASUALTY LIST

DIED OF ILLNESS

Private J. McPhee, Bell

(Townsville Daily Bulletin, Queensland – Tuesday 20 February, 1917)





AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P10683.001

**Pte John McPhee**



#### 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*)

A letter from Base Records, dated 7<sup>th</sup> October, 1921, to Mr J. McPhee advises that a request for the Star of David emblem to be incised on the headstone of the late Pte J. McPhee was questioned and explained that the Star of David was the emblem of the Jewish faith, whereas the Cross was symbolic of Christianity & it was noted that Pte McPhee's religion was recorded as Presbyterian. Mr McPhee replied stating that it had been a mistake on the form requesting the Star of David & the Cross was requested.

Pte J. McPhee does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*God Be With You Till We Meet Again*

Photo of Pte J. McPhee's Headstone at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire.



*(Photo © Ian King - with permission)*



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