

**St. George's Churchyard,
Fovant, Wiltshire
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2915 PRIVATE

J. T. SMITH

38TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

24TH MARCH, 1917 Age 50

John Thomas SMITH

John Thomas Smith was born in Warwickshire, England around 1892.

(Note: There is a discrepancy with John Thomas Smith's age - CWGC & his headstone have the age of death as 50, whereas his age on enlisting was stated to be 24). Due to the common name of "John Thomas Smith" & very little other information – it is hard to provide definite details on his younger years.

John Thomas Smith was a 24 year old, single Farmer from Waverley Road, Oakleigh, Victoria when he enlisted on 17th November, 1916 with the 10th Infantry Brigade, 38th Infantry Battalion, 6th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2915 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his sister – Miss Elizabeth Smith of 159 Sherlock Street, Birmingham, England as his parents were deceased. John Smith stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service due to his chest.

Private John Thomas Smith was posted to Seymour Reserve Company on 18th November, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to "M" Company on 20th November, 1916. Pte Smith was transferred to Reserve Company 37th on 6th December, 1916 then transferred to 6th Reinforcements of 38th Battalion on 8th December, 1916.

Private John Thomas Smith embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Medic (A7)* on 16th December, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 18th February, 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 John Thomas Smith was marched into Camp Details at Sutton Mandeville, Wiltshire on 3rd March, 1917 from 14th Training Battalion, Hurdcott, Wiltshire.

Private John Thomas Smith was admitted to Military Hospital, Fovant, Wiltshire on 15th March, 1917 – cause N.Y.D. (Not yet determined).

Private John Thomas Smith died at 5.50 pm on 24th March, 1917 at Military Hospital, Fovant, Wiltshire, England from Broncho Pneumonia.

A death for John T. Smith, aged 24, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Wilton, Wiltshire, England.

Private John Thomas Smith was buried on 27th March, 1917 in St George's Churchyard, Fovant, Wiltshire, England, – Plot number II. B. 1. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Pte J. T. Smith - *Coffin was a new wooden coffin. Pte Smith was most popular with his comrades, he was obliging, quiet and willing. Never known to complain before or during illness. He was admitted to Hospital 15.3.17 from Sutton Mandeville Camp. Every member of his Unit attended the funeral. His last request was for his sister Miss Elizabeth Smith. A wire was sent but returned marked "Not known at this address". His comrades expressed a wish that their great sorrow and sympathy be conveyed to his relatives, to this wish I desire to add my own. I am endeavouring to get in touch with next of kin. Nominal Roll shows (sister) Miss Elizabeth Smith, 15 Sherlock Street, Birmingham. When first notified of serious illness a wire was sent to this address, but brought forth no reply. (2nd Lt. W. W. H. Major)*

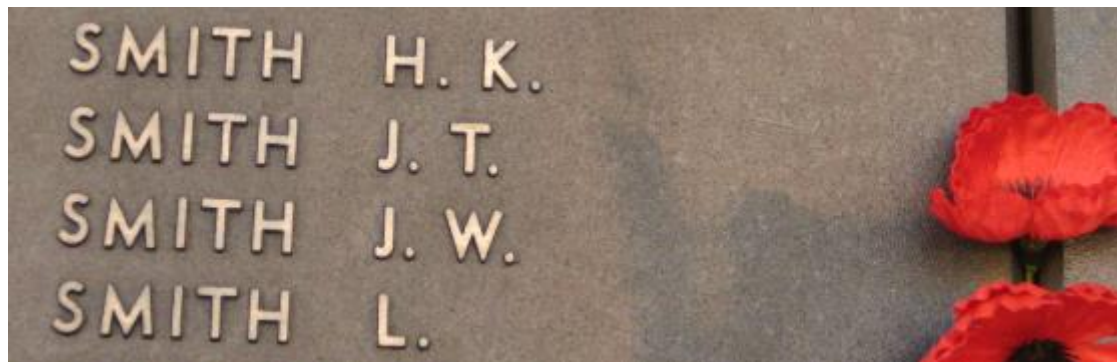
Details of the burial were sent to Miss E. Smith of 159 Sherlock Street, Birmingham, England – as per address on Nominal Roll. It is not known if the letter was received or returned.

Private John Thomas Smith was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also to be sent to Pte Smith's sister – Miss E. Smith in England, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque sent June, 1922). No signed receipts for the Medal or Scroll & Plaque were located in Pte Smith's Service Record file.

The personal effects of the late Private John Thomas Smith were forwarded to the Curator for Intestate Estates of Deceased Persons, New Zealand Chambers, Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private J. T. Smith – service number 2915, aged 50, of 38th Battalion Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Private J. T. Smith is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 130.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(44 pages of Pte John Thomas Smith'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

THE 286th CASUALTY LIST

The Victorian names are:-

DIED OF ILLNESS

Private J. T. Smith, England

(The Mildura Cultivator, Victoria – 11 April, 1917)

INTESTATE ESTATES

The Curator of the Estates of Deceased Persons has obtained rules to administer the estates of the following deceased persons:-John Thomas Smith, A.I.F., formerly Waverley-road, Oakleigh, died 24th March, 1917, £11 6/9.

(The Age, Melbourne, Victoria – 29 December, 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. T. Smith does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

St George's Churchyard, Fovant, Wiltshire, England

There was a 600 bed hutted military hospital at Fovant during the First World War, and the concentration of Australian depots and training camps in the area is reflected in the 63 First World War burials in this churchyard. The war graves form two groups, one west of the church and the other at the east end. There is also one burial of the Second World War. There are 44 War Graves belonging to those who served with the Australian Imperial Force in World War 1. *(Information from CWGC)*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00 299

(Photo c 1919)





St George's Churchyard, Fovant – War Graves at front & rear (*Churchyard photos courtesy of Andrew Stacey*)



Photo of Private J. T. Smith's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St George's Churchyard, Fovant, Wiltshire, England.





Cross of Sacrifice (Photo courtesy of Andrew Stacey)