

**West Ham Cemetery,
Forest Gate, London, England**

War Grave



Lest We Forget

World War 1



1312 PRIVATE

A. J. WATSON

37TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

18TH JULY, 1918 Age 25

Arthur James WATSON

Arthur James Watson was born at Stratford, London, England on 30th April, 1893 to parents Joseph and Emma Watson. He was baptised on 17th May, 1893 at St. Thomas's Church, West Ham, Essex, England.

Arthur James Watson (born 30/4/93) & his brother John William Watson (born 4/1/90) both were admitted to Atley Road School, Tower Hamlets, London on 14th September, 1896. Their father was listed as Joseph Watson, Carman from 46 Usher Rd. John Mill Watson had previously attended Manor Rd School, a Public Elementary School. Both brothers were removed from the school on 24th October, 1896.

Arthur James Watson attended school at Bridge Road County West Ham, England (as recorded by his mother for the Roll of Honour).

The 1901 England Census recorded Arthur J. Watson as an 8 year old, living with his family at 8 Cullum Street, Stratford, West Ham, London & Essex, England. His parents were listed as Joseph Watson (Carman, aged 34, born Harlow, Essex) & Emma Watson (aged 33, born Harlow, Essex). Arthur was one of 3 children listed on this Census (all born Stratford, Essex) – John William Watson (aged 11), then Arthur & Dorothy A. Watson (aged 3). Also listed was a Visitor - William Godfrey (General Labourer, aged 33, born Forest Gate, Essex).

The 1911 England Census recorded Arthur Watson as an 18 year old Labourer, living with his family at 1 Cullum Street, Stratford, West Ham, Essex, England. His widowed mother was listed as Emma Watson (Midwife & Monthly Nurse, aged 51). She stated she had been married for 33 years & had a total of 13 children – 4 whom were still living (9 having since died). Arthur's younger brother – William Watson (At School, aged 10, born West Ham, Essex) was also listed on this Census along with a Lodger – William Godfrey (Coal Porter, aged 40).

According to information supplied by his mother for the Roll of Honour – Arthur James Watson came to Australia when he was 19 years old.

The 1914 & 1916 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Grampians, subdivision of Wedderburn, Victoria recorded Arthur James Watson, Farm Labourer of Wychitella.

Arthur James Watson was a 23 year old, single, Labourer when he enlisted in Melbourne, Victoria on 3rd March, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 1312 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Emily Watson, 4 Broad Street, Martin Street, Stratford, E. London, England.

Private Arthur James Watson was posted to "D" Company of 37th Battalion on 3rd March, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to H. S. Pay Dept from 24th March to 28th March, 1916 then transferred back to "D" Company of 37th Battalion on 28th March, 1916.

Private Arthur James Watson embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Persic* (A34) on 3rd June, 1916 with the 10th Infantry Brigade, 37th Infantry Battalion "D" Company & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 25th July, 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 & also in the county of Dorset. Later Training & Convalescing Units were combined under the one Command Depot.

Private Arthur James Watson was written up for an Offence while posted at Larkhill, Wiltshire – A.W.L. (Absent without Leave) from midnight on 3rd September, 1916 until 4 pm on 8th September, 1916. He was awarded 14 days confined to Barracks by O.C. 37th Battalion on 9th September, 1916 & forfeited 5 days' pay.

Private Arthur James Watson proceeded overseas to France, via Southampton on 22nd November, 1916.

Private Arthur James Watson was admitted to 10th Australian Field Ambulance on 6th January, 1917 with Corneal Opacity. He was transferred to D.R.S. (Divisional Rest Station) on 6th January, 1917 then transferred to 15th Casualty Clearing Station on 7th January, 1917. Private Watson rejoined 37th Battalion in the Field on 10th January, 1917.

Private Arthur James Watson was admitted to 10th Australian Field Ambulance on 19th March, 1917 with Corneal Opacity. He was transferred to D.R.S. (Divisional Rest Station) on 19th March, 1917 then discharged to Base on 26th March, 1917.

Private Arthur James Watson was marched in to 3rd A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 29th March, 1917 from Hazebrouck. He was classified P.B. (Permanent Base) for evacuation from Etaples & was transferred to England on 4th May, 1917.

37th Battalion

The 37th Battalion was formed, as part of the 10th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division, in February 1916 at Seymour in Victoria. Its recruits were drawn from Melbourne, north-east Victoria and Gippsland.

After training in both Australia and Britain, the battalion moved to France on 23 November 1916. Within a week it had begun to occupy trenches on the Western Front, just in time for the onset of the terrible winter of 1916-17. During this time the 3rd Division was heavily involved in raiding the German trenches. In February 1917 the 37th Battalion provided 400 troops, with a similar party from the 38th Battalion, to form a special raiding "battalion". After several weeks of training this force staged a single 35-minute raid on the night of 27 February and was then disbanded.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Arthur James Watson was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, England on 4th May, 1917 from Administrative Headquarters from France. He was classified as P.B. (Permanent Base) on 5th May, 1917.

A Medical Report was completed on Private Arthur James Watson on 5th May, 1917 at No. 2 Australian Command Depot, Weymouth, Dorset, England. His disability was listed as Defective Vision which originated prior to enlistment – *“has always had weakness of R. eye. States got worse in France.”* The Medical Board found that Private Watson was permanently unfit for General Service and fit for Home Service.

Private Arthur James Watson was written up on 13th June, 1917 at Monte Video for *“Disobedience of standing orders.”* This was admonished on 18th June, 1917 by Colonel R. Spencer Browne.

On 8th September, 1917 Colonel Gordon found that Private Arthur James Watson was permanently unfit for General & Home Service.

[Note: There is no record in the Service Record File of Private Arthur James Watson from last entry in September, 1917 until the next entry on 5th July, 1918]

Private Arthur James Watson was admitted to Camp Hospital at Weymouth, Dorset, England on 5th July, 1918 with Pleurisy – seriously ill.

Private Arthur James Watson died at 8.30 am on 18th July, 1918 at Ward 41, Monte Video Camp Hospital, A Sub-Depot, No. 2 Command Depot, Weymouth, Dorset, England from Uraemia.

A death for Albert J. Watson, aged 25, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of Weymouth, Dorset, England.

Private Arthur James Watson was buried on 23rd July, 1918 in West Ham Cemetery, Forest Gate, London, England – Plot number B. 36. N.E. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private Arthur James Watson - *Coffin was good, Polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military Funeral. The coffin was draped with the Australian Flag, and surmounted by several beautiful wreaths. Gun carriage, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers, were in attendance. Prior to the interment, a service was held by Chaplain Wray, C.R. A.I.F. Headquarters, assisted by the Revd Seymour in Trinity Church, West Ham. The “Last Post” was sounded at the graveside. An oak cross will be erected by the A.I.F. Administrative Headquarters were represented at the funeral.*

Private Arthur James Watson requested in his Will, dated 10th July, 1917, that all his real and personal estate be bequeathed to his mother – Mrs Emma Watson, 4 Broad Street. Martin Street, Stratford, London E.

Private Arthur James Watson was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Watson's mother – Mrs E. Watson, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque issued on England in November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Arthur James Watson – service number 1312, aged 25, of 37th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Joseph and Emma Watson, of 4 Broad St., Morton St., Stratford.

Private A. J. Watson is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 129.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(59 pages of Private Arthur James Watson'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

ROLL OF HONOR VICTORIAN LIST

DIED OTHER CAUSES

Pte A. J. WATSON, England (18/7/18 (illness))

(*Weekly Times*, Melbourne, Victoria – 10 August, 1918)

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.

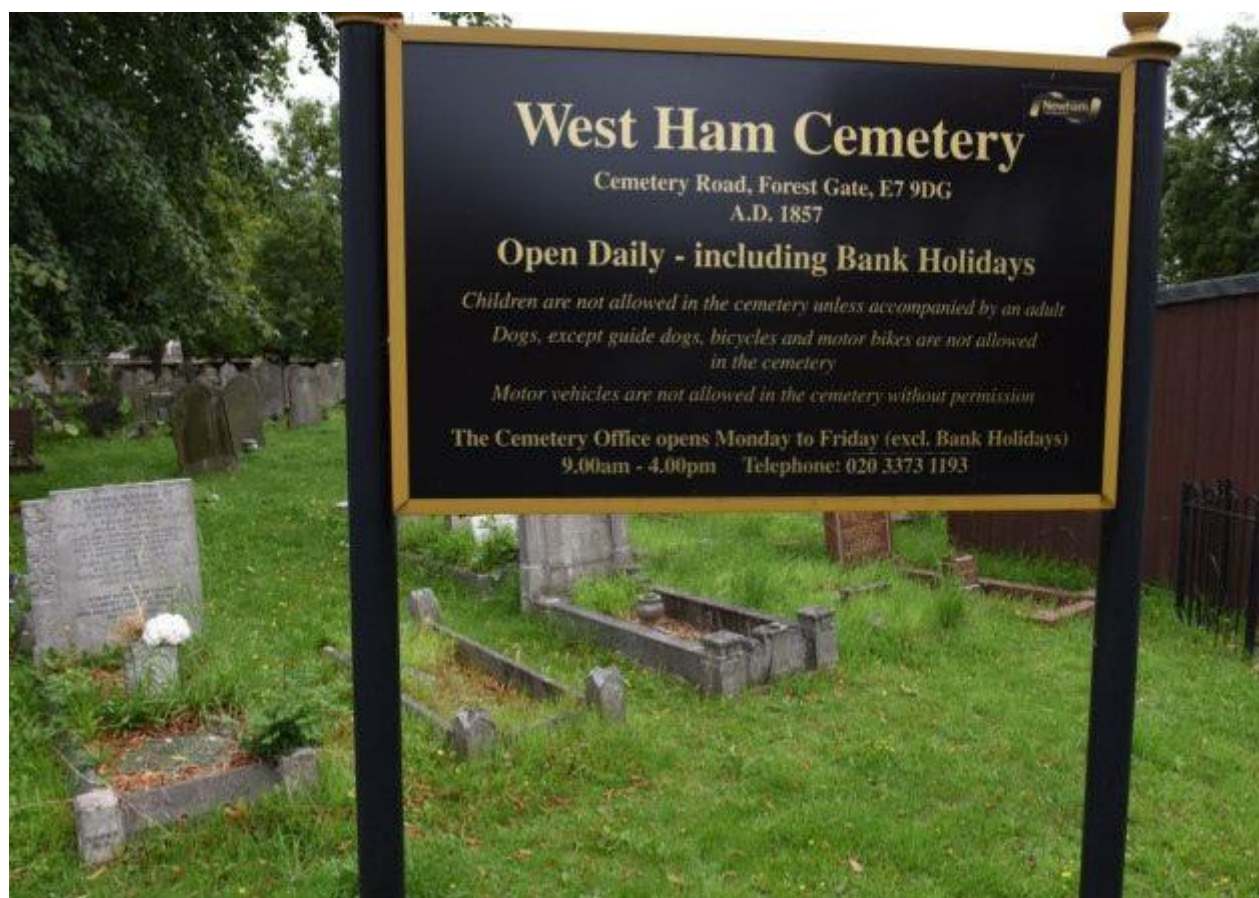
(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)

Private A. J. Watson does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

West Ham Cemetery, Forest Gate, London, England

There are 137 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war here; 30 are in the "Soldiers' Circle," on which a War Cross is erected, with a Screen Wall bearing the names of those whose graves (in the plot or elsewhere in the cemetery) are not marked by headstones. There are 78 Commonwealth burials of the 1939-1945 war in various parts of the cemetery, a second Screen Wall bears the names of those whose graves are not marked by headstones.

(Information from CWGC)



(Photo from Find a Grave – Trevor Clarke)

Photo of Private A. J. Watson's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in West Ham Cemetery, Forest Gate, London, England.



(Photo from Find a Grave – Len – Feb 2016)



(Photo by Judy Rieck)



Cross of Sacrifice at West Ham Cemetery *(Photo from CWGC)*