

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



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**3662 PRIVATE**

**L. WATT**

**28TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**1ST NOVEMBER, 1917 Age 46**

*Fight The Good Fight*

*Of Faith*

*Lay Hold On Eternal Life*

*1 Tim. 6 12*

## Louis WATT

Louis Robertson Robinson Watt was born at Morrisons Diggings, Victoria in 1869 to parents James & Margaret Watt (nee Gibb). His birth was registered in the district of Moorabool, Victoria.

James Watt, father of Louis Watt, died in 1883. His mother, Margaret Watt, died in 1903 at East Brighton, Victoria.

The 1903 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Fremantle, subdivision of Mundijong listed a "Louis Robinson Watt" Labourer of Mundijong, Western Australia.

The 1910, 1912, 1913, 1916 & 1917 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Fremantle, subdivision of Guildford listed Louis Watt, Striker, of Padbury Terrace, Midland Junction, Western Australia.

Louis Watt was a 45 year old, single Striker from Canterbury Terrace, Midland Junction, Western Australia when he enlisted in Perth, Western Australia on 4th October, 1915 with the 7th Infantry Brigade, 28th Infantry Battalion, 8th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 3662 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his brother – Mr John Watt, of Essendon, Victoria.

Private Louis Watt was posted to No. 31 Depot for recruit training on 4th October, 1915. He was transferred to No. 4 Depot on 16th October, 1915 then to No. 3 Depot on 1st November, 1915. Pte Watt was transferred to 8th Reinforcements of 28th Infantry Battalion on 1st November, 1915.

Private Louis Watt embarked from Fremantle, Western Australia on HMAT *Borda* (A30) on 17th January, 1916.

Private Louis Watt embarked for Overseas from Alexandria on 21st March, 1916 on H. T. *Oriana* & disembarked at Marseilles, France on 27th March, 1916.

Private Louis Watt was taken on strength on 28th Battalion in France on 23rd April, 1916.

Private Louis Watt was sent sick to Hospital in 28th June, 1916. Pte Watt claimed that he was on duty at the time of accident & this was confirmed by C.O. of 28th Battalion. Pte Watt was admitted 7th Australian Field Ambulance with a sprained ankle then transferred to No. 2 Casualty Clearing Station. Pte Watt was then transferred to No. 24 D.R.S. (Divisional Rest Station) with a sprained ankle. He was transferred to No. 7 Ambulance Train on 2nd July, 1916 & admitted to Australian Hospital at Wimereux, France on 3rd July, 1916. Pte Watt was transferred to Hospital Ship *Jan Breydel* on 5th July, 1916 for England.

Private Louis Watt was admitted to Ontario Military Hospital, Orpington, Kent, England with a sprained ankle on 6th July, 1916. He was discharged to Admin. Headquarters on 22nd August, 1916. He was granted furlough on 24th August, 1916 & then to report to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire.

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 Louis Watt was transferred from No. 1 Command Depot, Perham Downs, Wiltshire to 7th Training Battalion on 10th October, 1916 & classified as "B".

Private Louis Watt was classified as P. B. (Permanent Base – unfit for active service) while posted at No. 2 Group, Rollestone, Wiltshire on 16th August, 1917.

Private Louis Watt was admitted to Military Hospital, Fovant, Wiltshire on 22nd October, 1917 – cause N.Y.D. (not yet determined) – Seriously ill.

A Court of Enquiry was held at Fovant on 24th October (and subsequent dates up to 7th November, 1917) enquiring into the cause and nature of injuries sustained by No. 3662 Pte L. Watt, 28th Battalion (attached to 7th Training Battalion), A.I.F. on the night of the 21st of October, 1917.

Private Louis Watt died at 10.50 am on 1st November, 1917 at Military Hospital, Fovant, Wiltshire, England from Fractured base of skull.

Court of Enquiry – Evidence:

1st Witness. No.2165. Sergt. Strike.E. 41st Battalion. attached to the 11th Training Battalion, Fovant. Being duly sworn states:-  
On Sunday evening 21st October 1917. I was in charge of a picquet which was returning from Tisbury. At about 9.30.pm. I found No. 3662 Private Watt.A.L. of the 7th Training Battalion, Fovant lying about a mile out of Tisbury across the road in an unconscious condition suffering from a wound in the head which was bleeding freely and also blood issuing from his left ear. I notified the Police at Tisbury by runner of the man's condition and then procured medical assistance and an ambulance from Fovant. I left the man in charge of the Sergt. of Civilian Police and then returned to camp.  
(Sgd) E.Strike. Sgt.

2nd Witness. No.1096. Corporal A.J.Walsh 41st Battalion attached to the 11th Training Battalion, Fovant. being duly sworn states:-  
I was Corporal of the Tisbury Picquet on Sunday the 21st October 1917. under Sgt Strike. About a mile out of Tisbury on the way back to Camp at Fovant we came across a man lying across the road in an unconscious condition. On examination I saw that there was a wound in the back of the head which was bleeding also blood was coming from the left ear. This man was recognised as Private Watt of the 7th Training Battalion, Fovant by some men who came along and also by a letter which was in his Tunic Pocket. Private Watt appeared as if he had been hit by someone from behind . If he had been knocked down by a Motor Car he would not have been lying in the position he was found.  
(Sgd) R.J.Walsh. Corporal.

3rd Witness.No.6599. Private Jay.M. 28th Battalion attached to the 7th Training Battalion.A.I.F.Fovant.being duly sworn states:-  
On the 21st day of October 1917. I was in Tisbury with Pte Bridger.W. I met Pte A.L.Watts and Pte Campbell in Tisbury. The four of us went into an Hotel and had a drink. I do not remember the name of that Hotel. We then proceeded to the



Cross Inn Hotel and stayed there until about 9.pm. Pte Bridger and I then left the Hotel to try and secure a motor car to come home. We met three other men while trying to procure the car. Private Woodcock, Private Watts and Private J.Coote. The deceased Private A.L.Watts we left in the hotel in the company of Private Campbell and I did not see him again until I saw him on the ground with a crowd around him about a mile out of Tisbury. He was then unconscious.

(Sgd) M.Jay.

4th Witness. No 6549 Private Bridger.W. 28th Battalion attached to the 7th Training Battalion A.I.F.Fovant. being duly sworn states- Private Jay and I went to Tisbury on the 21st October.1917. On arriving in Tisbury at about 4 O'clock we went and had tea. Private Jay and myself met Private Watt.A.L. and Private Campbell in Tisbury at about 5-45.pm. We all went into a hotel where we had a drink. We then walked up the street and went into another hotel which I do not know the name of, and had about 5 more drinks. We all had stout and beer. About 9.pm. Jay and I then went to procure a motor car to come home in, leaving Watt and Campbell in the hotel together. We were unable to procure a motor car so started to walk home. On the way home we met Private J.Coote and another man who proceeded home with us. When we got about half a mile out of Tisbury we came across a number of men some of which were the picquet. They had a man on the ground and when I looked I saw it was Private Watt.A.L. He was unconscious. The Sergeant of the Picquet and I

looked about for his mate Private Campbell as I thought he might be laying down somewhere but could not find him.

(Sgd) W.Bridger.

5th Witness. Captain E. Huntley R.A.M.C. Fovant Military Hospital  
being duly sworn states:-  
No 5662. Private L. Watts 28th Battalion A.I.F. was  
admitted to Fovant Military Hospital on the 22nd October  
1917. with fractured base of skull. He subsequently  
died from this injury. I cannot state an opinion as to  
how the injury was caused. The patient was unconscious  
at first but later came round but had forgotten all  
about the accident or how it was caused.  
(Sgd) E. Huntley. Capt.  
R.A.M.C.

The Finding:

*After reviewing the evidence I am of the opinion that No. 3662 Pte Watt A. L. 28th Battn. A.I.F. was not on any Military Duty at the time of the accident mentioned in the above proceedings. I cannot express an opinion as to whether he was to blame or not as there is no evidence to show how the injuries were caused.*

*(Sgd) F. Dawson, Mjr.*

*Commanding 7th Trainign Battn. A.I.F.*

*Fovant 7.11.17*

A Coroner's Inquest was held at Military Hospital, Fovant on 2nd November, 1917 & by adjournment on 14th & 28th November, 1917 into the death of Private Louis Watt, No. 3662, Private in "D" Company of 28th Battalion A.I.F. The Coroner was Frank Henry Trethowan Esq.

COUNTY OF WILTS. )  
TO WIT. )

INFORMATION OF WITNESSES TAKEN THIS SECOND DAY  
OF NOVEMBER, one thousand, nine hundred and  
seventeen, at the MILITARY HOSPITAL FOVANT, in the  
Parish of COMPTON CHAMBERLAYNE, in the County of  
Wilts before me Frank Henry Trethowan, one of the  
Coroners for the said County touching the death of  
LOUIS WATT, then and there lying dead as follows:-

A N D Edgar Huntley on his oath saith:-

I am a Captain in the R.A.M.C. and Surgical Specialist  
stationed at Fovant Military Hospital.  
The deceased was brought to the hospital on the 21st.  
October 1917. I saw him and it was quite obvious that he was  
suffering from fracture of the base of the skull. He was bleeding  
profusely from the left ear. He lived until 10.5 a.m. on the  
1st. November 1917. The injuries might have been caused by his  
falling. There was nothing to show that he had met with foul  
play or had been knocked down by a car.

Edgar Huntley.



A N D Edmond Stike, on his oath states:-

I am a Sergeant 11th Training Battalion, A.I.F. stationed at West Camp, Fovant.

On Sunday the 21st. October 1917, about 9.30 p.m. I was in charge of the Military Picquet at Tisbury and was proceeding towards Fovant Camp and when about a mile out of Tisbury in Chickgrove Lane, East Tisbury I found the deceased lying across the road with a wound in the head which was bleeding. Blood was also issuing from the left ear. There was nothing to show that there had been any fighting. No car passed or met me as I was on my way to Fovant Camp. I notified the Military Police and removed the deceased to a cottage close by where his wound was attended to.

E. Strike.

A N D Thomas Quinney on his oath states:-

I am a Corporal Anzac Provost Corps, stationed at Tidbury. I saw the accused and Ptes. Bridges, and Jay go into the Cross Hotel, High Street, Tisbury about 6 o'clock p.m. and all three came out about 9 p.m. The deceased in my opinion was somewhat the worse for drink. I spoke to them. Bridger and Jay went down High Street towards the Post Office. The deceased went along to Cuff's Lane and another man was with him who had come out with him from the Cross Inn.

T. Quinney.

A N D Martin Jay on his oath saith:-

I am a Private in the 28th. Battalion, A.I.F. stationed at Fovant. On Sunday the 21st. October 1917, I met the deceased about 5.50 and shortly after I went into the Bennett Arms and then went to the Cross Inn. Bridger was with us and a man named Campbell. We left the Cross about 9 o'clock and were all somewhat under the influence of drink. When we left Bridger and I went to get a taxi, but could not get one and then went towards Fovant. Someway out I saw the deceased in the road with a crowd round him. The man who was with deceased when he left the Cross Inn was Pte. Campbell and whom I now believe to be Absent without Leave.

M. Jay.

A N D William Bridger on his oath states:-

I am a Private in the 28th. Battalion A.I.F. stationed at Fovant. I have known the deceased for several years. His name is Louis Watt a Private in "D" Company 28th. Battalion, A.I.F. No.1. Camp Fovant. His home address was "Essenden" Victoria Aus His age was 47.

BY THE  
FOREMAN.

I corroborate the evidence of Martin Jay, Campbell was a friend of the deceased. I believe he was in the same Battn. as I and the deceased.

W. Bridger.

ON THE ADJOURNMENT on  
the 14th. November 1917.

BY THE FOREMAN.

Campbell gave the deceased £1. which deceased used  
in buying drinks a balance of about 18/- was handed by the  
deceased to Campbell afterwards. There was no dispute as far as  
I am aware as to money. I don't know whether Campbell had  
much money with him. I don't know what the argument was about  
outside the Cross Hotel.

W. Bridger.

Severally taken before me  
this 28th day of November 1917,  
and on the prior dates:-

F.H. Trethowen.  
H.M. Coroner.

The Verdict was – “Pte Watt died on November 1st, 1917 from fracture of base of skull & it is unknown by what means the said Pte Watt met with the said injury.”

A death for Louis Watts, aged 47, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Wilton, Wiltshire, England.

Private Louis Watt was buried on 5th November, 1917 in St George's Churchyard, Fovant, Wiltshire, England, – Plot number II. C. 1. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Pte L. Watt - *Plain wooden Brass mounted coffin in good condition.*

Private Louis Watt was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Watt's eldest brother – Mr John Watt, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent December, 1921 & Plaque sent June, 1923).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Louis Watt – service number 3662, aged 46, of 28th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of James and Margaret Watt.

Private L. Watt is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 114.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)

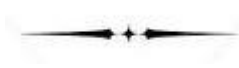




*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

(57 pages of Pte Louis Watt'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**

**AUSTRALIANS IN ACTION**

**THE ROLL OF HONOUR**

**361ST LIST**

WEST AUSTRALIA

DIED OF INJURIES

Louis Watt, Essendon (Vic)

*(Kalgoorlie Miner, Western Australia – 1 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 L. Watt does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*Fight The Good Fight Of Faith  
Lay Hold On Eternal Life 1 Tim. 6 12*

### **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

D00299

Graves of Australian soldiers in the Fovant Churchyard. Identified, left to right, front row: **3662 Private (Pte) Louis Watt, 28th Battalion, killed in action 1 November 1917**; 3284 Pte William Coleman, 36th Battalion, died 20 November 1917, aged 34 years; 7179 Pte Frank Leslie Gardner, 17th Battalion, died of sickness 7 March 1918; 1992 Pte John Wright, 41st Battalion, died of sickness 28 March 1918. *(Photo c 1919)*





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





Photo of Private L. Watt's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St George's Churchyard, Fovant, Wiltshire, England.







**Cross of Sacrifice** (Photo courtesy of Andrew Stacey)



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

