St. George's Churchyard,

Fovant, Wiltshire

War Graves

Lest We Forget

World War 1

2823   GUNNER

J. WOODGER

AUST. FIELD ARTILLERY

31ST OCTOBER, 1918   Age 32

Joseph WOODGER

Joseph Woodger was born at Surbiton, Surrey, England to parents John & Mary A Woodger (nee Kelly). His birth was registered in the March quarter of 1887.

The 1891 England Census recorded Joseph Woodger as a 4 year old living with his family at 1 Ivy Cottage, Long Ditton, Surrey, England. His parents were listed as John Woodger (Builder's Labourer, aged 40, born Surbiton, Surrey) & Maryann Woodger (aged 44, born London). Three of John Woodger's stepchildren were listed – Peter Kelly (Milkman, aged 19, born London), Rose Kelly (Domestic Servant, aged 17, born Bromley, Kent) & Richard Kelly (aged 14, born Kingston, Surrey). Four of John & Maryann's children were listed on this Census (all born Kingston, Surrey) – Jos. Woodger (aged 9) Ellen Woodger (aged 4), then Joe & Charley Woodger (aged 2).

The 1901 England Census recorded Joseph Woodger as a 15 year old Milkman, living with his family at 1 Ivy Cottage, Tolworth, Surrey, England. His parents were listed as John Woodger (General Labourer, aged 49) & Mary A. Woodger (aged 49). Joseph was one of four children listed on this Census – Thomas Woodger (Bricklayer, aged 20) Ellen Woodger (aged 18) then Joseph & Charles Woodger (aged 12).

Joseph Woodger married Alice Maud Cann on the December quarter, 1908 in the district of Kingston, Surrey, England.

The 1911 England Census recorded Joseph Woodger as a 24 year old Bricklayer living with his wife – Alice Woodger (aged 22, born Devonport) & their son – Henry Woodger (aged 13 months, born Tolworth). Joseph & Alice had been married for 4 years. The family were living in a 2 roomed dwelling – 4 Myrtle Cottages, Elm Road, Hook, Surrey, England.

Joseph Woodger, Bricklayer, aged 25 & his wife Clara, aged 21, & their son Henry, aged 2, were passengers on the *Indarra* which departed from the port of London on 23rd November, 1912. The Woodger family were destined for the port of Adelaide, South Australia.

A birth was registered in the district of Hindmarsh, South Australia in 1913 for John Thomas Woodger, son of Joseph & Alice Maude Woodger (nee Cann).

Joseph Woodger was a 29 year old, married (with 2 children), Bricklayer from 7 Clifton Street, Prospect, South Australia when he enlisted at Keswick, South Australia on 28th June, 1915 with the 10th Infantry Battalion, 9th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2823 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs A. M. Woodger, of Drayton Street, Bowden, South Australia. Joseph Woodger stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service due to his height – under 5ft 4" for A.I.F. Joseph Woodger was 5ft 2 ½ inches tall.

Private Joseph Woodger was posted to K Group, Base Depot on 28th June, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to 10th Reinforcements of 10th Infantry Battalion on 16th June or July, 1915 (2 different forms have the 2 different months) then transferred to 9th Reinforcements of 10th Infantry Battalion on 1st September, 1915.

Private Joseph Woodger embarked from Adelaide, South Australia on HMAT *Star of England (A15)* on 21st September, 1915 & disembarked at Alexandria, Egypt. (Casualty Form – Active Service states 29th <u>December</u>, 1915)

Private Joseph Woodger was taken on strength of Battalion from Reinforcements at Mudros on 25th November, 1915.

Private Joseph Woodger was transferred to 50th Battalion from 10th Battalion on 26th February, 1916 at Serapeum. He was taken on strength of 50th Battalion on 27th February, 1916 at Tel-el-Kebir.

Private Joseph Woodger was transferred to 4th Field Artillery & taken on strength of 24th Howitzer Brigade as Gunner on 14th March, 1916. He was posted to 111th Battery the same day.

Gunner Joseph Woodger proceeded to join British Expeditionary Force from Alexandria on 3rd June, 1916 & disembarked at Marseilles, France on 13th (?) June, 1916.

Gunner Joseph Woodger was transferred to 10th Field Artillery Brigade on 25th January, 1917. He was taken on strength of 10th F.A.B. & posted to 39th Battery the same day.

Gunner Joseph Woodger was reported to be with his Unit on 2nd June, 1918. (No previous details recorded since 25th January, 1917).

Gunner Joseph Woodger was wounded in action in France on 13th August, 1918. He was taken to 1st Australian Field Ambulance with shrapnel wounds to right thigh then transferred to 55th Casualty Clearing Station. Gunner Woodger was admitted to 11th Stationary Hospital at Rouen, France on 15th August, 1918 & shortly after was invalided to UK.

War Diary - 10th Australian Field Artillery Brigade

13th August, 1918 – Gailly

Fine bright warm day – Brigade moved into Wagon lines near HARBONNIERES & guns were put into action the same night at Sheet 66d F 5 b. H. 2 being at F2 B5.8. 9 O.R. taken on strength - 1 O.R. returned from School. 4 O.R. wounded & S/Off – 2 O.R. killed & S/Off. 1 O.R. to F. Amb – 1 O.R. on leave. 23 O (Officers) 711 O.R. doing duty. – Lt Ferguson hurt through fall of horse & evac. …….

(War Diary information from the Australian War Memorial)

Gunner Joseph Woodger was admitted to Beaufort War Hospital, Bristol on 18th August, 1918 with shell wounds to right thigh. He was transferred to No. 3 Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford on 9th September, 1918. Gunner Woodger was discharged to furlo from 1st October, 1918 to 15th October, 1918 & was then to report to No. 4 Command Depot at Hurdcott.

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.

Gunner Joseph Woodger was marched in to No. 4 Command Depot at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 15th October, 1918.

Gunner Joseph Woodger was admitted to Military Hospital at Fovant, Wiltshire on 22nd October, 1918 with Influenza.

Gunner Joseph Woodger died on 31st October, 1918 at Military Hospital, Fovant, Wiltshire, England from Double Pneumonia complicating Influenza.

A death for Joseph Woodger, aged 33, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Wilton, Wiltshire, England.

Gunner Joseph Woodger was buried at 3 pm on 4th November, 1918 in St George's Churchyard, Fovant, Wiltshire, England, – Plot number I. H. 2. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Gunner J. Woodger *- Coffin was polished Elm with brass mounts. Deceased was buried with full Military honors. The funeral was preceded by a Firing Party and Band from No. 4 Command Depot. Six of deceased's late Unit comrades supported the Pall. Two Officers and about 50 N.C.O.'s and Men from No. 4 Command Depot followed the remains and were present at the graveside. Wreaths from Parents, Officers, N.C.O.'s and Men of No. 4 Command Depot were placed on the grave. The following relatives attended the funeral (Father) Mr J. Woodger, 48 Tolworth Park Road, Surbiton, Surrey; (Brother) Driver C. Woodger, 13 Block Stanhope Lines, Aldershot; (Sister) Mrs Dobson, 17 Ravenscar Road, Tolworth; (Sister-in-Law) Mrs E. A. Woodger, 48 Tolworth Park Road, Surbiton. Headquarters A.I.F. Depots in United Kingdom were represented at the funeral.*

Gunner Joseph Woodger was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Gunner Woodger's widow - Mrs A. M. Woodger, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent September, 1921 & Plaque sent October, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Gunner Joseph Woodger – service number 2823, aged 32, of 10th Bty., Australian Field Artillery. No family details are listed.

Gunner J. Woodger is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 13.

(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)

Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia
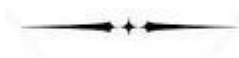
J. Woodger is remembered on the National Soldiers Memorial in Adelaide. The Adelaide National War Memorial commemorates those from South Australia that served in the First World War. The names of those that died are listed inside the Memorial, which is located on the corner of North Terrace & Kintore Avenue, Adelaide.

National War Memorial – Adelaide *(Photos by Bilby)*

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(55 pages of Gunner Joseph Woodger'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

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Newspaper Notices

431st CASUALTY LIST

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Wounded

2823 Gnr. J. WOODGER, Bowden

(*Chronicle*, Adelaide, South Australia – 12 October, 1918)

DIED ON ACTIVE SERVICE

WOODGER – On the 31st October, in hospital, of sickness, Gunner J. Woodger, dearly beloved husband of Mrs Alice Woodger, of Fourth-street, Bowden, after three years' active service. Sadly missed.

(*The Express and Telegraph*, Adelaide, South Australia – 13 November, 1918) & (Advertiser, Adelaide, South Australia – 14

November, 1918) & (*Chronicle*, Adelaide, South Australia – 16 November, 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)

Gunner J. Woodger 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   D00299

(Photo c 1919)

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

Photo of Gunner J. Woodger's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St George's Churchyard, Fovant, Wiltshire, England.

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