

**Tidworth Military Cemetery,
Tidworth, Wiltshire, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2666 PRIVATE

W. R. WOODLEY

39TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

16TH MARCH, 1917 Age 30

Behold I Am The Lord

The God Of All Flesh

Jer. 32-27

William Robert WOODLEY

William Robert Woodley was born at Seaton, Devonshire, England on 12th September, 1886 to parents John Carnel Woodley & Sarah Woodley (nee Channon). His birth was registered in December quarter, 1886 in the district of Axminster, Devon, England. He was baptised on 3rd October, 1886 & Seaton & Beer, Devon, England.

The 1891 England Census recorded William Woodley as a 4 year old Scholar, living with his family at Bunts Road, Seaton & Beer, Devon, England. His parents were listed as John Woodley (Brickmaker, aged 34, born Ottery St. Mary, Devon) & Sarah Woodley (aged 33, born Ottery St. Mary, Devon). William was one of four children listed on this Census – George Woodley (Scholar, aged 10, born Ottery St. Mary, Devon), Frank Woodley (Scholar, aged 6, born Seaton, Devon) then William & Mary Woodley (aged 2, born Seaton, Devon).

William Robert Woodley attended Nations School, Seaton, Devonshire, England.

The 1901 England Census recorded William Woodley as a 14 year old living with his family at 2 Bunts Road, Seaton, Devon, England. His parents were listed as John Woodley (Brickmaker, aged 43) & Sarah Woodley (aged 43). William was one of seven children listed on this Census – George Woodley (Carpenter, aged 20), Frank Woodley (Brickmaker, aged 16), then William, Mary Woodley (aged 12), Albert Woodley (aged 10, born Seaton, Devon), Leana Woodley (aged 7, born Seaton, Devon) & John Woodley (aged 5, born Seaton, Devon).

William Robert Woodley was a 30 year old, single, Brick Burner from Hamstead Road, Flemington, Sydney, New South Wales when he enlisted on 3rd October, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.) at Show Ground Camp, Sydney, New South Wales. His religion was Congregational & his next of kin was listed as his father – Mr John Woodley, The Brick Works, "Ottery", St Mary, Devonshire, England.

Private William Robert Woodley was posted to Recruits from 3rd October, 1916 at Show Ground Camp, Sydney, New South Wales. He was transferred to 5th Reinforcements of 39th Battalion at Kiama, New South Wales from 10th October, 1916.

Private Robert Woodley (name as listed on Embarkation Roll), Service number 2666, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Benalla* (A24) on 9th November, 1916 with the 39th Infantry Battalion, 5th Reinforcements & disembarked at Devonport, England on 9th January, 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 William Robert Woodley was marched in to 10th Training Battalion at Durrington, Wiltshire on 10th January, 1917 from Australia.

Private William Robert Woodley was sent sick to Parkhouse Hospital, Wiltshire on 10th February, 1917. He was admitted to Fargo Hospital, Wiltshire on 19th February, 1917 with Influenza. (The Hospital Admissions form recorded he was admitted to Fargo S. P. on 9th February, 1917 with the following comments "*Influenza improved. Transferred to Tidworth for mental observation. He was excitable and ____ also dirt in his habits.....*"). Private Woodley was transferred to Military Hospital, Tidworth on 2nd March, 1917 – cause N.Y.D. (not yet determined). (Note: Casualty Form – Active Service has "Cerebro Spinal Meningitis" written in red. The Hospital Admissions form recorded he was admitted on 2nd March with Nuerasthenia then on 15th March he was suffering from Cerebro Spinal Meningitis).

39th Battalion

The 39th Battalion was formed on 21 February 1916 at the Ballarat Showgrounds in Victoria and drew most of its recruits from the state's Western District. It became part of the 10th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division. Sailing from Melbourne on 27 May, the battalion arrived in Britain on 18 July and commenced four months of training. It crossed to France in late November and moved into the trenches of the Western Front for the first time on 9 December, just in time for the onset of the terrible winter of 1916-17.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private William Robert Woodley died at 2.25 am on 16th March, 1917 at Military Hospital, Tidworth, Wiltshire, England from Influenza & Cerebro Spinal Meningitis.

A death for William R. Woodley, aged 30, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Andover, Hampshire, England.

Private William Robert Woodley was buried on 21st March, 1917 in Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire, England – Plot number C. 304 and now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

From the burial report of Private William Robert Woodley - *Coffin was good Oak. Rev T. M. Vittu Noe, No. 1 Command Depot officiated at the Funeral.*

The Public Works Department, New South Wales wrote to Base Records on 8th February, 1917 requesting “*the date of embarkation of Private William R. Woodley, who enlisted on the 3rd October, '16, with the A.I.F., 5th Company, 5th Reinforcements, 39th Battalion.*”

Base Records replied to Director General, Public Works Department, Sydney, NSW on 13th February, 1917 advising “*No. 2666 Private W. R. Woodley, 5th Reinforcements, 39th Battalion, embarked from Sydney on 9/11/16 for active service abroad.*”

The Public Trust Office, Sydney, NSW, wrote to Base Records on 19th November, 1917 requesting a Certificate, in duplicate, relating to the death of No. 2666 Private W. R. Woodley, 39th Battalion.

Base Records replied to The Public Trustee, Sydney, NSW on 27th November, 1917 enclosing a certificate, in duplicate, of report of death of the late No. 2666 Private W. R. Woodley, 39th Battalion.

Private William Robert Woodley was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Woodley's father - Mr J. Woodley, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque issued in England in July, 1922). (Correspondence in July, 1925 showed Mrs S. Woodley (widowed mother) living at “Haven Cottage”, Chapel Lane, Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire.)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private William Robert Woodley – service number 2666, aged 30, of 39th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of John and Sarah Woodley, of Brickworks, Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire, England.

Private W. R. Woodley is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 132.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

W. R. Woodley & his brother – F. Woodley are both remembered on Ottery St. Mary's Church Roll of Honour, East Devon, England.



Ottery St. Mary's Church Roll of Honour (Photos from War Memorials Online)



(44 pages of Private William Robert Woodley'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



Connected to Private William Robert Woodley:

Older Brother – Frank Woodley: Stoker 2nd Class, Royal Navy, HMS Vivis (shore base). Died of illness 14th January, 1917, aged 32.



Newspaper Notices

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

LIST NO. 283

NEW SOUTH WALES

DIED OF ILLNESS

Privates W. R. Woodley (England).....

(Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, NSW – 30 March, 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 W. R. Woodley does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

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Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire, England

Tidworth Military Cemetery, which contains burials of both wars, was directly connected with training grounds on, or near, Salisbury Plain.

During the First World War, the cemetery was used for burials from Tidworth and Fargo Military Hospitals and the 417 graves, many of them of Australian or New Zealand servicemen, are scattered throughout the cemetery.

There are 106 Second World War graves in the cemetery, two substantial groups of which can be found in sections F and D. The rest are scattered.

The cemetery also contains 40 war graves of other nationalities, many of them Polish.

(Information from CWGC)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00327

The AIF Tidworth cemetery under snow. – March 1919.

Identified graves marked by a cross and headstone in the foreground

Front row: 50727 Private Rowland James Dickson, Australian Machine Gun Corps, died 14 October 1918.

Second row, left to right: 18282 Driver John Thalma Jackson, Details Australian Engineers, died 30 October 1917; 17445 Pte Roland Travers Woodville, Australian Army Medical Corps, died 13 September 1917; 31712 Gunner John Alexander McDonald, 15th Field Artillery Brigade, Australian Field Artillery, died 30 July 1917, aged 37, at Tidworth Military Hospital; 3062 Pte Even Thomas Kennedy, 3rd Australian Pioneers, died 7 August 1917.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00481

Tidworth Military Cemetery – 12 June, 1919

A corner of the Australian cemetery. Front row, left to right: 5840 Private F. W. Heede, 25th Battalion died 3 June 1917; 7350 Private A. E. Campbell, 8th Battalion, died 2 August 1917; 1824 Driver A. C. Jones, 4th Company, Australian Machine Gun Corps, AADC, died 8 August 1917; 8009 Corporal W. J. Giles, Australian Tunnelling Company, died 17 March 1918.



Tidworth Military Cemetery (Photo by *julia&keld* – Find a Grave)



Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire (Photo courtesy of John Prestidge)



Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire (Photo by Chris Talbot 2009)



(Photo courtesy of Portsmouth Remembers – Kevin)

Photo of Private W. R. Woodley's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of Selena Hardie)

