

Compton Chamberlayne War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



3462 PRIVATE

W. J. PARK

60th BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

23rd SEPTEMBER, 1917 Age 18

*ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S
YOUTHFUL HEROES*

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte W J Park is located in Middle Row
Grave Plot # 5 of Compton Chamberlayne Cemetery*

William Joseph Park was born at Geelong, Victoria in 1898 to parents William Peter & Rose Park. He was a Labourer, single & aged 18 years & 5 months, from Highton, via Geelong, Victoria when he enlisted on 18th May, 1917 with the 60th Infantry Battalion, 9th Reinforcements of the Australian Army. His service number was 3462 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his father – William P Park, Highton, via Geelong, Victoria.

Pte Park embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Port Melbourne (A16)* on 16th July, 1917 & disembarked at Liverpool, England on 16th September, 1917.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. These were located in the Salisbury Plain area in the county of Wiltshire.

Pte William J Park was marched into 15th Training Battalion at Hurdcott, Wiltshire.

Pte W J Park was admitted to Hospital at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 22nd September, 1917 with mumps.

Pte William Joseph Park died on 23rd September, 1917 at Military Hospital Tidworth, England. A Post Mortem was conducted & cause of death was found to be an abscess in the throat. A death for William J Park, aged 18, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Wilton, Wiltshire. (Fovant was a parish in the district of Wilton).

From Pte Park's medical records on being admitted to hospital with the diagnosis of mumps - *Appeared well, ate his tea. Awoke at 4.20 a.m. the following morning, unable to breathe. Died in 5 minutes. Artificial respiration carried on for an hour... no result.*

Pte Park was buried on 25th September, 1917 at Compton Chamberlayne cemetery. From the burial report of Pte W J Park – Coffin was oak – *Military Funeral. Pte Park was a keen soldier and his conduct exemplary. He was a fine clean living lad and very popular. His loss is very keenly felt.*

Private W J Park is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 170 .



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Pte W J Park was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll (September, 1921) & Memorial Plaque (September, 1922) were sent to Pte Park's mother (as his father had died) – Mrs Rose Park of Robinson St, Dandenong, Victoria.

(61 pages of Pte W J Park's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives

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THE 341st CASUALTY LIST

The Victorian names are :-

Died of Cause Not Stated

Private W. J. Park, Highton, 23/9/17

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – Saturday 13th October, 1917 & The Mildura Cultivator, Victoria – Wednesday 17th October 1917)

*** Rose Park, mother of deceased Pte W J Park, William Park, father of deceased Pte Park & his 3 sisters – Eileen Park, Margaret Park & Jean Park & brother – John Park all applied for the War Pension. All 3 sisters & brother were rejected on the basis they were not dependent on Pte W J Park. Rose Park (mother) was awarded a War Pension in the sum of 40/- per fortnight from 28/11/1917 & William Park (father) was granted £1 3/- per fortnight from 28/11/1917.

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Pte William Joseph Park's cousin – Pte Bernard Collins – Service No 820 of 21st Battalion was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal & recommended for the Victoria Cross.

The DCM Award was noted in the London Gazette on 11th May, 1917 page 4597

820 Pte B Collins, Aust. Inf.

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He went forward alone and succeeded in putting an enemy machine gun out of action. He set a splendid example of courage and determination.

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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 at Compton Chamberlayne Cemetery. 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)

Pte Park does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Photo of Pte W J Park's Headstone at Compton Chamberlayne War Graves Cemetery



Photo courtesy of Andrew Stacey