

# Durrington War Graves



*Lest we Forget*

## World War I



2694 PRIVATE

**G. A. JOHNSTON**

37TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

10th FEBRUARY, 1917 Age 25

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte G. A. Johnston is located in Grave Plot # 189  
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

## George Andrew JOHNSTON

George Andrew Johnston was born in 1892 at Robertson, NSW to parents Edward & Jane Johnston (nee McDonagh/MacDonagh). He was a 24 year old, single, Labourer from Robertson, via Moss Vale, NSW when he enlisted at Kiama on 27<sup>th</sup> October, 1916 with the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 2694 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Edward Johnston of Robertson, via Moss Vale, NSW.

Pte George Andrew Johnston embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Benalla (A24)* on 9<sup>th</sup> November, 1916 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 9<sup>th</sup> 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 George Andrew Johnston was marched into 10<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion at Durrington, Wiltshire from Australia on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 1917.

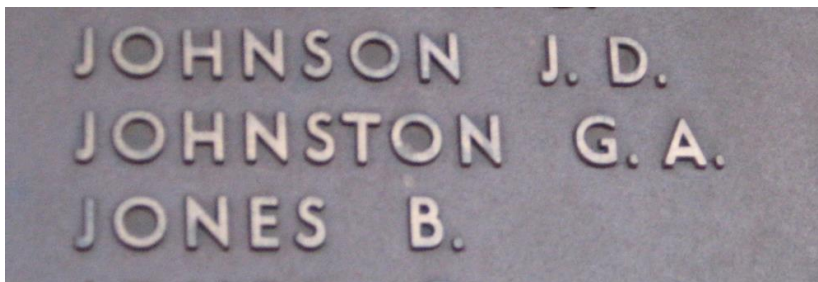
Private George Andrew Johnston was sent sick to Fargo Military Hospital on 5<sup>th</sup> February, 1917. He was reported as being seriously ill with Pneumonia on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 1917.

Private George Andrew Johnston died at 3.40 p.m. on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 1917 at Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire from Pneumonia.

A death for George A. Johnston, aged 24, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

Private George Andrew Johnston was buried on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 1917 at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire – Plot number 189 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Private G. A. Johnston is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 128.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Pte G. A. Johnston is also remembered on the Robertson Roll of Honour 1914 – 1919 Board located inside the Robertson School of Arts, Hoddle Street, Robertson, NSW & also the Robertson Honour Roll paired with the Kangaloon Honour Roll located outside the Robertson School of Arts.



(Photos from Register of War Memorials in NSW – Peter Levarre-Waters)



Pte George Andrew Johnston 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 Pte Johnston's father – Mr E. Johnston (sent December, 1921 & July, 1922)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private George Andrew Johnston – service number 2694 as being 25 years old & served with 37th Battalion Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

(39 pages of Pte George Andrew Johnston'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*

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## Newspaper Reports

### OUR FRONT HEROES

....Another death which has been reported, and which came as a great shock to his many friends, is that of Pte G. A. Johnston, son of Mr E. Johnston, Robertson. The deceased had previously been reported seriously ill. He was well known and highly esteemed in the Wingecarribee portion of the district.

*(The Scrutineer and Berrima District Press, NSW – Saturday 3 March, 1917)*

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### THE ROLL OF HONOUR

#### AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES – 274TH LIST

##### NEW SOUTH WALES – DIED OF ILLNESS

G. A. Johnston, Robertson, 10/2/17 (Prev. rep. ser. ill)

*(The Queenslander, Brisbane – Saturday 3 March, 1917)*

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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 Durrington War Graves 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*)

A letter from Base Records, dated 15<sup>th</sup> July, 1921, to Mr E. Johnston, Robertson, NSW advises that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of the late Pte G. A. Johnston had not been answered & non-receipt of a reply within 21 days would have to be accepted as indicating that no further action was to be taken.

Pte G. A. Johnston does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Photo of Pte G. A. Johnston's Headstone at Durrington War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire.



(Photo © Ian King - with permission)