

Sutton Veny War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War 1



3834 PRIVATE

J. W. LAIDLAW DCM

AUSTRALIAN T. M. BATTERY

6TH FEBRUARY, 1919 AGE 29

*CWGC Headstone for Pte J. W. Laidlaw is located in
Grave Plot # 69. J. 9. of St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny*

John William LAIDLAW

John William Laidlaw was born at Nullawarre, near Allansford, Victoria in 1890 to parents William John and Phoebe Laidlaw (nee Bonnett).

John William Laidlaw stated he was a 26 year old, single, Labourer from Nullawarre, Allansford via Warrnambool, Victoria when he enlisted at Warrnambool, Victoria on 12th July, 1915 with the 8th Infantry Battalion, 12th Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 3834 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr W. J. Laidlaw of Nullawarre, Allansford via Warrnambool, Victoria.

Private John William Laidlaw embarked from Adelaide on HMAT *Ceramic (A40)* on 23rd November, 1915.

Private John William Laidlaw was admitted to 4th Auxiliary Hospital at Heliopolis on 6th January, 1916 with mumps/measles (? both illnesses quoted). He was discharged to duty on 26th January, 1916.

Pte Laidlaw was written up for Neglecting Battalion Order by leaving camp improperly dressed on 25th February, 1916 at Zeitoun. He forfeited one day's pay as punishment.

Pte Laidlaw proceeded to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) from Alexandria on 29th March, 1916. He disembarked at Marseille, France on 4th April, 1916.

Pte Laidlaw was marched out from 1st Australian Div. Base Depot at Etaples on 25th June, 1916 to join the entrenching Battalion in France.

Pte Laidlaw was taken on strength with his Battalion in France on 14th July, 1916.

Pte Laidlaw was wounded in action in France on 26th July, 1916 with a gunshot wound to left arm. He was admitted to 10th General Hospital at Rouen on 26th July, 1916 & embarked on Hospital Ship *Salta* from Havre on 27th July, 1916. Pte Laidlaw was admitted to Southern General Hospital at Birmingham – Kings Heath Section (date not recorded).

Pte Laidlaw was transferred to 2nd Training Battalion on 31st August, 1916 at No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs. Pte Laidlaw proceeded overseas to France from Perham Downs on 5th September, 1916.

Pte Laidlaw was marched in to 1st Australian Division Base Depot (A.D.B.D.) at Etaples, France on 9th September, 1916. He joined his Battalion in Belgium on 21st September, 1916.

Pte Laidlaw was transferred to 2nd Trench Mortar Battery in France on 9th March, 1917. He was sent to Hospital sick with Mumps on 14th March, 1917 & transferred from 2nd Field Ambulance to C.M.S. on 15th March, 1917. Pte Laidlaw was discharged to duty on 31st March, 1917 & rejoined his Unit on 1st April, 1917.

Pte Laidlaw was wounded in action in Belgium (2nd Occasion) on 4th October, 1917 with a gunshot wound to the face. He was taken to 65th Field Ambulance then transferred to 11th Casualty Clearing Station on 5th October, 1917. Pte Laidlaw was transferred on 6th October, 1917 to 4th General Hospital then transferred on 9th October, 1917 to 6th Convalescent Depot at Etaples. Pte Laidlaw was transferred on 11th October, 1917 to 14th Convalescent Depot at Trouville.

Private John William Laidlaw was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during the operations east of Ypres on 4-8/10/17. His N.C.O. having become a casualty he took charge of the team, carrying the N.C.O.'s load as well as his own. He was wounded in the shoulder but continued to advance. Later he was shot through the leg and refused to give up his load until he fell exhausted. He set a splendid example of coolness and determination." (The award notice appeared in *London Gazette Supplement* dated 4th March, 1918.)



Distinguished Conduct Medal

Pte Laidlaw was discharged to Base Details at Trouville on 20th December, 1917 & marched in to A.G.B.D. at Havre the same day.

Pte Laidlaw was marched out from Havre on 30th December, 1917 to rejoin his Unit. He rejoined his Battery in France on 1st January, 1918.

Pte Laidlaw was granted leave to UK on 14th January, 1918 & rejoined from leave on 1st February, 1918.

Pte Laidlaw was detached to 15 Corps Trench Mortar School on 18th July, 1918 & rejoined from detachment on 1st August, 1918.

Pte Laidlaw proceeded on leave to London from 27th December, 1918 & returned from leave on 10th January, 1919.

Pte Laidlaw was marched in to Base ready for Return to Australia on 19th January, 1919. He was marched out to England on 24th January, 1919 (as part of 1915 Personnel).

Private John William Laidlaw was admitted to the 1st Australian General Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 27th January, 1919 dangerously ill with broncho pneumonia from Overseas Training Brigade.

Private John William Laidlaw died at 9.30 p.m. on 6th February, 1919 at the 1st Australian General Hospital, Sutton Veny of Influenza & Broncho pneumonia.

A death for John W. Laidlaw, aged 30, was registered in the March quarter, 1919 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

Private John William Laidlaw was buried on 10th February, 1919 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny - Grave no. 69. From the burial report of Pte Laidlaw - *Coffin was Elm with Brass Mounts – Deceased was buried with full Military Honours, the coffin draped with the Australian flag being borne to the graveside on a Gun Carriage preceded by a Firing Party from the Australian Overseas Training Brigade. Six of deceased's late Unit comrades supported the Pall and a number of Officers, N.C.O.'s and Men followed the remains to the graveside and were present at the graveside ceremony. Headquarters A.I.F. Depots in United Kingdom were represented at the funeral.*

Pte John William Laidlaw requested in his Will dated 29th June, 1917 that all his real & personal Estate be left to his mother – Mrs W. J. Laidlaw of Nullawarre, Allansford, Victoria.

A letter dated 8th August, 1919 was sent from Major, For Brigadier-General, Adjutant-General to The Commandant 3rd Military District stating that the Minister desires that the Distinguished Conduct Medal and Deed for the late Pte J. W. Laidlaw be presented to his father publicly on the first suitable occasion. A letter was written to Mr W. J. Laidlaw asking if he would like the decoration to be handed to him publicly or whether he would prefer it to be transmitted direct from the Base Records Office.

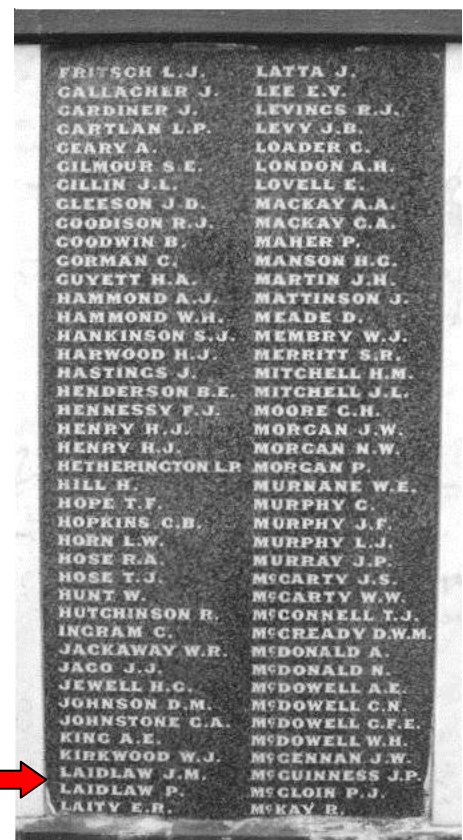
Pte John William Laidlaw was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Laidlaw's father – Mr W. J. Laidlaw (Scroll sent October, 1921 & Plaque sent October, 1922).

Private J. W. Laidlaw is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 20.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

J. W. Laidlaw, along with his brother P. Laidlaw, are both remembered on the Warrnambool War Memorial located at Cannon Hill, Liebig & Merri Streets, Warrnambool, Victoria.



Warrnambool War Memorial (Photos from VHD Heritage Victoria)

(68 pages of Pte John William Laidlaw'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) & National Archives.



Connected to Pte John William Laidlaw:

Brother – Private Percy Laidlaw, 676, 23rd Battalion, A.I.F. , died of wounds – 26th September, 1917. Buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium – XXIII. C. 7A

Newspaper Notice –

LAILAW – In Loving memory of Pte Percy Laidlaw, No. 676, who died of wounds at the 3rd Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, France, on 26th September, 1917.

(Inserted by his loving mother and father, P. and W. J. Laidlaw, Nullawarre).

(*Warrnambool Standard*, Victoria – Thursday 26 September, 1918)

Newspaper Reports

PRIVATE J. W. LAIDLAW

Mr W. J. Laidlaw, Nullawarre, has received word from the Base Records Office stating that his son, Private J. W. Laidlaw, has been reported wounded (second occasion).

(*Warrnambool Standard*, Victoria – Thursday 1 November, 1917)

LIST OF CASUALTIES

WOUNDED

Private J. W. Laidlaw, Nullawarre

(*Cobden Times and Heytesbury Advertiser*, Victoria – Wednesday 21 November, 1917)

HEROES AT THE FRONT

PRIVATE J. W. LAIDLAW

Mrs J. W. Laidlaw, Nullawarre, has received a communication, stating that her son, Pte J. W. Laidlaw, has been awarded the D.C.M. Pte Laidlaw is a native of Nullawarre and enlisted about 2 ½ years ago. He was wounded on 4th October last on which date he earned the distinction.

(*Warrnambool Standard*, Victoria – Thursday 28 March, 1918)

PTE. J. W. LAIDLAW

Pte J, W, Laidlaw, son of Mr W. J. Laidlaw, of Nullawarre, has been awarded the D.C.M. When his N.C.O. became a casualty he took command of the team, carrying the N.C.O.'s load as well as his own, and continued to

advance, though wounded. Later he was wounded again, and refused to give up his load until he fell exhausted. He set a splendid example of coolness and determination. A brother of Private Laidlaw was killed in action in France.

(Warrnambool Standard, Victoria – Saturday 20 July, 1918)

DIED ON SERVICE

LIDLAW – In sad and loving memory of No. 3834 Pte J. W. Laidlaw (D.C.M.), who died of bronchial pneumonia, February 7, 1919, in France, after 3 ½ years active service.

For God, King and country.

(Inserted by his sincere friend Mina)

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 8 March, 1919 & The Australasian, Melbourne, Victoria – Saturday 15 March, 1919)

VICTORIAN CASUALTIES

LIST No. 461

DIED, OTHER CAUSES

LIDLAW, J. W. (D.C.M.), Nullawarre, 6/2/19, illness, P.R.W.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 19 March, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

LIDLAW – In loving memory of my dear soldier boy, Pte J. W. Laidlaw, D.C.M., who died of illness at Salisbury Plains, England on the 6th February 7, 1919, after 3 ½ years' active service.

Ever Remembered

(Inserted by L. A. Wathen)

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – Friday 6 February, 1920)

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 St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny. 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 was sent from Base Records to Mr W. J. Laidlaw, dated 20th July, 1921, advising that a communication from the Defence Department concerning an inscription that could be placed on his son's Headstone – the late Pte J. W. Laidlaw in the Churchyard at Sutton Veny had not yet been replied to. The letter advised that if no reply was received within 21 days, it would be taken as indicating that no further action was required.

Pte John William Laidlaw does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Photo of Private J. W. Laidlaw's CWGC headstone in St. John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.



(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)



War Graves at Sutton Veny (Photos from CWGC)

