

Sutton Veny War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War 1



7500 PRIVATE

R. P. MITCHELL

11TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

2ND DECEMBER, 1917

Erected By His Comrades

*CWGC Headstone for Pte R. P. Mitchell is located in
Grave Plot # 314. D. 4. of St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny*

Richard Paul MITCHELL**

(Arthur Harold JONES)

Richard Paul Mitchell** was born in Brisbane, Queensland around 1875. He was a 42 year old, single, Clerk from Forrest House, St. George's Terrace, Perth, Western Australia when he enlisted at Fremantle, Western Australia on 6th January, 1917 with the 11th Infantry Battalion, 25th Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 7500 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his sister – Mrs Marie Elizabeth Blanche Brown(e) of Gladstone Road, South Brisbane, Queensland.

Pte Richard Paul Mitchell was appointed Lance Corporal on 5th April, 1917.

Lance Corporal Richard Paul Mitchell embarked from Fremantle on HMAT *Borda* (A30) on 29th June, 1917 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 25th August, 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.

Lance Corporal Richard Paul Mitchell was marched in to 3rd Training Battalion, Durrington, Wiltshire from Australia on 25th August, 1917 & his rank reverted to Acting Corporal on 26th August, 1917.

Acting Corporal Mitchell was written up for an offence while at Durrington – Absent without leave from midnight 4th October, 1917 to Tattoo on 7th October, 1917. He was punished by reverting back to the permanent rank of Private & forfeited 3 days' pay.

Private Richard Paul Mitchell was admitted to the Military Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 28th November, 1917.

Private Richard Paul Mitchell died at 8 a.m. on 2nd December, 1917 at the Military Hospital, Sutton Veny of Chronic Nephritis. A post mortem examination was conducted on 3rd December, 1917.

A death for Richard P. Mitchell, aged 43, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

Private Richard Paul Mitchell was buried on 5th December, 1917 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny - Grave no. 314. From the burial report of Pte Mitchell - *Coffin was polished Elm with Brass handles and name plate. Other Australian soldiers are buried in the Military Section of this Cemetery. A cross will be erected to his memory by his comrades.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Pte Richard Paul Mitchell contains several letters by soldiers regarding their connection to the late Pte Mitchell. Some of them are listed below:

- From Pte Burlinson, 7691, 11th Battn – *“He was in C. Training Coy in 2nd T.B. at Sutton Veny and I was told by several of his mates that he had died in hospital there of pneumonia about the middle of December”.*
- From R. O. Adams – *“Entered Hospital 28.11.17 with shortness of breath & kidney symptoms. He had not been to France, but came up from Durrington. Became worse convulsing & unconscious on 30.11.17. Seemed much better after treatment on 1.12.17 but had an excited pulse. Difficulty breathing on the morning of the 2nd about 5.30 a.m. and breathing ceased at 6.30. The breathing ceasing before the heart. This condition was present before joining up.”*
- From Pte R. H. Kent, 7494, 11th Battn – *“He was with me at Sutton Veny and died about Christmas, I was told of Bright's disease. A special cross was erected over his grave in Sutton Veny Churchyard by subscription among the men of the 11th Battn. Australian Imperial Force Training Battalion. He came from Perth, Western Australia.”*
- From Pte E. Reilly, 7578, 11th A.I.F. – *“ I came over to England in Company with Mitchell, but as he was over age – 42 he was classed C and not taken on with the Regt. On my departure for France Mitchell came*

to say goodbye to me and he was then ill and with face much swelled. About a week after reaching France news came from men in the same Regt. that Mitchell had died at Sutton Veny, near Warminster.”

- From Q.M.S. W. M. Brown, 780, 12th Battn. A.I.F. – *“Mitchell died in Sutton Veny Hospital on Dec 2nd 1917(not 21st). He never went to the front. He landed in England 25-8-17 on the Borda 25th Rfts 11th Battn, and was working with me in the Orderly Room. I believe a post mortem examination was held and it was diagnosed as Bright’s Disease. He was a splendid worker and one of the most popular men in the Battalion, and a great friend of mine. He was buried in Sutton Veny Cemetery and the Company, including Officers, N.C.O.’s and men subscribed for a cross which has been erected over the grave. He had a military funeral and half of the battalion were allowed to attend. N.B. I have seen the grave of the above. It has a nice cross at the head with rising sun cut out on the top and below is the inscription: In Memory of 7500 Pte Mitchell R.P. 11th Battn. A.I.F. who died 21-12-17. Erected by his Comrades”.*

Pte Richard Paul Mitchell requested in his Will dated 7th June, 1917 that all his real & personal Estate be left to Marie Elizabeth Blanche Browne, the wife of Leslie C. Brown of Brisbane, Queensland, Commercial Traveller.

The CWGC lists Private Richard Paul Mitchell, 7500, of 11th Battalion, Australian Infantry, A.I.F. No family details are listed.

Private R. P. Mitchell is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 63.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

** An enquiry was held into the identity of deceased soldier, No. 7500, Pte Richard Paul Mitchell, 11th Battalion in 1919 & was still continuing in 1923. It was ascertained from unofficial sources that Pte Richard Paul Mitchell was identical with Arthur Harold Jones, solicitor of Brisbane, Queensland and that his next of kin should be his wife – Mrs St. M. Jones of Auchenflower, Queensland.

From the enquiry the following was noted (not in chronological order):

- Pte R. P. Mitchell's Will left his Estate to Mrs Marie Elizabeth Blanch Browne, the wife of Leslie C. Browne, commercial traveller of Brisbane.
- A Mrs Mitchell of Randwick, NSW was interviewed on 14th November, 1919 by Special Inquiry Officer Coates, when she stated that her husband was away. Mrs Mitchell was again interviewed on 17th November when she was told that a Mr W. H. Mitchell had written to the Military Authorities (22nd September, 1919) claiming that the deceased Pte R. P. Mitchell was his brother. Mrs Mitchell advised that her husband's name was James Mitchell & that he had a relative named W. H. Mitchell but did not know his address & was unable to give any information on the matter. Miss Mitchell of Randwick, NSW was interviewed a few weeks later & she stated that she was the sister of Mrs Marie Elizabeth Blanch Browne of Queensland but did not know her address. Miss Mitchell stated that her father – Mr J. Mitchell was away in the country sick & that her mother was away. She refused to give her father's present address. The report made by Special Inquiry Officer Coates stated that Mrs L. C. Brown (named in Pte Mitchell's Will) is the daughter of Mrs Mitchell (of Randwick). Mrs Mitchell stated she could not give the exact address of Mrs Brown in Brisbane.
- A letter dated 21st October, 1918 written by R. Crommelin in Third London General Hospital, Wandsworth is included in Pte R. P. Mitchell's Service Record file. It reads: *"Dear Fergie – Don't suppose you ever expected a note from me. This is why I write. Did you know that Dick Jones died? He came to W.A. about the end of 1916. I was at Duntroon College when he landed, and when I got home in Jan. 17, found he was in Perth suing the name of Mitchell. Not getting a job to suit him he enlisted and came to England as a Lance Cpl. I tried to get him to come under his own name, but he said he would change it in England. I asked one of the officers in his Battn. how he was and he told me he died on Salisbury Plain..... Why I write is this. Did his wife know of the death? If not she should be told. If, however, they were advised, my note is useless....."*
- From a report to The Hon. Mr Groom, M. P. Department of Works and Railways, on 9th December, it was noted that *"Mrs L. C. Brown – sister of Pte R. P. Mitchell was interviewed by the Assistant Provost Marshalls but she denied having known any soldier named Mitchell; she said her husband had a friend of that name. The Assistant Provost Marshall subsequently saw Mr Brown, who refused to make any statement except "that he was carrying out the dying wishes of his friend as expressed in a letter written a few weeks before his death". In view of the statement that Mrs L. C. Brown was deceased's sister there seems something distinctly wrong with the foregoing evidence.....several visits were made to Mr Mitchell (at Randwick but) he never returned home. They have since moved to 27 Church Street, Randwick, New South Wales, but W. H. Mitchell has not materialised beyond the letter held at this office..... There is something decidedly dishy about the whole thing but nothing authentic to warrant an assumption that R. P. Mitchell was not the soldier's real name.... I have written Lieutenant Crommelin, although I note a discrepancy in his statement – he calls the soldier Dick Jones, whereas his name is asserted to be Arthur Jones....."* Another letter written by The Hon. Mr Groom, M. P. Department of Works and Railways dated 25th August, 1919 reads: *"Mr Arthur Jones was a Solicitor carrying on his profession in Brisbane. He married and left there to go to Toowoomba. Mrs Jones has no idea as to where he went. She heard subsequently of his death, and could obtain no information regarding him. The attached paper indicates the great trouble she is in.....Mrs Jones has been left without any support, and it is highly desirable that she should be enabled to establish her rights. You can understand the terrible position she is in owing to the absence of information as to the actual death of her husband".* In another letter by The Hon. Mr Groom, M. P. Department of Works and Railways dated 15th December, 1919 reads: *"There is no significance in the name "Dick", as that was the name by which we all knew him. Arthur Jones was a personal friend of mine for 30 years. When he was quite a young lad reading for Law he read in my chambers in Brisbane when I was at the Bar there."*

- A letter from R. Crommelin, Perth, W.A., dated 6th January, 1920 to the Officer in Charge Base Records, Melbourne reads: “ *I have been to the Records at Headquarters, and looked up the Card of Richard Paul Mitchell, who left here with reinforcements of the 11th Battalion on the 29th June, 1917, as a Lance Corporal. There is not the slightest doubt that this man was Arthur Henry Jones, late Solicitor of Toowoomba. I have known him for quite a number of years in Queensland, and we were close, personal friends, so there can be no possible doubt about his identity. I did my best to induce him to sail from here under his correct name, and pointed out how awkward it might be for his wife and son if anything happened to him and they were not aware that he had enlisted. In England I met the Officer who took away his reinforcements and asked him about Jones, or Mitchell, as he was then know, and he told me that he had died at Salisbury Plains. I then went to Horsferry Road, looked up the Records there and at once wrote to Mr H. W, Ferguson, of the Union Bank, whom I addressed as “Fergie”. The fact that I mentioned Jones as “Dick” does not mean that there was any mistake in the identity, but that was the name by which his intimates knew him.....”*”
- A letter was written by Base Records to Messrs Parke, Davis & Co. of Sydney (Manufacturing Chemists) on 1st February, 1918 asking for the latest address of Mr Brown (husband of Mrs Brown named in Pte Mitchell’s Will) who represents their firm. Messrs Parke, David & Co. replied stating that their representative was Mr L. C. Brown & that his wife’s Christian name was Annie. The Company wrote another letter to Base Records stating “*We have seen Mrs Brown mentioned in your letter of 1st, and discover that Private Richard Paul Mitchell, 11th Battalion, is her brother.....”*”.
- A letter dated 5th October, 1921 to The Officer in charge Base Records, Melbourne from District Headquarters, Perth in regards to late No. 7500 Pte Mitchell, R.P. 11th Bn. (Correct name – Jones Arthur Harold) states: “..please note that the next of kin of the abovementioned is the widow, Mrs Gertrude St. Mabyn Jones, of “Windermere”, Chasley St, Auchenflower, Brisbane, Queensland”



FACTS

Richard Paul Mitchell is listed in the Queensland Death Index as having died on 2nd December, 1917 – father’s name Alfred Raymond Jones, mother’s name Amie Keeble.

A birth was registered in Queensland in 1875 – date of birth 17th December, 1874 for Arthur Harold Jones – parents Alfred Raymond Jones & Amie Keeble

A marriage was registered in 1900 in Queensland between Arthur Harold Jones & Gertrude St. Mabyn Lawry.

A birth was registered in Queensland in 1902 for Alan Bruce Jones – parents Arthur Harold & Gertrude St. Mabyn Jones (nee Lawry).

The 1903 Australian Electoral Roll lists Arthur Harold Jones, Duncan St. West End - Oxley, Solicitor. Gertrude St. Malyn Jones also of Duncan St. West End - Oxley, Domestic Duties.

The 1905 Australian Electoral Roll lists Arthur Harold Jones, Hardgrave St. West End - Oxley, Solicitor. Gertrude St. Malyn Jones also of Hardgrave St. West End - Oxley, Domestic Duties.

The 1913 Australian Electoral Roll lists Arthur Harold Jones, Wallace St. Toowoomba, Solicitor. Gertrude St. Mabyn Jones also of Wallace St. Toowoomba, Home Duties.

The 1921 Australian Electoral Roll lists Gertrude St. Mabyn Jones of Windmere, Chasley St, Auchenflower, Home Duties. Arthur Harold Jones is not listed after 1913.



Pte Richard Paul Mitchell was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also to be sent to Pte Mitchell's next of kin. The British War Medal, Scroll & Plaque were signed for by Mrs St. Mabyn Jones on 14th October, 1929. (Normally these would have been issued several years earlier usually between 1921 & 1922 but due to the uncertainty of Pte Mitchell's identity they would have been delayed).

(156 pages of Pte Richard Paul Mitchell'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 file) & National Archives.



Newspaper Reports

AUSTRALIANS IN ACTION

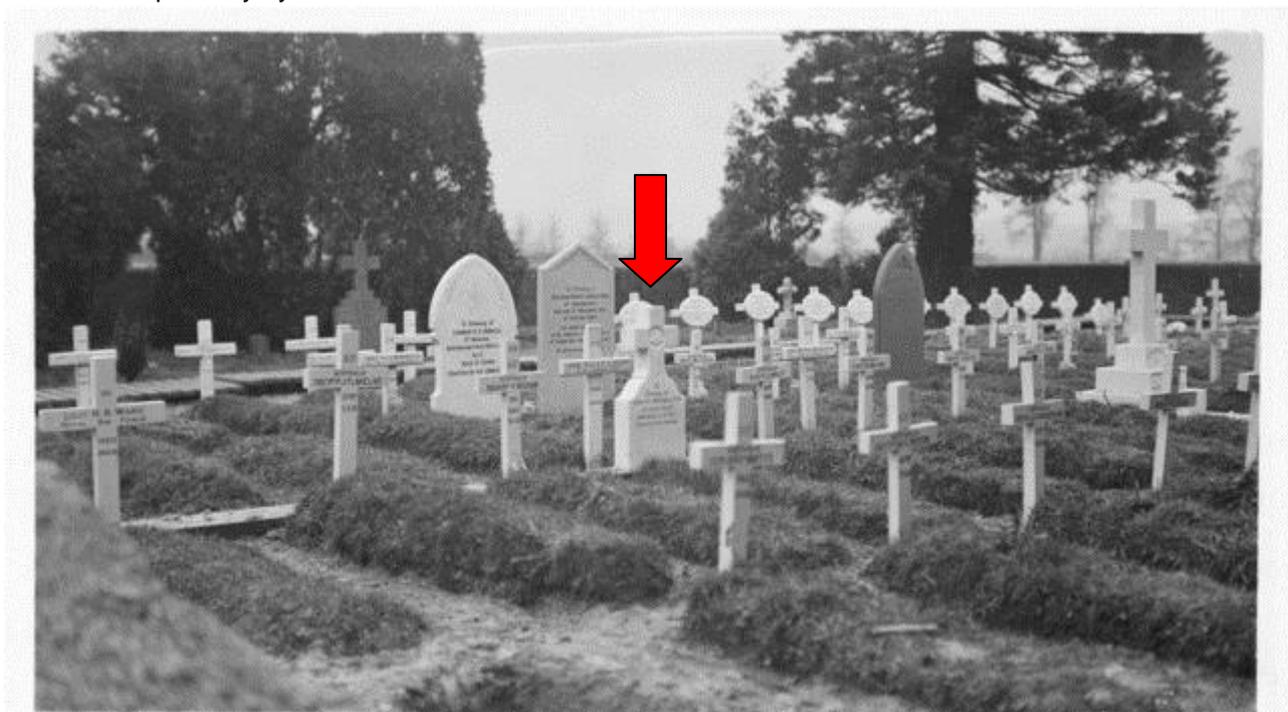
W.A. ROLL OF HONOUR

DIED OF ILLNESS

Richard Paul Mitchell, Brisbane (Q), previously reported died, cause not stated.

(Kalgoorlie Miner, WA – Tuesday 8 January, 1918)

Pte Richard Paul Mitchell does not have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. His headstone was erected privately by his Comrades of 11th Battalion.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00376

Photo of Sutton Veny Churchyard – April 1919

Photo of Pte R. P. Mitchell's private headstone in St. John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.



(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)



War Graves at Sutton Veny *(Photos from CWGC)*

