St. Mary's Churchyard

Hertingfordbury, Hertfordshire

War Grave

Lest We Forget

World War 1

8558   LEADING STOKER

C. W. MATTHEWS

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

H.M.A.S. "SYDNEY"

10TH JULY, 1918   Age 29

Until The Day Breaks

And The Shadows Flee Away

Peace Perfect Peace

Charles William MATTHEWS

Charles William Matthews was born on 11th January, 1889 at Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, England to parents Joseph and Rose Matthews (nee Barron). He was baptised at Bishops Stortford on 1st May, 1889.

The 1891 England Census recorded William Matthews as a 2 year old living with his family at Great Habers Farm, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, England. There were 5 separate households listed at Great Habers Farm. His parents were listed as Joseph Matthews (Farm Labourer, aged 34, born Little Hadham, Herts) & Rosina Matthews (aged 34, born Bishops Stortford, Herts). William was the youngest of 4 children listed on this Census – Emma Matthews (Scholar, aged 10, born Little Hadham, Herts), Alice Matthews (Scholar, aged 8, born Shorley, Herts), Harriet Matthews (Scholar, aged 4, born Little Hadham, Herts) & William.

The 1901 England Census recorded William Matthews as a 12 year old living with his family at Hazel End, Farnham, Essex, England. His parents were listed as Joseph Matthews (Horsekeeper on Farm, aged 42) & Rosea Matthews (aged 42). William was one of 4 children listed on this Census – Fanny Matthews (Hand in a Milk Factory, aged 16), then William, Edith (aged 8, born Bishops Stortford, Herts) & Eva (aged 4, born Amwell, Herts).

[The 1911 England Census recorded the Matthews family living at Cole Green, Hertford in a 4 roomed dwelling. The family consisted of Joseph Matthews (Horsekeeper on Farm, aged 53) & Rose Matthews (aged 53). Joseph & Rose Matthews had been married for 31 years & had a total of 6 children, all still living. Only 2 of their children were living at home in this Census – Edith Matthews (Dairying, aged 18) & Eva Matthews (aged 14).]

Charles William Matthews was a Farm Labourer when he enlisted on 4th April, 1910 with the Royal Navy for a period of 12 years. His service number was K. 6436 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Rose Matthews of 2 Cole Green, Hertford, England. (Note – his date of birth on the Royal Naval records is 11th January, 1890).

Charles William Matthews served in the following ships with the British Royal Navy:

Ship	Rating	Date
Pembroke II	Stoker II	4 April, 1910
Indomitable	Stoker II	9 August, 1910
Indomitable	Stoker 1	7 November, 1911
Pembroke II	Stoker 1	25 November, 1911
Blenheim	Stoker 1	12 January, 1912
E_____	Stoker 1	1 October, 1913
Pembroke II	Stoker 1	4 November, 1913
Eclipse	Stoker 1	26 February, 1914
Yarmouth	Stoker 1	14 April, 1914
Yarmouth	Acting Leading Stoker	27 May, 1915
Yarmouth	Leading Stoker	9 December, 1915
Pembroke II	Leading Stoker	22nd November 1917

Charles William Matthews was on loan from Royal Navy to the Royal Australian Navy on 8th December, 1917 for a period of 3 years. His service number was 8558.

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Leading Stoker Charles William Matthews served in H.M.A.S. *Sydney* from 8th December, 1917.

H.M.A.S. *Sydney*

H.M.A.S. Sydney was a Chatham class light cruiser of the Royal Australian Navy (R.A.N.). Laid down in 1911 and launched in 1912, the cruiser was commissioned into the R.A.N. in 1913.

During the early stages of World War I, Sydney was involved in supporting the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force, and escorting the first ANZAC convoy. On 9th November 1914, the cruiser defeated the German cruiser SMS Emden at the Battle of Cocos. During 1915 and 1916, Sydney operated on the North America and West Indies Station, before joining the 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron at Greenock, Scotland in November 1916. On 4th May 1917, the cruiser was involved in an inconclusive action against the German zeppelinL43; neither was damaged. *(Wikipedia)*

Later in 1917, *Sydney* was fitted with an aircraft launching platform and equipped with a Sopwith Ships Pup fighter. On 1 June 1918, while patrolling in the Heligoland Bight, *Sydney* and *Melbourne* launched their aircraft to engage two German reconnaissance aircraft. *Sydney's* fighter destroyed one of the enemy aircraft.

Sydney was present at the surrender of the German High Seas Fleet on 21 November 1918. She returned to Australia on 19 July 1919. After the war, *Sydney* carried out routine fleet duties until paid off in 1928. She was broken up the next year. *(The Australian War Memorial)*

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
A03399

H.M.A.S. *Sydney* 1914

Leading Stoker Charles William Matthews died on 10th July, 1918 on Hospital Ship *Soudan* as a result of burns of body, face & limbs. The Hospital Ship *Soudan* was in the vicinity of Invergordon, Scotland on 30th June, 1918.

From the Royal Australian Navy Australian Official History – Volume 9 – page 307:
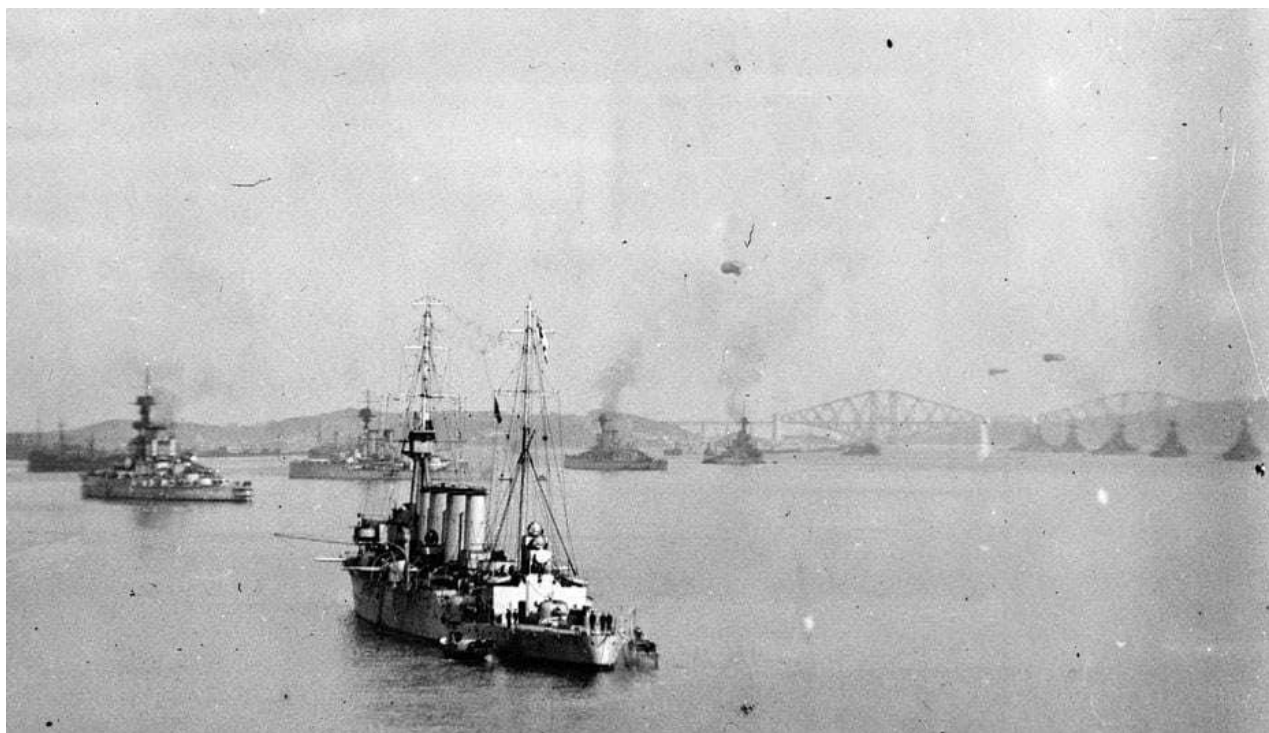
Except for escorting a convoy to Bergen on the 18th-21st, the rest of June was uneventful, but on the 28th, it is recorded that half the Sydney's crew went down with "the Spanish 'flu." On the 9th July, the already quoted diary declares, "we had a thunderstorm which brought down three balloons. Leading Stoker Matthews was blown up out of a lower bunker," and died in hospital the next day. On the 22nd another convoy had to be escorted, and on the 8th and 18th of August the squadron was detailed to support a flotilla of United States mine-layers……."
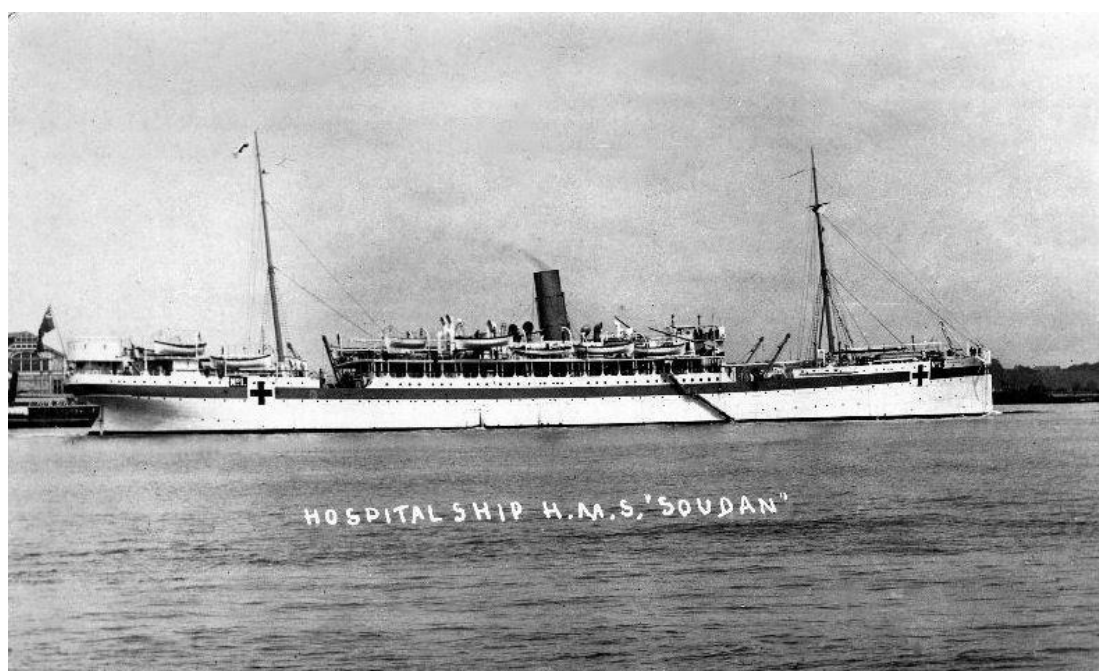
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H.M.A.S. *Sydney* in the Firth of Forth, Scotland, in 1918
when she was operating in the North Sea as part of the part of the British Grand Fleet

HOSPITAL SHIP H.M.S. "SOUDAN"

Leading Stoker Charles William Matthews was buried in St. Mary's Churchyard, Hertingfordbury, Hertfordshire, England and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Leading Stoker Charles William Matthews – service number 8558, aged 29, of H.M.A.S. *Sydney*, Royal Australian Navy. He was the son of Joseph and Rose Matthews, of 2 Cole Green, Hertford, England.

Charles William Matthews is named on the St. Mary's & St. John's Hertingfordbury Roll of Honour which is held inside St. Mary's Church, Hertingfordbury, Hertfordshire, England.

Hertingfordbury Roll of Honour *(Photo courtesy of Jonty Wild)*

✚ *Matthews, Charles W.   H.M.S. Yarmouth*

C. W. Matthews is named on the Hertingfordbury War Memorial which is located inside St. Mary's Church, Hertingfordbury, Hertfordshire, England.

Hertingfordbury War Memorial *(Photo courtesy of Malcolm Lennox & Jonty Wild)*

Charles William Matthews is named on the St. Mary's & St. John's Hertingfordbury Roll of Honour which is held in Birch Green School – Hertingfordbury Cowper C. of E. School & is a duplication of the Roll of Honour held in the Church.

Hertingfordbury Cowper C. of E. School & the Roll of Honour *(Photo courtesy of Malcolm Lennox & Jonty Wild)*

C. W. Matthews is also named on the Birch Green War Memorial located at Birch Green Road.

Birch Green War Memorial *(Photo by Bikeboy)*

Leading Stoker C. W. Matthews is remembered on Royal Australian Navy WW1 Memorial, located at HMAS Cerberus Protestant Chapel of St Mark, Nelson Road, Crib Point, Victoria.

HMAS *Cerberus* Protestant Chapel of St Mark, Crib Point, Victoria *(Photos courtesy of Karen Standen)*
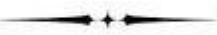
According to the Australian War Memorial, as Leading Stoker Charles William Matthews was not a permanent member of the Royal Australian Navy, he is not commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia. Apparently a number of Royal Navy personnel who were on loan to the Royal Australian Navy during World War 1 were added to the Roll of Honour in error in the 1940's & 50's. Under current Memorial policy these names will remain on the Roll of Honour.

Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(2 pages of Leading Stoker Charles William Matthews' Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC & National Archives

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)

Leading Stoker C. W. Matthews does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Until The Day Breaks And The Shadows Flee Away

Peace Perfect Peace

St. Mary's Churchyard, Hertingfordbury, Hertfordshire, England.

St. Mary's Churchyard, Hertingfordbury contains 5 Commonwealth War Graves – 4 relating to World War 1 & only 1 from World War 2.

(Photo from Find a Grave – julia&keld)

St. Mary's Churchyard, Hertingfordbury *(Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett & Gary Coffey)*

Photo of Leading Stoker C. W. Matthews' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. Mary's Churchyard, Hertingfordbury, Hertfordshire, England.

(Photo courtesy of Jonty Wild)