

Durrington War Graves

World War 1



Lest We Forget



783 PRIVATE

T. R. BRITTAIN

12TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

24TH APRIL, 1917 Age 41

A Hero At Rest

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte T. R. Brittain is located in Grave Plot # 235
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

Thomas Richard BRITTAIN

Thomas Richard Brittain was born at Wellington, Bunbury, Western Australia in 1873, to parents Thomas Richard & Frances Brittain.

Thomas Richard Brittain was a 41 year old, single, Labourer from 91 South Street, Fremantle, Western Australia when he enlisted on 10th September, 1914 with the 12th Infantry Battalion "G" Company of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 783 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his sister – Mrs G Maguire of 91 South Street, Fremantle, Western Australia.

Pte Thomas Richard Brittain embarked from Fremantle on HMAT *Medic (A7)* on 2nd November, 1914.

Pte Thomas Richard Brittain was listed as missing at Dardanelles from 25th to 28th April, 1915. He rejoined his Unit on 18th May, 1915.

Pte Brittain was admitted to hospital at Gallipoli on 14th August, 1915 – No.1 Casualty Clearing Station then transferred to Mudros. He disembarked at Malta ex *Valdivia* (Febrile) on 29th August, 1915. He was then transported to England from Malta per *Plassey* on 5th September, 1915.

Pte Brittain was admitted to Military Hospital at Fulham, London on 12th September, 1915 with an internal hernia. He was discharged from Hospital at Weymouth on 7th January, 1916.

Pte Brittain was returned to duty in Egypt on 28th March, 1916.

Pte Brittain was admitted to 3rd Australian General Hospital on 13th May, 1916 with a boil on his hand. He was discharged ex Ras-el –Tin, Egypt on 28th June, 1916 to Tel-el-Kebir. Pte Brittain was again admitted to Hospital on 7th July, 1916 & discharged on 17th August, 1916 to Moascar.

Pte Brittain embarked overseas from Alexandria on 27th August, 1916 per H. T. *Megantic*.

Pte Thomas Richard Brittain was admitted to Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire on 19th April, 1917, seriously ill with pneumonia.

Pte Thomas Richard Brittain died at 11.20 a.m. at Fargo Military Hospital of Lobar pneumonia.

A death for Thomas R. Brittain, aged 45, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

Pte Thomas Richard Brittain was buried on 27th April, 1917 at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire in plot number 235. From the burial report of Pte Brittain - *Coffin was polished wood with brass furniture. Military Funeral.*

Pte Thomas Richard Brittain requested in his Will extracted from his Paybook that the whole of his property and effects to be equally divided among his sisters listed hereunder:

Mrs G. Hellier – 212 Roe St, West Perth; Mrs F. Macguire – 91 South St, Fremantle; Mrs E. Farrington – 91 South St, Fremantle; Mrs B. Bush - 91 South St, Fremantle; Mrs B. Lynn - 91 South St, Fremantle; Mrs A. A. Armstrong – Lord St, Kalgoorlie; Mrs E. Shaw – Cunderin, W.A.

Pte Thomas Richard Brittain was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Brittain's next of kin – his eldest sister (both parents deceased) – Mrs G. Hillier of 212 Roe St, West Perth (July, 1921 & August, 1922)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Thomas Richard Brittain – service number 783 as being 41 years old & served with 12th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Thomas Richard & Frances Brittain. Born at Wellington, Bunbury, Western Australia.

Private T. R. Brittain is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 65.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(69 pages of Pte Thomas Richard Brittain'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



Newspaper Reports

RETURNED TO UNIT

12th Battalion

Ptes T. R. Brittain, Fremantle; C. J. Wintle, West Perth

(Bendigo Advertiser, Victoria Thursday 1 July 1915)

THE ROLL OF HONOUR: WEST AUSTRALIANS



Private T. R. Brittain

12th Battalion

(Reported Missing)

(*Western Mail*, Perth, Western Australia Friday 16 July, 1915)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA - THE ROLL OF HONOUR

ILL

12th Battalion – T. R. Brittain (Fremantle) disembarked at Malta. Previously reported missing.

(*The West Australian*, Perth, Tuesday 21 September, 1915)

RETURNED TO DUTY

Infantry – Privates T. R. Brittain (Fremantle)

(*The Daily News*, Perth, Western Australia, Thursday 13 April 1916)

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

ILL, INJURED OR WOUNDED

T. R. Brittain (S. Fremantle) ill second (occasion), previously reported returned to duty)

(*The West Mail*, Perth, Friday 16 June, 1916)

AUSTRALIANS IN ACTION

West Australian Casualties

DEATHS

T. R. Brittain, South Fremantle, died of illness.

(*Western Argus*, Kalgoorlie, Western Australia - Tuesday 15 May, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Heroes

BRITTAIN – In loving memory of my dear brother T. R. Brittain, who died in England on April, 24, 1917.

Today as we gaze at your photo
 It's likeness so fond and true.
Do you know how our hearts are aching,
 And longing dear brother for you.

Inserted by his loving sister, Jane and brother-in-law George and family.

BRITTAIN – In loving memory of our dear brother, Private T. R. Brittain, who died at the Fargo Military Hospital on April, 24, 1917, of pneumonia.

Today as we gaze at your photo
 It's likeness so fond and true.
Do you know how our hearts are aching,
 And longing dear brother for you.

Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Florrie and George Maquire.

BRITTAIN – In loving memory of our dear brother, Private T. R. Brittain, who died at the Fargo Military Hospital on April, 24, 1917, of pneumonia.

His life he gave that other may live.

Inserted by his loving sisters and brothers-in-law, Pansy and Bert Bush, Lizzie and Bert Lynn (on active service).

(*The West Australian*, Perth, Wednesday 24 April, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Heroes

BRITTAIN – In loving memory of my dear brother Thomas Richard Brittain 12th Battalion, who died at Largo Military Hospital on April, 24, 1917.

Not our will dear brother, but Thy will be done.

Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Lizzie and Bert Lynn.

BRITTAIN - In loving memory of my dear brother, Tom, who died on April, 24, 1917.

He proved himself a soldier
He fought in honour's name;
He went and died for Australia,
That's how he played the game.

Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Pansy and Bert Bush, niece and nephew Doris and Stanley.

BRITTAIN - In loving memory of my dear brother, who died on April, 24, 1917.

Farewell to you dear brother
Sweet thought of you we'll keep.
Although two years have passed away'
Our grief is just as deep.

Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Mr and Mrs Hillier and family.

(The West Australian, Perth, Friday 25 April, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Heroes

BRITTAIN – In ever loving memory of my dear brother, Private Thomas Richard Brittain (Anzac), who died April, 24, 1917, Fargo Military Hospital, Rolleston.

Do not ask if we do miss him,
Only those can tell
Who have lost a loving brother
Without a last farewell.

Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Mr and Mrs Hillier and family.

BRITTAIN - In loving memory of our dear brother, Tom, who died on April, 24, 1917, at Fargo Military Hospital.

As long as life and memory last,
We will remember thee.

Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Florrie and George Maquire.

(The West Australian, Perth, Tuesday 24 April, 1923)

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 dated 8th March, 1922 from Base Records to Mrs G. Hillier – eldest sister of late Pte Thomas Richard Brittain states that the personal inscription that was chosen contains too many letters & would not be permitted on the headstone. The inscription that was denied – *Its only an old piece of Bunting. The old tattered Red White and Blue. He fought for it like a hero. My brother so Dearest and true. Gone from those who loved him best, in a hero's grave he lies at rest.*

Pte T. R. Brittain does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

A Hero At Rest



Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire (Photo by Dave Healing 2013)

Photo of Pte T. R. Brittain's Headstone at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire.



(Photo © Ian King - with permission)