

**Reading Cemetery,
Reading, Berkshire
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



4962 PRIVATE

J. CASSIDY

48TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

2ND APRIL, 1920 Age 26

John (Jack) CASSIDY

John C. Cassidy was born at Elizabeth Street, Launceston, Tasmania on 3rd December, 1892 to parents Patrick & Alice Cassidy (nee McDonald).

John Cassidy was sentenced in June, 1911 for 12 months' imprisonment for shopbreaking.

From the *Police Gazette*, Tasmania – 12 February, 1915 -

Prisoners to be discharged:

Cassidy, John on the 16th instant, labourer, aged 26, height 5 feet 2 ¾ inches, pale complexion, dark hair, grey eyes, medium nose, native of Tasmania, mole on left side of chin; vide "Persons Convicted" this issue.

John Cassidy was a 27 year old, single, Labourer from Tasmania when he enlisted on 4th August, 1915 with the 26th Infantry Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 3277 & his religion was Roman Catholic. No next of kin was listed.

John Cassidy stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service on account of his teeth. He also stated to the question "have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power?" that he had been charged with Housebreaking & Entering & served 12 months in 1910; drunkenness – 14 days & Larceny twice.

A reference was written on 12th August, 1915 by E. Phythian, Pitts Farm, Albert Road, Moonah which reads: "*Dear Sir, In reference to yours of 10th Jack Cassidy was in my employ for eleven months (11). He was a reliable man for me and in every way what is ___ a good man on the farm. I can only speak of him as he was with me both honest and reliable.*"

Private John Cassidy was posted to Depot Battalion at Claremont, Tasmania from 4th August, 1915. He was transferred to Broadmeadows Camp on 20th October, 1915.

Private John Cassidy was admitted to Clearing Hospital, Broadmeadows on 30th November, 1915 with a sore throat & transferred to Isolation Camp on 1st December, 1915 with a sore throat. He was discharged to duty on 26th January, 1916.

Private John Cassidy, previously of 7th Reinforcements, 26th Battalion, was in Depot Draft Company on 26th January, 1916. He was transferred to 9th Reinforcements, 24th Battalion on 8th February, 1916 & was due to embark from Fremantle on HMAT *Warilda*.

Private John Cassidy failed to re-embark on HMAT *Warilda* at Fremantle on 16th February, 1916. H.M.A.T. *Warilda*, was at sea on 17th February, 1916 & notified Base Records that 6 men of the 9th Reinforcements, 24th Battalion had deserted at Fremantle on the 16th instant: No. 4036 - Pte J. Cassidy; 3953 – Pte R. C. Sloss; 3859 – Pte R. Maloney; 4009 - Pte H. Walker; 4007 – Pte A. Storen & 3822 – Pte J. Gardiner.

District Headquarters, Perth wrote to Secretary, Department of Defence on 28th February, 1916 to advise that 4036 – Pte Cassidy, 4007 – Pte Storen & 4009 – Pte Walker had been apprehended & were at present in camp at Blackboy Hill.

Private John Cassidy was transferred to 15th Reinforcements, 16th Battalion. His regimental number was altered to 4962. New Attestation Papers were completed with next of kin listed as his only brother – Mr Frank Cassidy of P.O., Launceston, Tasmania.

Private John Cassidy embarked from Fremantle, Western Australia on HMAT *Ulysses (A38)* on 1st April, 1916. He was marched in to 4th Training Battalion on 26th April, 1916.

Private John Cassidy was transferred to 48th Battalion on 20th May, 1916.

Private John Cassidy embarked from Alexandria on 7th June, 1916 on *Huntspill* & disembarked at Marseilles, France on 14th June, 1916.

Private John Cassidy proceeded to join 48th Battalion from 4th A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) in France on 17th July, 1916. He was taken on strength with 48th Battalion in France on 18th July, 1916.

Private John Cassidy was written up for a crime – Drunkenness in the field on 28th July, 1916. He was awarded a fine of 10/-.

Private John Cassidy was reported missing in action in France on 8th August, 1916 - possibly killed in action.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private John Cassidy contains several unofficial reports of the whereabouts of Pte Cassidy, reported as Missing from 8th August, 1916, from the following informants:

- Pte Thomas Dwyer, 4974, 48th Battalion (1/12/16) - states that "I saw Cassidy with the 47th Batt: Australian Imperial Force, in Oct. last (date unknown) at Dicky Bush in Belgium."
- Pte J. P. Davis, 4792, No. 11 Stationary Hospital, Rouen (2/12/16) – "says he knew Cassidy and saw him after August, either in Sept. or October in Ypres district near Poperinghe, He himself went to Reninghelst in order to see the dentist of the 4th F. Ambulance, and there met Cassidy who said he was then attending the doctor of the 47th Batt. Informant described Cassidy as short, dark, clean shaven. He did not know No. or any more particulars."
- Pte J. P. Davis, 4793, C Co., No. 5 General Hospital, Rouen (23/3/17) – "Informant said that Cassidy was in D Co., named Jack, came from Tasmania, and was called "Tazzie". He came in the same reinforcement as informant and had a No. near his. He was a little, dark man, clean shaven and aged about 22 or 23. This man Informant saw was at Ypres in October."
- L/Cpl. Payne, 4265, 46th Batt, Dartford (14/1/17) – "I knew Cassidy. He was killed by shell at Pozieres and was buried on top of the parapet – his grave had a cross on which was "Buried by his Comrades" and also his name, number etc. I saw his grave."
- T. Dwyer, 4974, 48th Batt (12/3/17) – "Pte Bernie Davis 4792 of A Co. who told me in Oct. Last in Belgium that he had recently seen Cassidy at Dichebouche with the 47th and that Cassidy then seemed to be suffering in the head from nerve shock or something of the kind."
- J. Crowe, 4966, 48th Battn. A. Co. Westham Camp, Weymouth, England (24/3/17) – I left him alive and kicking in a place called Neuinhurst. It was about Oct. 26, 19 when I was speaking to him. It was getting late when I was speaking to him and then he said goodbye to him. He went away and I went to my camp. Len Hanman was with me, but I do not know where Hanman is or his No. I knew Cassidy as good as gold. Some called him Jim and others Cass" for short."
- Corpl. J. Davis, 4595, 48th Battn. D. Co., XIII Pltn, Havre Hospital (7/6/17) – "He was in D Co., XIII, Pltn. I knew Cassidy was missing on the 8th August. None of us knew what had become of him. About the 18th May Cassidy was brought back to the Battalion; he was all right, he had been adrift. I was a witness at the Court Martial. I left the Battalion on the 30th May. I heard nothing of Cassidy after the Court Martial. He was in the same platoon as me. I know he is the same man as his number is 4962 (note boo produced with a list of the platoon showing Cassidy's name and number in it)."

Private John Cassidy who was previously reported Missing in action on 8th August, 1916 was now reported not missing – apprehended Absentee on 17th May, 1917.

A F.G.C.M. (Field General Court Martial) was held on 27th May, 1917 concerning Private John Cassidy's absence – "When on active service deserting His Majesty's Forces from 6/8/16 to 11/5/17. The finding was Guilty. Private John Cassidy was sentenced to 15 years penal servitude from 27th May, 1917 and forfeited 294 days' pay on 27th May, 1917. Number of days in arrest awaiting trial – 15.

Private John Cassidy was admitted to No. 1 Military Prison at Rouen, France on 20th June, 1917. His sentence was commuted to 2 years imprisonment with hard labour on 14th July, 1917.

The unexpired portion of Private John Cassidy's sentence was suspended on 17th June, 1918 & he was released from No. 1 Military Prison & discharged to duty. Private John Cassidy entrained for his Unit with 48th Battalion. The remainder of his sentence was suspended as from the date of release from Prison on Authority A.G., G.H.2. No A.G. 12/P.S. D/7/6/18.

Private John Cassidy was absent without leave from 48th Battalion in France on 25th June, 1918 which he should have rejoined on being released from Prison.

Private John Cassidy was arrested on 17th July, 1918 & returned to 48th Battalion.

Private John Cassidy was reported as an absentee on 1st September, 1918. He was apprehended at Havre, France on 14th October, 1918.

Private John Cassidy was reported as "pending disposal" on 15th October, 1918 at D.A.P.M. (Deputy Assistant Provost Marshall).

Private John Cassidy was escorted to A.C.S.C. Compound at Havre on 28th October, 1918.

Private John Cassidy was returned to 48th Battalion from AWL (Absent without leave) on 2nd November, 1918.

A F.G.C.M. (Field General Court Martial) was held on 5th December, 1918 in France regarding Private John Cassidy's absent without leave from 1 pm on 25th June, 1918 to 11.45 am on 17th July, 1918 & again from 6pm on 1st September, 1918 to 10 pm on 12th October, 1918. Private John Cassidy was found guilty & sentenced to 2 years imprisonment Hard Labour on 5th December, 1918.

Private John Cassidy was absent without leave from 48th Battalion in France on 2nd January, 1919. A Court of Enquiry was held on 7th February, 1919 declaring that No. 4962 Pte J. Cassidy had illegally absented himself from 48th Battalion on 2nd January, 1919 & was still absent on 7th February, 1919.

Private John Cassidy was illegally absent from 2nd January, 1919 & rejoined 48th Battalion from being illegally absent on 27th February, 1919. Private John Cassidy was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment hard labour on 19th March, 1919 with a total forfeiture of 440 days' pay.

Private John Cassidy was returned to his Unit with 48th Battalion on 27th February, 1919.

A F.G.C.M. (Field General Court Martial) was held on 19th March, 1919 concerning Pte J. Cassidy being AWL from 2 am on 2nd January, 1919 until 3.15 pm on 26th February, 1919. He pleaded guilty. The finding of the Court was guilty & he was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment hard labour. His sentence was to run concurrent with sentence from 1918.

Private John Cassidy was admitted to No. 10 Military Prison, Dunkirk on 5th May, 1919.

On 7th June, 1919 the No. 10 Military Prison revised Private John Cassidy's sentences:

- 1st Sentence – 2 years I.H.L. awarded 27th May, 1917
- 2nd Sentence – 2 years I.H.L. awarded 5th December, 1918
- 3rd Sentence – 12 months I.H.L. awarded 19th March, 1919

1st Sentence suspended released 17th June, 1918. Unexpired portion of 1st Sentence put into execution and to run concurrently with 2nd & 3rd, dated 8th May, 1919.

Private John Cassidy disembarked at Folkestone, England from No. 10 Military Prison, Dunkirk, France & was marched in (under escort) to H. M. Military Prison at Oxford on 23rd July, 1919.

Private John Cassidy's sentence was suspended by Southern Command as from 1st October, 1919.

Private John Cassidy was admitted to Reading War Hospital, Berkshire, England on 7th October, 1919 with malignant Endocarditis.

The unexpired portion of Private John Cassidy's detention for 2 years was remitted as from date of embarkation to Australia. Private John Cassidy was to return to Australia on *Friedrichsruh* with Tuberculosis (incurable).

Private John Cassidy did not return to Australia. He was reported seriously ill on 19th February, 1920 in Reading War Hospital, Berkshire with no improvement. Private John Cassidy's condition was reported as stationery on 27th February, 1920.

Frank Cassidy, brother of Pte John Cassidy, wrote to Base Records on 25th March, 1920 stating he had received a telegram & a letter saying that his brother was seriously ill. He had contacted Base Records to find out any further information regarding his brother's health. Base Records replied on 31st March, 1920 stating that no later information had been received since 10th March, 1920 & it is to "*be assumed he has continued to make satisfactory progress, as in the event of any change for the worse having taken place this Office would have been notified.*" Previous notifications sent to Mr Frank Cassidy had gone unclaimed & telegrams advising that Pte Cassidy had been admitted to hospital had gone undelivered – address unknown. Enquiries were made through the press & Mr V. W. Lovegrove of Smithton, Tasmania supplied Base Records with a current address for Mr F. Cassidy.

Private John Cassidy died at 4.50 pm on 2nd April, 1920 at Reading War Hospital, Oxford Road, Reading, Berkshire, England from Phthisis.

A death for John Cassidy, aged 32, was registered in the June quarter, 1920 in the district of Reading, Berkshire, England.

Private John Cassidy was buried on 7th April, 1920 in Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire – Screen Wall. 72. Those buried in Plot 72 & buried in other parts of the cemetery that do not have headstones marking their graves are named on the Memorial Screen Wall located near the Cross of Sacrifice. Their deaths are still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. From the burial report of Pte Cassidy - *Coffin was Elm with brass mountings. The deceased was accorded a Military funeral. The coffin was draped with the Australian flag. Pall bearers were supplied by a detachment of the Royal Berkshire Regiment stationed in Reading. Wreaths sent bore the following inscriptions: In remembrance from Miss Gray, Eastfield, Whitchurch-on-Thames. From the sister of an Australian. A representative of these Headquarters was present.*

Private J. Cassidy is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 145.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John Cassidy – service number 4962, aged 26, of 48th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Patrick Cassidy. Born at Launceston, Tasmania.

Base Records contacted Mr F. Cassidy c/- Mr A. H. Gale, Marrawah, Tasmania in October, 1921 asking if there were any nearer blood relatives than himself due to the "Deceased Soldiers Estates Act 1918" which stated that the War Medals & Mementoes of a deceased soldier were to be handed in the following order of relationship – Widow, eldest surviving son, eldest surviving daughter, father, mother, eldest surviving brother, eldest surviving sister etc. Mr Frank Cassidy replied stating that both parents were deceased & he was the only brother.

Pte John Cassidy was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Cassidy's brother – Mr Frank Cassidy, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll signed for in March, 1922 & Plaque signed for November, 1923).

(110 pages of Pte John Cassidy'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, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



Newspaper Notices

TASMANIA

ALLEGED STEALING

Launceston, Sunday night - John Cassidy, aged 20, was arrested to-day charged with stealing 15s in silver and coppers from Moran and Cato's stores.

(Zeehan and Dundas Herald, Tasmania – 12 June, 1911)

NEWS IN BRIEF

A youth named John Cassidy was at the Criminal Court yesterday sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment for shopbreaking.

(Examiner, Launceston, Tasmania – 22 June, 1911)

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

311TH AUSTRALIAN CASUALTY LIST

TASMANIAN CASUALTIES

NOT MISSING

Pte J. Cassidy, Launceston – Now reported not missing; previously reported missing.

(The North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times, Tasmania – 18 June, 1917)

Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire, England

Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire contains 248 War Graves, 17 of those being from Australian Forces – World War 1.

The War Graves Plot is situated at the back of the cemetery, in the right hand corner from the entrance. A Screen Wall Memorial commemorates those buried in Plot 72 and those buried in other parts of the cemetery whose graves are not marked by headstones. There are 207 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war and 41 of the 1939-1945 war. There is also 1 Serbian burial.

(Information & photos from CWGC)



Cross of Sacrifice & Memorial Screen Wall, Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire *(Photos from CWGC)*



Photo of Pte J. Cassidy's name on the Screen Wall Memorial in Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of Phil Wood)