

Sutton Veny War Graves

World War 1



Lest We Forget



54016 PRIVATE

T. N. NIVEN

33RD BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

14TH OCTOBER, 1918

*CWGC Headstone for Pte T. N. Niven is located in
Grave Plot # 364. E. 16 of St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny*

Thomas Nathaniel NIVEN

Thomas Nathaniel Niven was born in Silvertown, Essex, England on 27th March, 1896 to parents John & Elizabeth Niven (nee Armstrong).

The 1901 England Census listed Thomas Niven as 5 year old Living with his family at 36 Star Lane, West Ham, Essex. His parents were listed as John Niven (Blacksmith, aged 44, born Scotland) & Elizabeth Niven (aged 40, born Scotland). Thomas was the second youngest of 9 children listed on this Census – (Elizabeth (Confectionary Maker, aged 20, born Scotland), James C. (Apprentice Engineer, aged 18, born Scotland), John (Apprentice Blacksmith, aged 16, born Silvertown, London), Lizzie (aged 13, born Silvertown, London), Jeanie (aged 11, born Silvertown, London), Maggie (aged 9, born Silvertown, London), Martha (aged 7, born Silvertown, London), then Thomas & Janett (aged 2, born Silvertown, London).

Mr J Niven (Blacksmith, aged 48) & his wife (aged 47) & their 8 children embarked from London on *Pericles* & arrived at Brisbane Australia on 1st March, 1910. Master T (Thomas) was aged 13. The rest of the children were listed by initial only & their ages were – 25, 23, 21, 19, 16, 11 & 5.

Thomas Niven had previously served with 29th Batt. Militia Cadets at Balmain. He had served for 4 years & was currently still serving at the time he enlisted.

Thomas Niven was a 22 year old, single Labourer from Balmain, Sydney, NSW when he enlisted at Darlinghurst, NSW on 23rd April, 1918 with the 5th (N) Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 54016 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Elizabeth Niven of 22 Curtis Road, Balmain, NSW.

Private Thomas Nathaniel Niven embarked from Sydney on SS *Field Marshal* on 19th June, 1918 & disembarked at London, England on 26th August, 1918.

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.

Private Thomas Nathaniel Niven was marched in to 5th Training Battalion on 26th August, 1918 & allotted to Reinforcements of 19th Battalion.

Pte Niven was transferred to Reinforcements of 33rd Battalion at Fovant, Wiltshire on 27th September, 1918.

Private Thomas Nathaniel Niven was admitted to the Group Clearing Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire with Influenza on 8th October, 1918 & then transferred to the Military Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 10th October, 1918 seriously ill with pneumonia.

Private Thomas Nathaniel Niven died at 9 p.m. on 14th October, 1918 at the Military Hospital, Sutton Veny of Influenza & Pneumonia.

A death for Thomas N. Nivern, aged 22, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

Private Thomas Nathaniel Niven was buried on 18th October, 1918 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny - Grave no. 364. From the burial report of Pte Niven - *Coffin was good polished Elm with Brass Mounts – The 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 and Band. Six of deceased's comrades acted as Pall-Bearers. The funeral was attended by 3 Officers and about 100 N.C.O.'s and Men of the deceased's late Unit. A floral wreath from the Comrades of the Deceased was placed on the grave. Headquarters A.I.F. Depots in U. K. were represented.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Pte Thomas Nathaniel Niven contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of his family to obtain the fullest details possible of his death and Burial. A letter from Major R.A.M.C. Registrar for Officer in Charge, Military Hospital Sutton Veny reads:

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"4016 Pte T. N. Niven 33rd Battalion A.I.F. The above named man was admitted to this Hospital from Influenza and later contracted Pneumonia from which complication he died on 14th October 1918. He was buried at Sutton Very Churchyard, the number of the Grave space being: - 364, Military Section."

Pte Thomas Nathaniel Niven requested in his Will dated 30th May, 1918 that all his real & personal Estate be left to his mother – Elizabeth Niven.

Private T. N. Niven is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 122.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Pte Thomas Nathaniel Niven was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Niven's father – Mr Niven (sent July, 1921 & February, 1923).

The CWGC lists Private Thomas Nathaniel Niven, 54016, of 33rd Battalion, Australian Infantry, A.I.F. No family details are listed.

(67 pages of Pte Thomas Nathaniel Niven'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

THE 447th CASUALTY LIST

DIED, OTHER CAUSES

NEW SOUTH WALES

Pte T. N. Niven (Balmain), illness

(The Farmer and Settler, Sydney, NSW – Tuesday 17 December, 1918)

ON ACTIVE SERVICE

NIVEN – In memory of our dear brother, Private T. N. Niven, who died October 14, 1918. Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Mrs and Mr Smith.

NIVEN – In memory of our brother, Thomas Niven who died in Sutton Veny Hospital, October 14, 1918, aged 22. Gone, but not forgotten. Inserted by S.S. Major (returned) and Mrs Buttery.

NIVEN – In loving memory of my dear brother, Pte Thomas Niven, who died October 14, 1918, from pneumonia influenza, in England. Inserted by his sister and brother-in-law, Maggie and George Sutton.

NIVEN – In loving memory of my nephew and our cousin, Private Thomas Nathaniel Niven, A.I.F., who died in England, October 14, 1918.

He died for his country.

Inserted by Uncle Jim and family Kogarah.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – Tuesday 14 October, 1919)

ON ACTIVE SERVICE

NIVEN – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Private Thomas Nathaniel Niven, 33rd Battalion, who died October 14, 1918.

He has fought the good fight.

Inserted by father, mother, brothers and sisters. Balmain.

NIVEN – In loving memory of our dear brother, Thomas Niven, who died October 14, 1918.

We never knew your pain, dear,

We never saw you die.

We only know you passed away

And never said good-bye

Inserted by his loving sisters and brothers-in-law, Bella, Magge, Alf and George Sutton.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – Thursday 14 October, 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)

Pte Thomas Nathaniel Niven does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.



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



Photo of Private T. N. Niven's CWGC headstone in St. John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.



(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)