

**Hollybrook Cemetery,
Southampton, Hampshire, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2000

J. T. ROOTSEY

AUSTRALIAN WAR WORKER

7TH NOVEMBER, 1918

John Thomas ROOTSEY

John Thomas Rootsey was born at Cotter's Creek, near Cooma, New South Wales in 1871 to parents Henry & Julia Rootsey (nee Jess).

Julia Maud Rootsey, mother of John Thomas Rootsey, died on 30th May, 1910 in Prince Alfred Hospital, Camperdown, Sydney, NSW.

Henry Rootsey, father of John Thomas Rootsey, died on 18th July, 1911 at Bega, NSW.

John Thomas Rootsey stated he was a 44 year old Labourer when he enlisted on 29th September, 1917 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.) at Bega, NSW. His religion was Roman Catholic & his next of kin was listed as his sister – Annie Rootsey, Mary St, Waterloo, Sydney, NSW. John Thomas Rootsey left his mark "X" as he could not write.

Private John Thomas Rootsey was posted to Recruits at Show Ground Camp, Sydney, NSW on 16th October, 1917. He was transferred to "A" Company, 1st Depot Battalion at Liverpool, Sydney, NSW on 22nd October, 1917.

A detailed Medical History was completed on Private John Thomas Rootsey on 30th November, 1917. His disability was recorded as "*Over age – Hepatic Insufficiency*" which had occurred at Bega, NSW 5 years ago.

Private John Thomas Rootsey was discharged from Australian Imperial Force on 12th December, 1917 – medically unfit (over age 50)

John Thomas Rootsey, Road Labourer, aged 44 years & 4 months, applied for enrolment as a Volunteer for Work as a Navy or Labourer in Great Britain. He was single & stated he last worked for Hayes Bro's, Brogo, NSW for 2 ½ years as an Axe Worker. John Rootsey stated on his application form that he had volunteered for active service with A. I.F. for 58 days but was discharged as medically unfit (over age). He stated the earliest date he was prepared to embark was "*The sooner the better.*"

John Thomas Rootsey was given a Muniton Worker number of 2000. He embarked from Australia on 13th April, 1918 on *Ulysses* & arrived at Liverpool, England on 8th June, 1918.

War Worker John Thomas Rootsey reported sick on 11th June, 1918 due to an "*Inflamed connective tissue of forearm*" & entered C.C.S. (Casualty Clearing Station) Hospital at Eastleigh on 11th June, 1918. He produced a Doctor's Certificate stating he was "*unfit for heavy work of any kind*" which was dated until 18th June, 1918.

War Worker John Thomas Rootsey was engaged to start work with Messrs Perkins & Sons, Eastleigh but was unable to begin work this week (as reported on 15th June, 1918 on Rootsey's "Record since Landing" Sheet)

War Worker John Thomas Rootsey began work with Messrs Perkins & Sons, Eastleigh as a Navy on 20th June, 1918. He advised the Officer in Charge of Muniton/War Workers, Liverpool, England that he was enquiring into his "*sub.allow*" & that his arm was still bad & working for 1 week had made it worse. The Doctor had advised he should be in Hospital but War Worker Rootsey stated there was no hospital available for him.

War Worker John Thomas Rootsey produced a Medical Certificate for 11th – 18th June, 1918 & requested that he receive payment for that time.

On 8th August, 1918 the Medical Officer recommended that War Worker Rootsey be brought in for a medical examination by A.I.F. A letter was sent on 10th August, 1918 to Messrs Perkins & Sons advising that Mr Rootsey was required in London to be examined by the A.I.F. Medical Officer & was to bring his luggage with him.

The Accounts Branch advised that War Worker Rootsey's account had been settled for his period of sick leave from 11th – 18th June, 1918 & a cheque would be sent in due course.

A Medical Certificate was produced advising that "*J. T. Rootsey, of 206 Southampton Road, is unable to work suffering from _____ of Liver.*" Dated 17th July, 1918 by Henry L. Grant.

A Medical Certificate was produced dated 6th August, 1918: "This is to certify that M. J. T. Rootsey was unfit for work owing to illness from 20-7-18 to 23-7-18 inclusive."

On 9th September, 1918 W. Fitzpatrick, writing on behalf of War Worker Rootsey (as he could not write himself), wrote to Officer in Charge advising he had been at work for 6 weeks & was quite well again. The Officer in Charge replied stating that if War Worker Rootsey was back at work then there would be no necessity for him to come to London but if he fell sick again he was to notify this Office immediately.

War Worker John Thomas Rootsey began work with Messrs Boots & Sons, Calshot, Southampton on 16th September, 1918.

On 1st November, 1918 a letter was sent to Officer in Charge from K. M. Symonds stating that War Worker Rootsey was at Hants Royal Hospital, Southampton in a critical condition. A Telegram was sent to Officer in Charge on 8th November, 1918 advising that War Worker Rootsey had "died to-day. Wire instructions."

Australian War Worker John Thomas Rootsey died on 7th November, 1918 at Southampton Infirmary, Hampshire, England from Pneumonia following Influenza.

(Note: The Australian War Memorial & the Commonwealth War Graves Commission both have the date of death listed as 8th November, 1918. They were advised at the time of researching of the Death Certificate located in his War Worker file which states he died on 7th November, 1918. All other forms in the file record the date of death incorrectly as 8th November, 1918)

A 839761

CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF DEATH.
Pursuant to the Births and Deaths Registration Acts, 1836 to 1874.

Registration District, SOUTHAMPTON.

1918. Death in the Sub-district of SOUTHAMPTON EASTERN, in the County of SOUTHAMPTON.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
No.	When and where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
289	Seventh November 1918 Royal South Hants Hospital	John Thomas Rootsey	Male	45	of New South Wales Australia. 45 Australian War Worker No. 2000.	Pneumonia Certified by A. H. Hilmy M. R. C. West Australia	K. M. Symonds Carriving the body to be buried. 366 Starling Street Perth	8th November 1918	Ulfred Thomas Burt Registrar.

I, U. T. Burt, Registrar of Births and Deaths for the Sub-district of SOUTHAMPTON EASTERN, in the County of SOUTHAMPTON, do hereby certify that this is a true copy of the Entry No. 289 in the Register Book of Deaths for the said Sub-district, and that such Register Book is now legally in my custody.

WITNESS MY HAND this 8th day of November, 1918.

Insert in this Margin any Notes which appear in the original entry.

A letter was sent to Officer in Charge by Symonds on 9th November, 1918 advising that War Worker Rootsey had "died on night of 7th inst. and not on the 8th as previously stated."

Australian War Worker John Thomas Rootsey was buried on 11th November, 1918 in R.C. Portion of Shirley Warren Cemetery, Southampton – Grave Registration No. L. 9. 119 R.C.

According to information supplied by Symonds to Officer in Charge "twenty-five A.W.Ws. (Australian War Workers) attended funeral and his fellow workers sent wreaths". A request was made that "a cross of military character be placed on R's grave, as he had formerly been an A.I.F. man." (ref: page 10 – date 12/11/18 in Service Record file). J. T. Rootsey has the emblem of the Australian Imperial Force – Rising Sun on his headstone.

This is now recorded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as Hollybrook Cemetery, Southampton, Hampshire, England – Plot number L. 9. 119 and now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

[Note: The CWGC originally had him listed as J. T. Rooysey. His headstone was engraved as Rooysey then between 2013 & 2018 (as shown by photos on Find a Grave) the headstone was replaced & the correct surname of Rootsey was engraved.]

1200/1A | 2000 | J.T. | ROOYSEY | AUSTRALIAN WAR WORKER | 8TH NOVEMBER 1918 | NONE | CROSS | L9 | 119 | 18

A death for John T. Rootsey, aged 45, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Southampton, Hampshire, England.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Worker John Thomas Rootsey – service number 2000, Australian War Worker. No family details are listed.

Australian Munitions War Worker John Thomas Rooysey is remembered on the Commemorative Roll Book, located in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. The Commemorative Roll records the names of those Australians who died during or as a result of wars in which Australians served, but who were not serving in the Australian Armed Forces and therefore not eligible for inclusion on the Roll of Honour.

[Note: The Australian War Memorial were advised at the time of researching (November, 2022) that CWGC & National Archives both had the Munitions War Worker listed as Rootsey. AWM advised that the Office of Australian War Graves had been contacted some time ago regarding the amendment to Rooysey/Rootsey's war grave but no response had been received so far.]



Commemorative Roll (Photo from AWM)



Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial (Capital Photographer)

Australian Munitions & War Workers

Men enlisted under a joint Australian Commonwealth - Imperial Government scheme for providing skilled Australian workers to British war industries during the First World War. Under this scheme the volunteers would receive free passage to Great Britain, an allowance for travel time, a special allowance for the duration of service, and eventual repatriation to Australia. Married men also received a separation allowance, but were required to allot a portion of all their earnings to dependants. The men were expected to work in whatever industries they were directed to by the British Board of Trade, and under the prevailing conditions and wages for the duration of hostilities.

Government newspaper adverts appeared in August, 1916, and the first party of 76 workers departed Australia in September. Groups continued to be recruited and sent at intervals, with the eventual number of workers under the scheme totalling just over 5,000. Almost 1,000 of these had already been working in Britain under private agreements with large firms such as Vickers, and were brought under the conditions of the scheme. An additional 200 former AIF soldiers were also recruited in Britain. Initially only skilled workers were sought, however at the request of the British Government later groups included large numbers of navvies for general labouring.

These men were not members of the Australian Imperial Forces and did not serve in combat units, but were recruited to meet the shortfall in skilled labour that threatened many of Britain's key wartime industries including munitions. *(Source: Australian War Memorial)*



(12 pages of Private John Thomas Rootsey's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

(45 pages of Munition Worker John Thomas Rootsey's War Worker records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial & National Archives



Newspaper Notices

The newspapers at the time were encouraged not to report munition explosions or deaths through TNT poisoning as it would affect the morale of the civilian population and so reports in newspapers are virtually non-existent. When the war ended the Australians returned home and life moved on.

MUNITION WORKERS

AUSTRALIANS IN GREAT BRITAIN

Melbourne, Thursday.

The Minister for Defence (Senator Pearce) announces that during the period from the inception of the schemes for the despatch of munition workers and navvies to Great Britain up to June 30 last, 2662 munition workers had been disembarked in England for employment on munition and war work. There had also been enrolled under the munition workers' scheme 124 men who had been discharged from the A.I.F. in England for that purpose, and two discharged A.I.F. men had enrolled under the navvies' agreement, making the total number of men engaged in work in Great Britain under both these schemes 4,998. Of this number 384 men had returned to Australia – the majority on account of ill-health. There had been 23 deaths. The agreement of 38 men had been cancelled for disciplinary and other reasons. Six of the men had enlisted in the A.I.F., in England, five men had enlisted in the Royal Navy, and nine men had enlisted in the British Army, leaving the total number of men still in England under the Commonwealth agreement as 4,533. In addition these men were registered on the index held in Australia House 674 Australian munition workers who proceeded to Great Britain under private contract prior to the inauguration of the Commonwealth scheme. Of the men still in England on June 30, 1918, 87 were waiting return up to that date, 152 men had proceeded to France to engage in special work, and 107 of them had returned again to England. Australian munition workers were employed at 409 different firms or centres, and navvies at 192, and the value of the output produced by the labour of these men was estimated at £6,000,000.

Provision for the payment of munition workers and navvies who proceeded to Great Britain on war work under the agreement with the Commonwealth Government is made in an amendment to the war financial regulations issued today. Munition workers and navvies are to be provided with a free passage from Australia to Great Britain and back. In the case of munition workers a dependants' allowance of 25s a week, with allowances for children, will be made for the first eight weeks after embarkation. Subsequently the allowance will be 20s. Separation allowances equal to that paid in the case of a private in the A.I.F. will be paid to dependants.

(Examiner, Launceston, Tasmania – 30 August, 1918)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) honours the 1,700,000 men and women of the forces of the Commonwealth who died in the two world wars and ensures that their memory is never forgotten. The applicable periods of consideration are 4 August 1914 to 31 August 1921 for the First World War and 3 September 1939 to 31 December 1947 for the Second World War.

The Commission's principles:

- Each of the dead should be commemorated by name on the headstone or memorial
- Headstones and memorials should be permanent
- Headstones should be uniform
- There should be no distinction made on account of military or civil rank, race or creed

During both WW1 (& WW2) a number of Commonwealth civilian organisations were accepted by the military as qualifying for war grave status.

Members of the Recognised Civilian Organisations had to meet two additional criteria not required by military casualties.

1. Their death had to be caused by war actions or the increased threat caused by war and
2. They had to be on duty at the time of their death - being posted overseas counted as 'being on duty'.

The Australian government deemed that their War and Munitions Workers (men and women) qualified for war grave treatment as they were recruited as a body and were posted overseas for the war effort. Some of their CWGC entries show a 'service number' indicating that they were an organised body.

Hollybrook Cemetery, Southampton, Hampshire, England

Southampton was No 1 Port during the First World War and military hospitals were established in the University buildings, in the Highfield Institution and at Shirley Warren. During the Second World War, 4.5 million tons of military equipment passed through Southampton docks and parts of the prefabricated harbours used at Arromanches during the Normandy invasion were made there. For a while, Southampton was also base to the 14th Major Port Transportation Corps of the United States Army.

Southampton (Hollybrook) Cemetery contains burials of both wars and a memorial to the missing.

The cemetery has a First World War plot near the main entrance containing most of the 125 graves from this period. Behind this plot is the Hollybrook Memorial which commemorates by name almost 1,900 servicemen and women of the Commonwealth land and air forces whose graves are not known, many of whom were lost in transports or other vessels torpedoed or mined in home waters. It also bears the names of those who were lost or buried at sea, or who died at home but whose bodies could not be recovered for burial.

Most of the 186 Second World War burials are in a separate war graves plot. 3 of these burials are unidentified seaman of the Merchant Navy.

In addition to the Commonwealth war graves, the cemetery contains 67 war graves of other nationalities, many of them German, of which 2 are unidentified.

(Cemetery information from CWGC)



(Photo from 2012 – Basher Eyre)



Chapel at Hollybrook Cemetery (Photo by Michael Day)



Hollybrook Cemetery



(Photo courtesy of Allan Noble)



Hollybrook Cemetery with Hollybrook Memorial at front *(Photo by Michael Day)*

Photo of Australian War Worker J. T. Rooysey's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Hollybrook Cemetery, Southampton, Hampshire, England.

(Note the incorrect spelling of surname. See below for updated headstone)

(At the time of researching – November, 2022 it was discovered that the date of death on CWGC headstone was incorrect. A copy of the Death Certificate was located in his War Worker file which show he died on 7th November, 1918. CWGC were advised November, 2022 of the incorrect date)



(Photo from Find a Grave – Geoffrey Gillon – August 2013)

Photo of Australian War Worker J. T. Rootsey's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Hollybrook Cemetery, Southampton, Hampshire, England with correct surname.

(At the time of researching – November, 2022 it was discovered that the date of death on CWGC headstone was incorrect. A copy of the Death Certificate was located in his War Worker file which show he died on 7th November, 1918. CWGC were advised November, 2022 of the incorrect date on the headstone.)



(Photo from Find a Grave – JackieC – November, 2018)