

# Thompson, John Webb

A.S.C. 1907-10

**Number:** 5448: Private

**Unit:** 17th Battalion

**Date of death:** 15 April 1917

**Memorial details:** Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, France

**War Grave Register Notes:** Age 20. Son of Frederick John and Maria Frances Thompson, of Orsova, Yule St., Dulwich Hill, Born at Milthorpe.

## **CHARACTER OF THE TEAM.**

J. Thompson played a few matches for the 1<sup>st</sup> X1, but made very few runs.

Bathurstian

**Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.**

No. ~~EA 970~~ 5448.

Name THOMPSON John Webb  
 Unit 14 Rfb 17th Bn.  
 Joined on 13.3.16

14

**Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.**

1. What is your Name? John Webb Thompson
2. In the Parish of \_\_\_\_\_ in or near the Town of Wellthorpe n. in the County of \_\_\_\_\_
3. Natural Born
4. 19 years 11 months
5. Book Clerk
6. No
7. No
8. Mother Mrs. M. J. Thompson  
Julia Street  
Wellthorpe n.
9. No T.A.S.U.
10. No
11. 3 years in militia

THOMPSON John  
9 years 9 months.  
5 feet 3 1/2 inches.  
9 - 1 lbs.  
 Height 34 inches.  
 Hair Dark  
 Eyes Brown Blue  
 Complexion Dark Brown  
 Distinguishing Mark None

	O.C.Troops.	A.18 "Wiltshire" Embarked ...	Sydney
		Disembarked...	Plymouth
25.10.16.	I.B.List.No.62.	Adm.Davenport Milt.Hos.	England.
8.11.16.	do.	Sick (slt). Disch.from Milt.Hosp.	
		Devonport to Perham Downs.	
		Duty.	do.
25.10.16.	No.1.Cum.Depot.T.O.S.&	placed in Class A.	Perham Down
7.11.16.	OC.5th.Tg.Bn.	Marched in	Rollestone.
13.12.16.	do.	Proceeding O/Seas France per	
		"Golden Eagle"	Folkestone.
14.12.16.	2nd.ADBD.	Marched in	Etaples.
24.12.16.	CO.17th.Bn.	Joined Bn.	France.
24.3.17.	do.	Wounded in Action.	do.

"Shell Contusions" in March, killed three weeks after returning to unit.

17.3.17.	6th.Aust.F.Amb.	Admitted Shell Contusions.	France.	16.3.17
31.3.17.	CO.17th.Bn.	Rejoined Bn.	do.	27.3.17
21.4.17.	do.	KILLED IN ACTION.	do.	15.4.17

**Particulars Required for the Roll of Honour of Australia in the Memorial War Museum**

1. Name (in full) of Fallen Soldier: *John Webb Thompson*
2. Unit and Number, (if known): *17<sup>th</sup> Battalion, No 5448*
3. With what Town or District in Australia was he chiefly connected (under which his name ought to come on the Memorial)  
 Town (if any) *Bathurst* District *Bathurst* State *N. S. W.*
4. What was his Birthplace: *Millshope*
5. Date of Death: *15. 4. 17*
6. Place where Killed or Wounded: *Lagnicourt, France*

**Particulars Required for the Nation's Histories.**

1. What was his Calling: *Bank Clerk*
2. Age at time of Death: *20*
3. What was his School: *All Saints College, Bathurst*
4. What was his other Training: *—*
5. If born in Britain or Abroad, at what age did he come to Australia: *Born in Australia*
6. Had he ever served in any Military or Naval Force before Enlisting in the A.I.F. (Please state particulars):  
*In Australian Military Citizen Forces.*
7. Any other biographical details likely to be of interest to the Historian of the A.I.F., or of his Regiment—

*Son of the late Canon Thompson, of St. Barnabas, Bathurst and Diocesan Registrar of the Bathurst Diocese, and also grandson of the late William Webb, of Millshope*

Was he connected with any other Member of the A.I.F. who died or who distinguished himself. (Please state Relationship) —

9. Name and Address of the Parent or other person giving this information—

Name: *Maria Frances Thompson*

Relationship to Soldier: *Mother*

Address: *Orsoni Vale St Dulwich Hill*

my much that through illness this has  
 neglected. *M. F. Thompson*

**The following, gives an account of the locality and events on the day of John's death. It is acknowledged as being pasted in its entirety from AWM records.**

### **Battle of Lagnicourt**

#### **March 1917 - April 1917**

Lagnicourt, in northern France, was the scene of fierce fighting in March and April 1917. When the Germans withdrew to the Hindenburg Line in March and the British and dominion forces advanced rapidly in their wake but as they neared the Hindenburg Line they were confronted by well-prepared rearguard forces, which were only removed after difficult fights. One such action took place at Lagnicourt between 26 and 27 March. Closing with the Hindenburg Line, the British lost no time in launching a major offensive around Arras. This left their line weak in several places, including Lagnicourt. Aware of this weakness, the Germans launched a counter-stroke in the Lagnicourt area at dawn on **15 April**, utilising 23 battalions. Their aim was not to permanently recapture the territory, but merely to hold it for a day and capture or destroy all the equipment and supplies they found there. They rapidly occupied Lagnicourt and captured several batteries of the 1st Australian Division's artillery. A vigorous counter-attack by four Australian battalions just after 7 am recaptured the village and most of the guns, and forced a premature German withdrawal.

### **War Casualties**

News has been received by Mrs. Thompson, of Yule street, Dulwich Hill, that her son, Private John Webb Thompson, aged 21 years, was killed in France on April 15. He was the eldest son of the late Canon Thompson, of Bathurst and previously was on the staff of the Australian Bank of Commerce.

SMH 12/5/17 P.14

Pte. John Webb Thompson, eldest son of the late Canon Thompson, of St. Barnabas', South Bathurst, was killed in France.

Deceased, who was 21 years of age, was in the employ of the Australian Bank of Commerce.

SMH 30/5/17 P.12

How the accounts varied. From "hit in the abdomen," to being "bayoneted," to being "hit in the middle of the forehead." One considers that the last of these, would have been the most merciful account for his mother.

17th A.I.F.

Thompson J.W. 5448.

(K. Apl. 15/17 Det D/B)

"Thompson was a Signaller, C. Coy. I saw him the morning after the fight at Lagnicourt lying dead in the open. He was doubled up with his hand thrust in his throat. He had been hit in the abdomen. He was buried near by."

Eye-witness:

Description: From Dulwich Hill, Sydney.

Informant: L/Cpl. L.C. Robinson 5399,  
17th A.I.F. C. Coy.,  
Bethnal Green Military Hospt.

Home address:  
Daisy Bank,  
Bega,  
South Coast- Coast,  
N.S.W.

S

A.I.F. 17.

THOMPSON, J.W. 5448

K.Apl.15th.1917. Det:

I knew him quite well. He was killed by being bayoneted. There were three or four together at an outpost and the Germans came and bayoneted him. I buried him, two hundred yds from this outpost which was between Lagnicourt and Bullecourt. I put up a cross with his name on and number. He comes from Dulwich Hill, near Sydney N.S.W.

Informant: Pte W.D.Pilgrim. 5393.  
No. 7 C.C.

BOULOGNE. 16.8.17.

17th Battalion.

Thompson, J. W.  
Private, 5448.

"Killed In Action, 15/4/17"

I knew Thompson. I saw him at Lagnicourt on the 15th April, 1917 I was with him on that day down in a sunken road. A bullet hit him in the middle of the forehead, and he was killed instantly. He was buried on the sunken road, just outside the Vaux side of Lagnicourt by Padre Captain Fernie. (Capt. Fernie is now at St. Augustine's Church, Unley Park, Terrace, South Australia.)

Informant:- Sergeant-Major Colin Campbell,  
1522, 17th Battalion.  
4th Australian General Hospital  
Randwick.

F.B.W. 23/1/18.

Thompson in loving memory of Private John Webb (Jack)  
Thompson, Signaler 17th Battalion killed in action at Lagnicourt,  
France, April 15th 1917 aged 19 years, elder son of the late  
Canon Thompson of Bathurst. He chose the path of sacrifice.  
Inserted by his mother.

