

**St. Mary's New Churchyard,
Codford, Wiltshire, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2881 PRIVATE

A. J. COUCHMAN

51ST BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

15TH FEBRUARY, 1917

Arthur John COUCHMAN

Arthur John Couchman was born at Wilmington, Kent, England in 1887 to parents John & Emma Ada Couchman (nee Pratt). His birth was registered in the June quarter of 1887 in the district of Dartford, Kent, England.

The 1891 England Census recorded Arthur J. Couchman as a 4 year old, living with his family at Hook Green, Wilmington, Kent, England in a 4 roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as John Couchman (Agricultural Labourer, aged 28, born Wilmington, Kent) & Emma A. Couchman (aged 26, born Chelsfield, Kent). Arthur was the eldest of four children listed on this Census (all born Wilmington, Kent) – Arthur then Ellen (aged 2), George (aged 1) & Edward (aged 8 months). Also listed was George D. Pratt – a Boarder (aged 17).

The 1901 England Census recorded Arthur Couchman as a 13 year old House Boy, living with his family at Hook Green, Wilmington, Kent, England in a 4 roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as John Couchman (Agricultural Labourer, aged 37) & Emma Couchman (aged 35). Arthur was the eldest of seven children listed on this Census (all born Wilmington, Kent) – Arthur then Ellen (aged 12), George (aged 11), Edward (aged 10), Amy (aged 9), Albert (aged 4) & Frank (aged 7 months).

Arthur J. Couchman married Sarah M. McAlinden in Fremantle, Western Australia in 1916.

Arthur Couchman was a 29 year old, married, Labourer from Thompson Road, North Fremantle, Western Australia when he enlisted at Fremantle, Western Australia on 10th July, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Sarah M. Couchman of Thompson Road, North Fremantle, Western Australia.

Private Arthur John Couchman was posted to 77 Depot on 10th July, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 8th Reinforcements of 51st Battalion on 1st August, 1916 then transferred to 7th Reinforcements of 51st Battalion on 4th September, 1916.

Private Arthur John Couchman, Service number 2881, embarked from Fremantle, Western Australia on HMAT *Argyllshire (A8)* on 9th November, 1916 with the 51st Infantry Battalion, 7th Reinforcements & disembarked at Devonport, England on 10th January, 1917.

51st Battalion

The 51st Battalion was raised in Egypt in the first week of March 1916, as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Approximately half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 11th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 11th, the 51st was predominantly composed of men from Western Australia. The battalion became part of the 13th Brigade of the newly-formed 4th Australian Division.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. These were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Private Arthur Couchman was marched in to 13th Training Battalion at Codford, Wiltshire. He was admitted sick to Group Hospital at Codford on 11th February, 1917.

Private Arthur John Couchman died at 5.30 p.m. on 15th February, 1917 at No. 3 New Zealand Group Hospital at Codford, Wiltshire, England of Broncho-pneumonia.

A death for Arthur J Couchman, aged 29, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

Private Arthur John Couchman was buried on 21st February, 1917 was buried in St. Mary's New Churchyard, Codford, Wiltshire, England - Grave No. 48.

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Private Arthur John Couchman requested in his Will, dated 2nd November, 1916 that his wife Sarah Mary Couchman be appointed as the Executrix & bequeathed all his real or personal estate to her as well.

Base Records wrote to The Deputy Commissioner of Pensions, Department of Repatriation, Perth, Western Australia, on 18th April, 1923 requesting "...whether any pension is being paid to Mrs Sarah Mary Couchman, on account of the service of her husband, the late No. 2881 Private A. J. Couchman, 51st Battalion, if so, have you any later address for the lady than- Thompson Road, North Fremantle, W.A....."

The Deputy Commissioner of Pensions replied to Base Records on 14th May, 1923 advising "...pension was last paid at the General Post Office, Perth, on the 11th March 1920. I have caused a search to be made in the office of the Registrar General in this State, but no record can be found either of this widow having died or re-married, not am I able to locate Mrs Couchman by searching the Electoral Roll. Should her whereabouts become known to this office at any future date, you will be duly advised."

Private A. J. Couchman was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A letter included in Private Couchman's Service Record File shows that Officer in Charge of Base Records was unable to locate the whereabouts of Private Couchman's widow. As a result his British War Medal, Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were sent to "Untraceables".

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Arthur John Couchman – service number 2881, of 51st Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Private A. J. Couchman is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 152.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



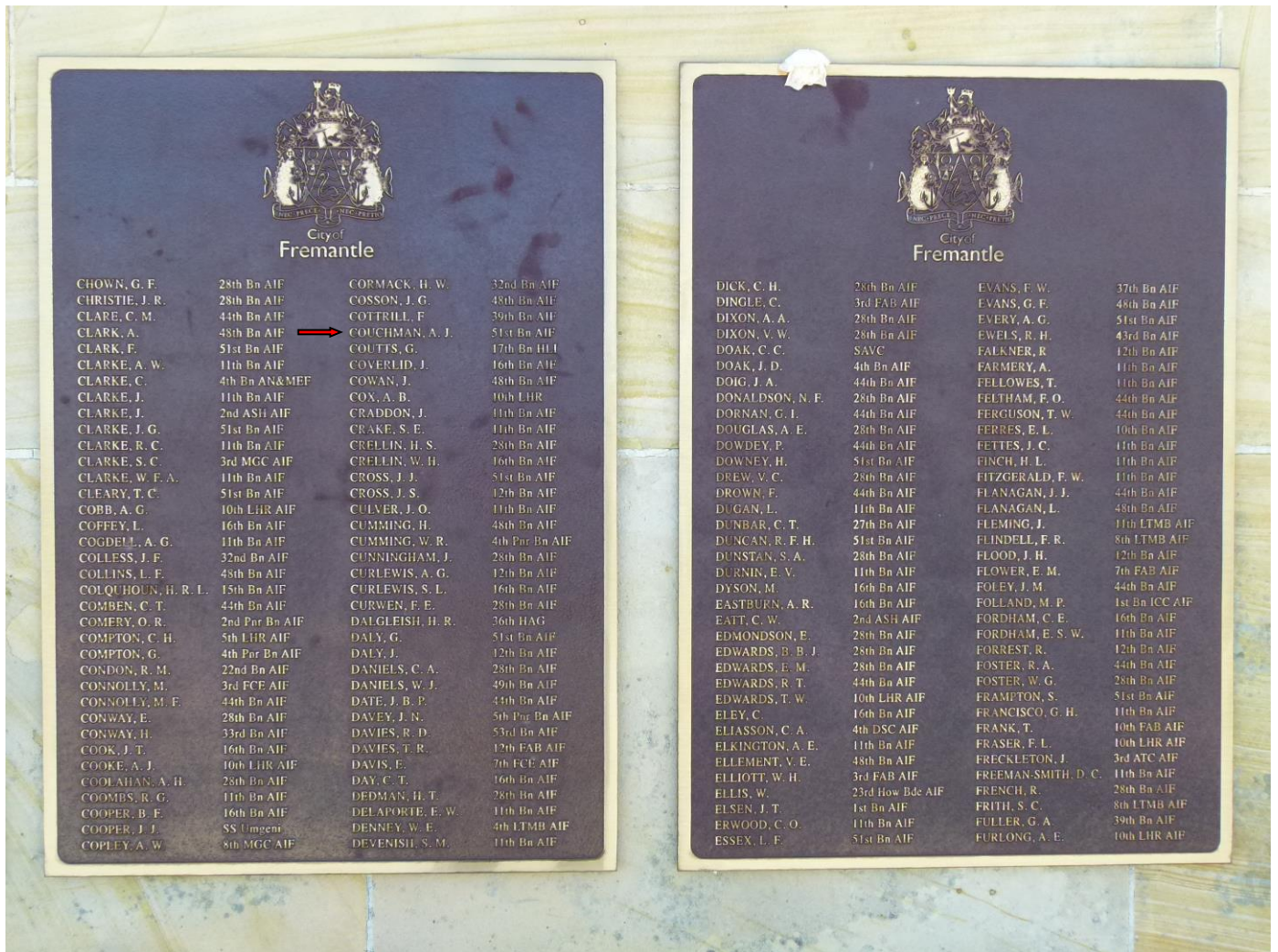
Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

A. J. Couchman is remembered on Fremantle's 849, located at War Memorial, Monument Hill Memorial Reserve, High & Swanbourne Streets, Fremantle, Western Australia. Twelve plaques contain all 849 names of the Fremantle servicemen who died in service or were killed in action during World War One. The plaques were created as part of the Centenary of Anzac commemorations.



Fallen Sailors & Soldiers Memorial (*Photos from Monument Australia*)





Fallen Sailors & Soldiers Memorial (Photos courtesy of Gordon Stuart)



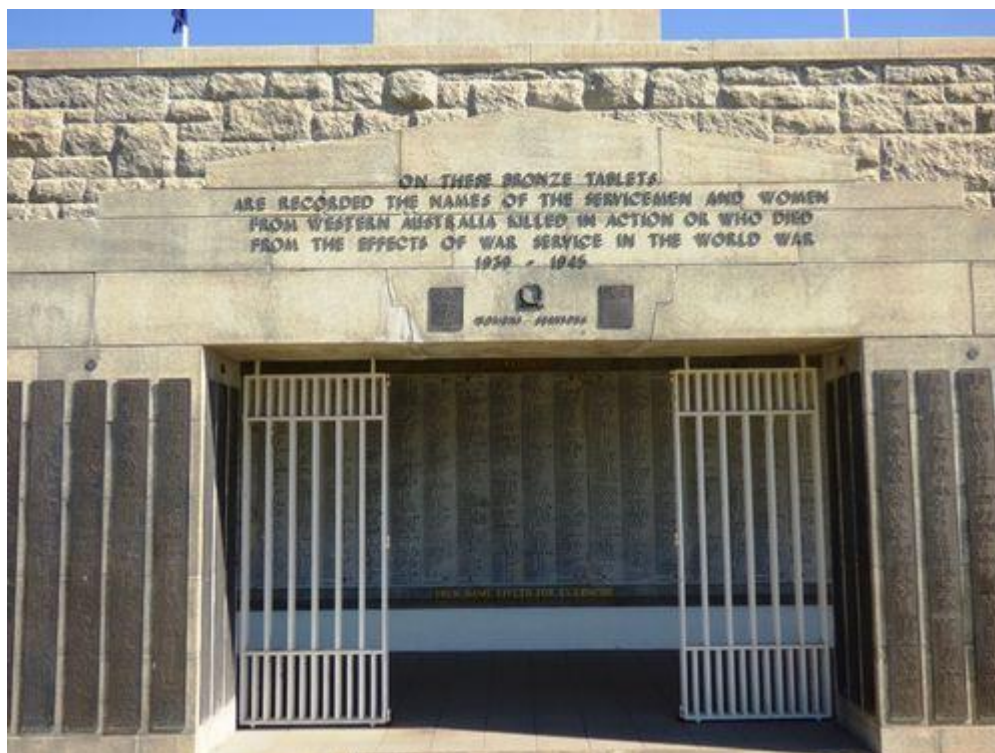
A. J. Couchman is remembered on the Western Australia State War Memorial which is located at the top of Kings Park and Botanic Garden escarpment, ANZAC Bluff, Fraser Avenue, Perth, Western Australia. The memorial was developed around an 18 metre tall obelisk as the principal feature, which is almost a replica of the Australian Imperial Force Memorials erected in France and Belgium.

The heavy concrete foundations are supplemented by heavy brick walls which enclose an inner chamber or crypt. The walls surrounding the crypt are covered with The Roll of Honour; marble tablets which list under their units the names of more than 7,000 members of the services killed in action or as a result of World War One.



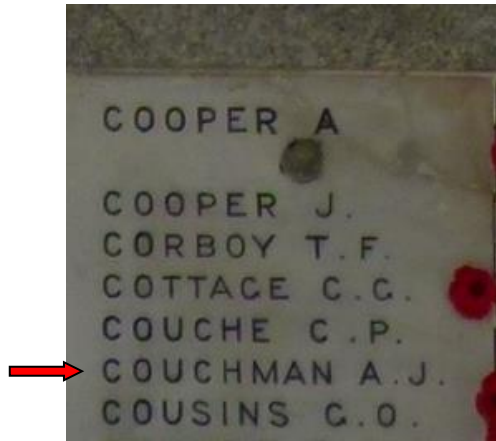
**Western Australia State War Memorial Cenotaph, Kings Park (above)
& (below) The Crypt with the Roll of Honour names**

(Photos from Monument Australia – Kent Watson/Sandra Tattersall/Graeme Saunders)





51st Battalion Panel (Photo courtesy of Gordon Stuart)



(53 pages of Private Arthur John Couchman'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

DEATHS

COUCHMAN – On February 15, in Codford Hospital, England, of bronchial pneumonia, Private A. J. Couchman, 7/51st Battallion, dearly beloved husband of Mrs S. M. Couchman, of Thompson-road, North Fremantle, and late East Kirupp. Deeply mourned. English and Irish papers please copy.

(The West Australian, Perth, Western Australia, Wednesday 28th February, 1917 & Western Mail, Perth, Western Australia, Friday 2nd March, 1917)

W.A. CASUALTIES

DEATHS

A. J. COUCHMAN, North Fremantle, died of illness.

(The Daily News, Perth, Western Australia, Saturday 3rd March, 1917)

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 Codford 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)

Private A. J. Couchman does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

St. Mary's New Churchyard, Codford, Wiltshire, England

The New Zealand Command Depot was established at Codford in June 1916 and the No 3 New Zealand General Hospital followed in July. The New Churchyard was established by deed of gift as the "Military Burial Ground," with a small part reserved for future burials from the parish. The war graves plot contains 98 burials, mostly of New Zealand and Australian forces. There is only one burial of the Second World War in the New Churchyard.

(Information from CWGC)

There are 31 WW1 Australian War Graves & 66 WW1 New Zealand War Graves located here. There is one WW1 British Royal Army Medical Corp Grave & one WW2 Welsh Guards grave located in this Churchyard.



St. Mary's New Churchyard, Codford *(Photos courtesy of Romy Wyeth)*





St. Mary's New Churchyard, Codford *(Photo courtesy of Romy Wyeth)*



New Zealand Section of Codford Anzac War Graves Cemetery *(Photo by Romy Wyeth 2013)*

Photo of Private A. J. Couchman's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. Mary's New Churchyard, Codford, Wiltshire, England. Also known as Codford Anzac War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire.

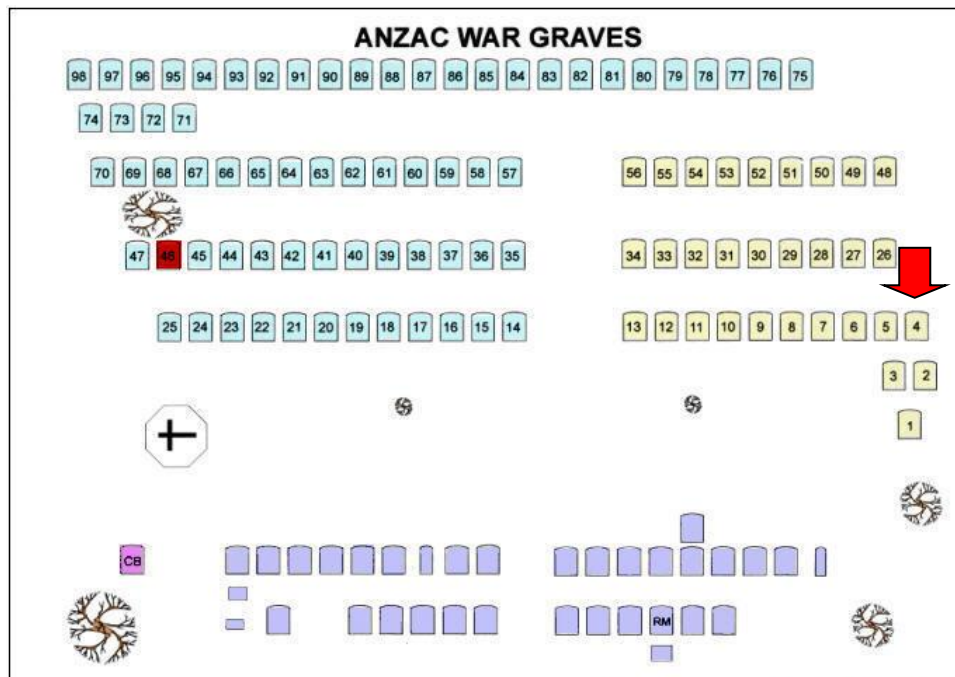


(Photo by Michael Day 2015)



(Photo courtesy of Romy Wyeth 2013)

Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Private A. J. Couchman is located in Main First Row Grave Plot # 4 of Codford War Graves Cemetery (CWGC Reference - Grave # 48)



- Australian Soldiers
 - Welsh Soldier
 - New Zealand Soldiers
 - Local Burials
 - UK Soldier
- Codford War Graves map adapted from Brian Marshall courtesy of Romy Wyeth