

Minwear, Wales

War Memorial Plaque



Lest We Forget

World War 1



645 PRIVATE

J. JOHN

28TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

29TH JULY, 1916

Joseph JOHN

Joseph Davies John was born at Broomhill, Minwere, Pembrokeshire, Wales in 1893 to parents David & Catherine Ann John (nee Lewis). His birth was registered in the December quarter, 1893 in the district of Narberth, Pembrokeshire).

David John, father of Joseph Davies John, died on 20th April, 1900 at Broomhill, Minwere, Pembrokeshire, Wales.

The 1901 Wales Census recorded Joseph D. John as a 7 year old living with his family at Broomhill, Minwere, Pembrokeshire, Wales. His widowed mother was listed as Catherine A. John (Farmer, aged 39, born Monkton, Pembrokeshire). Joseph was one of eight children listed on this Census (all born Minwere, Pembrokeshire) – Thomas D. John (aged 12), Emma J. John (aged 10) William D. John & George D. John (aged 9), David John (aged 8), then Joseph, Benjamin A. John (aged 3), Albert J. John (aged 2) & Reginald D. John (aged 9 months). Five servants were also listed – Mary Ann Mathias (General Servant domestic, aged 21), Elizabeth Mason (General Servant domestic, aged 18). Thomas Jackson (Teamster on Farm, aged 21), Arnold Scourfield (Cow Boy, aged 15) & Thomas Roch (Teamster on Farm, aged 17).

According to information supplied by his mother for the Roll of Honour - Joseph Davies John came to Australia when he was 17 years old. A "Joseph John" Builder was a passenger on *Otranto* which had departed from London & arrived at the port of Fremantle, Western Australia on 21st February, 1911. Another passenger list for the *Otranto* which departed London on 20th January, 1911 lists Thomas John (Labourer), Arthur John, William John (Apprentice), Emmie John (Domestic) & Joseph John (apprentice) bound for Fremantle.

[The 1911 Census recorded Catherine Ann John (widow, aged 49) living at Amberley House, Pembrokeshire, Wales which was a 3 roomed dwelling. She listed that she had 9 children in total – all still living. Still living at home were – David John (Chemist Shop Assistant, aged 18) & Reginald D. John (School, aged 10).]

Joseph John was a 21 year old, single, Farmer from Amberley House, Main Street, Pembroke, England (Roll of Honour has his place of association as Gnowangerup, Western Australia) when he enlisted at Perth, Western Australia on 12th March, 1915 with the 7th Infantry Brigade, 28th Infantry Battalion "D" Company of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 645 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs C. A. John, of Main Street, Pembroke, England.

Private Joseph John was posted to No. 12 Depot Company on 12th March, 1915. He was transferred to "D" Company, 28th Battalion on 16th April, 1915.

Private Joseph John embarked from Fremantle, Western Australia on HMAT *Ascanius* (A11) on 9th June, 1915 (*Note on Embarkation Roll on the Australian War Memorial website – "Embarkation date was recorded as 29 June on original record."*).

Private Joseph John embarked with the Battalion on H.T. *Invernia* on 4th September, 1915 for the Gallipoli Peninsula.

Private Joseph John was wounded at Apex, Gallipoli on 18th September, 1915. He was admitted to 7th Field Ambulance at Anzac with shrapnel wounds to left Thigh. He was transferred to 16th Casualty Clearing Station the same day with shrapnel wounds to thumb then transferred to Hospital Ship *Mahena* with shrapnel wounds to left thumb. Pte John was admitted to St. David's Hospital, Malta on 23rd September, 1915. He was transferred to Ghain Tuffiecha on 1st November, 1915 & discharged to duty from St. Barnabas Hospital at Malta on 4th January, 1916, fit for active service.

Private Joseph John embarked for Egypt on Hospital Ship *Borna* from Malta on 4th January, 1916 & disembarked at Alexandria on 12th January, 1916.

Private Joseph John returned to duty at Tel-el Kebir on 13th January, 1916.

Private Joseph John proceeded to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) from Alexandria on 16th March, 1916 & disembarked at Marseilles, France on 21st March, 1916.

Private Joseph John was reported Missing in France on 29th July, 1916.

28th Battalion

The 28th Battalion was raised at Blackboy Camp in Western Australia on 16 April 1915 from recruits previously earmarked for the 24th Battalion, which was instead being raised in Victoria. The battalion left Australia in June, and, after two months spent training in Egypt, landed at Gallipoli on 10 September.

At Gallipoli, the 7th Brigade, which included the 28th Battalion, reinforced the weary New Zealand and Australian Division. The 28th had a relatively quiet time at Gallipoli and the battalion departed the peninsula in December, having suffered only light casualties.

After another stint in Egypt, the 7th Brigade proceeded to France and the Western Front, as part of the 2nd Australian Division. The 28th Battalion took part in its first major battle at Pozieres between 28 July and 6 August 1916.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 28th Battalion

Sausage Valley 29th July, 1916:

At 12.10 am enemy opened up a heavy fire with H. E. Shrapnel & Machine Guns, causing a number of casualties. Our artillery placed a barrage fire on enemy trenches. As soon as the men were lifted the men rushed forward in perfect order and were met with heavy fire from rifles, machine guns and artillery. The first wave was held up by the enemy's wire which was intact and very strong. The four waves reached the wire and unavailing efforts were made to find openings or make them in the face of intense machine gun fire. Heavy casualties resulted. A very intense artillery barrage of the enemy's prevented any reports of the situation getting through and it was not until 2.50 am that orders for withdrawal could be delivered. From this hour onwards the men were withdrawn and ordered to return to Sausage Valley. Lieut. Col. Collett was wounded, three Company Commanders killed, one severely wounded and 8 other officers killed or wounded. About 11 am the battalion marched to Tara Hill to bivouac.

CASUALTIES for JULY 1916

	<i>KILLED</i>	<i>WOUNDED</i>	<i>Sick to Hospital</i>	<i>MISSING</i>
<i>Officers</i>	5	6		1
<i>Other Ranks</i>	58	145	52	256
	63	151	52	257

Total Casualties 523

(War Diary information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Joseph John was killed in action in France on 29th July, 1916, as decided by a Court of Enquiry held on 4th January, 1917.

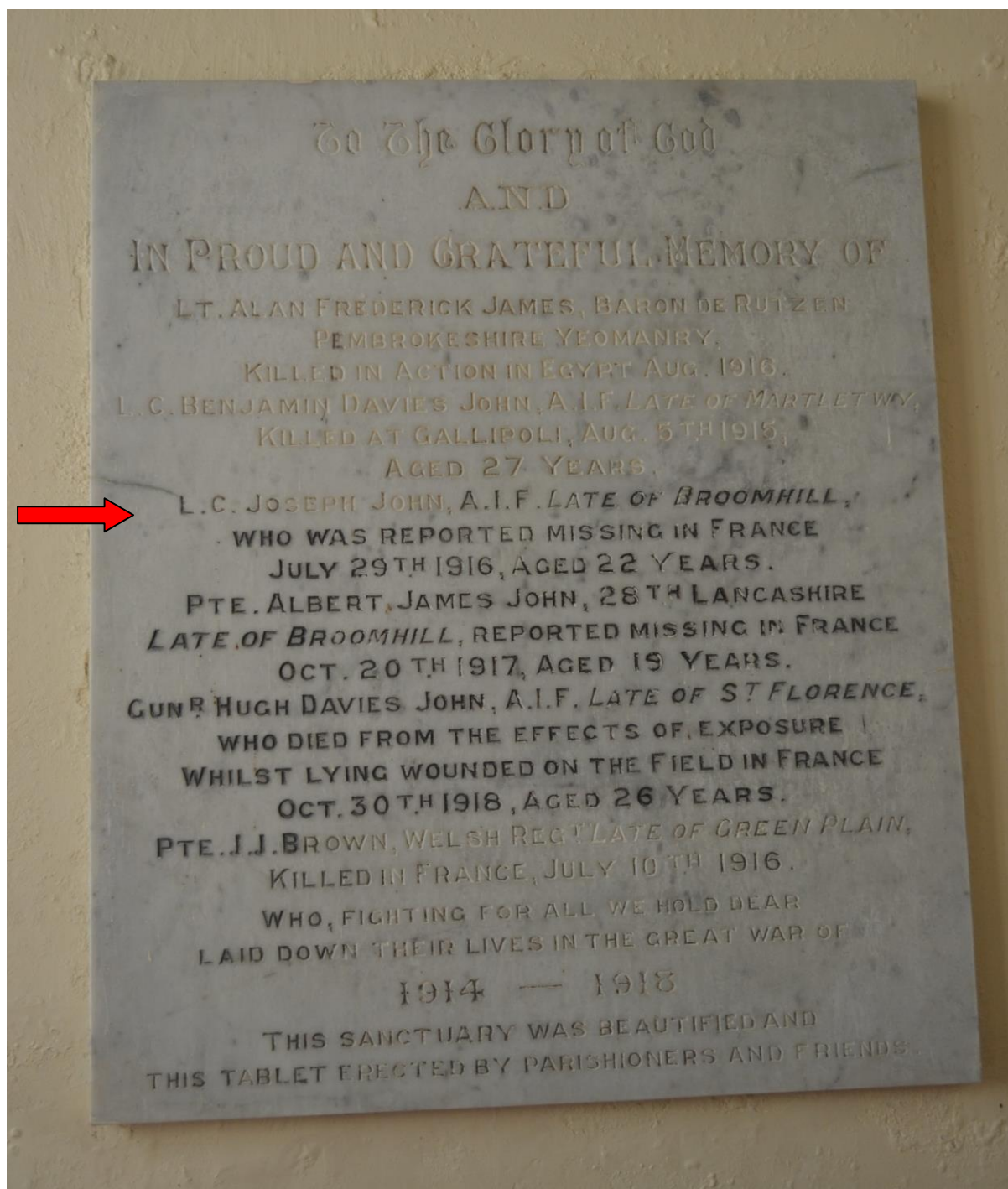
Private Joseph John is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, France as he has no known grave. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

A War Pension was granted to Catherine Ann John, mother of the late Private Joseph John, in the sum of £2 per fortnight, commencing 29th September, 1916.

Private Joseph John was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte John's mother in England – Mrs C. A. John, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque sent July, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Joseph John – service number 645, of 28th Battalion Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Joseph John is remembered on the Minwear Memorial which is located inside St. Womar Church, Minwear, Wales & is dedicated in memory of the men of the parish who fell in the Great War.



Minwear War Memorial (Photo courtesy of Deborah Tilley)

Private J. D. John is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 113.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(32 pages of Private Joseph John'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

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

NINETY-FIRST AND NINETY-SECOND CASUALTY LISTS

WOUNDED

28th Battalion – J. John (England)

(Western Mail, Perth, Western Australia – 22 October, 1915)

156th CASUALTY LIST

WOUNDED, ILL OR RETURNED TO DUTY

28th Battalion – J. John (England), returned to duty.

(Western Mail, Perth, Western Australia – 24 March, 1916)

275th CASUALTY LIST

5th MILITARY DISTRICT

KILLED IN ACTION, PREVIOUSLY REPORTED MISSING

J. John (England)

(*Western Mail*, Perth, Western Australia – 2 March, 1917)

Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, France

Villers-Bretonneux became famous in 1918, when the German advance on Amiens ended in the capture of the village by their tanks and infantry on 23 April. On the following day, the 4th and 5th Australian Divisions, with units of the 8th and 18th Divisions, recaptured the whole of the village and on 8 August 1918, the 2nd and 5th Australian Divisions advanced from its eastern outskirts in the Battle of Amiens.

The memorial is the Australian National Memorial erected to commemorate all Australian soldiers who fought in France and Belgium during the First World War, to their dead, and especially to name those of the dead whose graves are not known.

The Australian servicemen named in this register died in the battlefields of the Somme, Arras, the German advance of 1918 and the Advance to Victory. The memorial stands within Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery, which was made after the Armistice when graves were brought in from other burial grounds in the area and from the battlefields.

On the three walls, which are faced with Portland stone, are the names of around 10,885 Australians who were killed in France and who have no known grave. The 'blocking course' above them bears the names of the Australian Battle Honours. The names are engraved on the memorial in order of battalion, then alphabetically under rank.

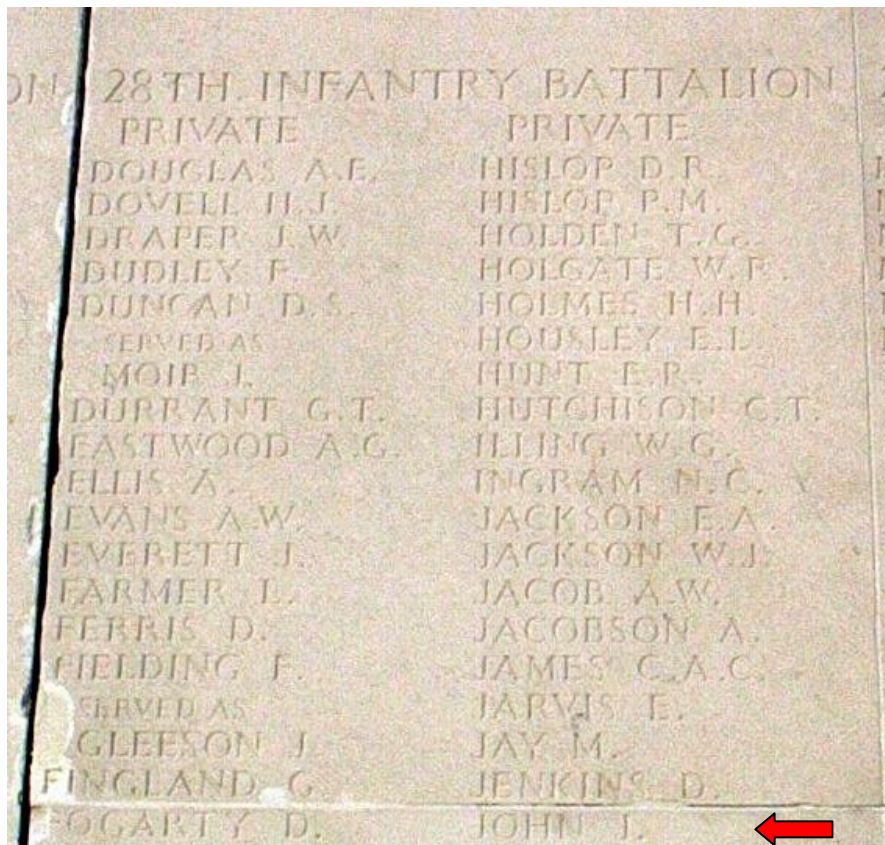
(*Information & photos from CWGC*)





Villers-Bretonneux Memorial (Photos from CWGC)

Photo of Private J. John's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, France.



(Photo courtesy of Have Paws will travel! – Find a Grave)