

Baverstock War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



2240 PRIVATE

J. R. BIGLANDS

32ND BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

1ST FEBRUARY, 1917 Age 29

Whatever Joy

Or Grief Be Ours Dear Jack

We Always Think Of You

John Robert BIGLANDS

John Robert Biglands was born at Semaphore, South Australia in 1887, to parents George & Margaret Biglands (nee Fee). He was a 28 year old, married, Driver from Glanville, South Australia when he enlisted on 4th October, 1915 with the 3rd Light Horse Regiment, 15th Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 2240 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Christina Florence Biglands, c/o Mrs Dubrick, Mont Pelier, Portland Estate, South Australia.

John Robert Biglands had married Christina Florence Dubrich in 1911, in the district of Port Adelaide.

A birth was registered for Allan John Biglands in 1911 – parents John Robert Biglands & Christina Florence Dubrich, in the district of Port Adelaide. Another birth was registered in 1912 - parents John Robert Biglands & Christina Florence Dubrich, in the district of Port Adelaide for Rita Florence Biglands.

Pte John Robert Biglands embarked from Adelaide on HMAT *Anchises (A68)* on 16th March, 1916.

Pte Biglands was taken on strength at Tel-el-Kebir, Egypt on 15th April, 1916. On 15th May, 1916 Pte Biglands was transferred to Artillery Details at Tel-el-Kebir.

On 28th May, 1916 Pte Biglands embarked from Alexandria bound for England to Training camps located in the Salisbury Plain area in the county of Wiltshire.

On 1st July, 1916 Pte Biglands was Absent without Leave from 21.30 hrs from Larkhill until 21.30 hrs on 15th July, 1916. He was charged also with falsifying a leave pass. Awarded 28 days detention. Total forfeiture 43 days pay.

On 11th August, 1916, a Field Court Martial was held at Bulford regarding Pte Biglands. When in Confinement in Detention at Bulford Camp on 21st July, 1916, escaped & remained absent until apprehended by Cpl. Tamsitt, M.P. at Salisbury City at 8.45 p.m. on 26th July, 1916. Pleaded guilty. Found guilty. Sentence 35 days detention. Total forfeiture 56 days pay.

Pte Biglands was transferred from 3rd Light Horse Regiment on 28th September, 1916 to Artillery Training Depot.

Private Biglands was marched in to 8th Training Battalion, 32nd Battalion on 24th October, 1916 from Artillery Detail.

Pte Biglands was admitted sick to Fovant Hospital from 8th Training Battalion at Hurdcott Camp on 24th December, 1916, suffering from influenza. He returned to duty on 24th January, 1917 after being discharged from hospital with mumps.

A Court Martial was held on 30th January, 1917 in regards to Pte J. R. Biglands, 2240. He was charged with – when on active service absenting himself without leave at Hurdcott from 08.00hrs on 5th November, 1916 till apprehended at London by the Military Police at 22.50 hrs on 30th November, 1916. Pleaded guilty. Found guilty. He was sentenced to 60 days Detention. Total forfeiture 87 days pay.

Private John Robert Biglands died at 10.30 p.m. on 1st February, 1917 at Guard Room at No. 11 Camp, Hurdcott, Wiltshire from self-inflicted wounds (Throat cut).

A death for John R. Biglands, aged 32, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Wilton, Wiltshire.

Private John Robert Biglands was buried in the churchyard of St. Edith's at Baverstock, Wiltshire on 5th February, 1917 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Headstone.

From the burial report of Pte John Robert Biglands - *Coffin – oak wood. Buried with full Military Honours.*

An Inquest was held into the death of Private John Robert Biglands:

Mr F. H. Trethowan, Coroner for South Wilts, held an inquest at Hurdcott Camp, on Saturday, on Pte. John Robert Biglands, of the Australian Imperial Forces, who was found in the detention room with his throat cut.

Capt. Blumer, of the Australian Army Medical Corps, stationed at Hurdcott Camp, said that at 10.30pm on February 1st, he was called to see Biglands and found him dying. His throat was cut, the wound having been apparently self-inflicted. The wind pipe and the large blood vessels on either side were severed. He died almost immediately from hemorrhage.

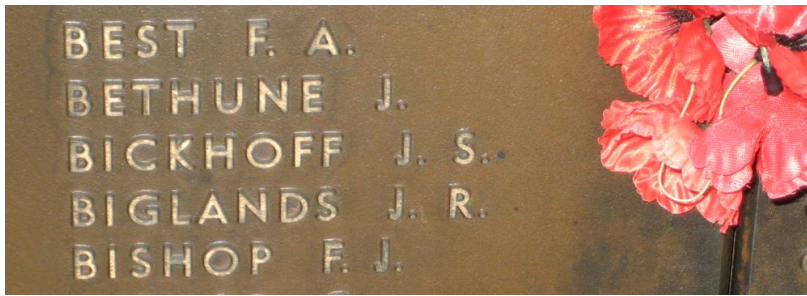
Private Camp, AIF, said that Biglands was 22, and his home was in Portland, South Australia. He had known him about two months, and last saw him alive at 7.30pm on February 1st, when he took some tea and something to eat into the detention hut where Biglands was detained for being absent without leave. Biglands said nothing. He seemed depressed and had been depressed for the last week. He knew of no cause for the depression except the detention. For the last week he would not speak to anyone. If he had any trouble it must have been of a private nature. He had recently been in hospital with mumps. About 10 pm on Thursday he went to the detention room where Biglands slept and thought he was in a fit. He called the sergeant of the guard and they went back together, got a light, and saw that Biglands' throat was cut. They called medical assistance.

Sergt. McCornick, of the Regimental Police, said that from the position of Biglands' body it appeared that the wound was self-inflicted. There was no serious charge against him. It was usual in the case of detention of this kind to allow a man his kit, and he attended drills. His door was not even locked.

P.C. Hull, stationed at Burcombe, deposed to being called to the hut and finding the body. A razor was under his shoulder, and his holdall showed that the razor had probably been taken from it. There was a number of letters, but they threw no light on the affair.

*A verdict of "Suicide while of unsound mind" was returned.
(Inquest details from [Salisbury Inquests](#))*

Private J. R. Biglands is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 119.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Pte J. R. Biglands is also remembered on the South Australian National War Memorial located on corner North Terrace and Kintore Avenue, Adelaide. Panel 5, 4th Column – 32nd Battalion.



South Australian National War Memorial

(Photo by Bilby)

Pte John Robert Biglands was entitled to British War Medal only. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Biglands' widow – Mrs C. F. Watt (December, 1921 & August, 1922). The widow of Pte Biglands – Christina Florence Biglands remarried in 1922 to Donald Hutchinson Watt.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John Robert Biglands – service number 2240 as being 29 years old & served with 32nd Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of George and Margaret Biglands; husband of Christina Florence Biglands, of Montpelier Square, Portland, South Australia.

A War Pension was granted to Christina Florence Biglands, widow of late Pte John Robert Biglands, in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 5/5/1917. A War Pension was also granted for Allen John Biglands, son of the late Pte John Robert Biglands, in the sum of 20/- per fortnight from 5/5/1917. A War Pension was also granted for Rita Florence Biglands, daughter of the late Pte John Robert Biglands, in the sum of 15/- per fortnight from 5/5/1917.

(60 pages of Pte John Robert Biglands' 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

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Newspaper Reports

LAW COURTS

SUPREME COURT – CRIMINAL SITTINGS

Tuesday, June 3

(Before his Honor Mr. Justice Buchanan and Jurors.)

The Crown Solicitor (Mr. C. J. Dash-wood) prosecuted.

A First Offender.

John Robert Biglands (26), laborer, of Port Adelaide, pleaded guilty to a charge of having, at Birkenhead, on April 11, stolen a watch and chain and other articles, worth in all £20, and 10/ in money, belonging to William George Wigg.

Mr. F. V. Smith, who defended the accused, asked his honor to extend the benefits of the First Offenders Probation Act to his client. He said that until the offence in question he had been honest and well behaved. He had a wife and two children, the elder of which was only 17 months of age. Some time ago he lost his work, and while unemployed he became depressed and took refuge in alcohol. It was while under the influence of drink that he took the goods. He had given the police every assistance as soon as he recovered from the effects of liquor.

George Biglands, father of the accused, deposed to the general good conduct of his son. He would see that restitution was made in respect to the stolen property.

His Honor said while intoxication was no excuse for crime, he thought the case was one to which he could apply the probation provisions of the First Offenders Act. He would be sentenced to 12 months imprisonment and released in his own bond of £10, to be of good behaviour for six months. The accused entered into the bond and was released.

(The Advertiser, Sth Australia – Wednesday 4 June, 1913)

CASUALTY LIST - 279

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Died of Wounds

Pte J. R. Biglands

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – Friday 16 March, 1917)

HEROES OF THE GREAT WAR

BIGLANDS – In loving memory of our dear husband and father, John R., who died at Hurdcott Camp, England, February 1, 1917.

Inserted by his loving wife and children, Rita & John.

(The Advertiser, Sth Australia – Friday 1 February, 1918)

HEROES OF THE GREAT WAR

BIGLANDS – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, John Robert, who died at Hurdcott Camp, England, February 1, 1917, in his 30th year, eldest and beloved son of M. and G. Biglands..

There is one link death cannot sever,
Love's remembrance lasts for ever.

Inserted by his loving mother, father, brother and sister-in-law, Will and Hazel.

(The Advertiser, Sth Australia – Monday 8 April, 1918)

HEROES OF THE GREAT WAR

BIGLANDS – In loving memory of my dear son and brother, John Robert Biglands, who died at Hurdcott Camp, England, February 1, 1917. So dearly loved.

Oh the beauty, oh, the gladness of that resurrection day,
Which shall not through endless ages pass away.

Inserted by his loving mother, brother, sister-in-law, Will and Hazel.

(The Advertiser, Sth Australia – Wednesday 5 February, 1919)

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. Edith's Churchyard, Baverstock. 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)

A letter from Base Records, dated 27th June, 1921, to Mrs C. F. Biglands advises that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription for the headstone of the late Pte J. R. Biglands had not been answered & non-receipt of a reply within 21 days would have to be accepted as indicating that no further action was to be taken.

Pte J. R. Biglands does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Whatever Joy or Grief be ours Dear Jack We Always Think Of You

Photo of Pte J. R. Biglands' CWGC Headstone at St. Edith's Churchyard, Baverstock, Wiltshire.



(Photo courtesy of Andrew Stacey 2012)



St. Edith's Churchyard, Baverstock, Wiltshire.

(Photo from CWGC)