

## John Arthur (Jack) Ralston



Private (Pte) 3460 John Arthur Ralston enlisted in the 59<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion in the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade of the 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Division in Geelong on 21 April 1917, having previously tried to enlist two years earlier when aged just 16 years.

He embarked overseas on 16 July and disembarked in Liverpool on 16 September, where he joined the 15<sup>th</sup> (Brigade) Training Battalion at Hurdcott Camp. While there, he contracted venereal disease and spent three weeks at the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Dermatological Hospital at Bulford between 26 September – 16 October, then returned to Hurdcott.

He was detached to the 5<sup>th</sup> Division Signals School at Codford for a course of instruction from 23 January 1918, but he subsequently contracted influenza and was hospitalised at the 3<sup>rd</sup> New Zealand Hospital between 22 March – 16 April.

After a further two months training, he left England on 1 July. He landed in France the next day and was taken on strength of the 59<sup>th</sup> Battalion, in the field near Morlancourt, on 10 July.

Just four days later, he was evacuated to the 61<sup>st</sup> Casualty Clearing Station suffering from otitis media. Later diagnosed with meningitis, he was transferred to the 5<sup>th</sup> General Hospital at Rouen on 18 July, where he subsequently died of the disease on 21 July 1918.

Private 3460 John Arthur Ralston was buried in the St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, France on 23 July 1918.

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| Name: Ralston, John Arthur (Jack)   |  |
| Service Number                      | 3460   |
| Date enlisted                       | 21 April 1917  |
| Place enlisted                      | Geelong, Victoria  |
| Rank on enlistment                  | Private  |
| Initial Unit                        | 59 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion  |
| Previous military service           | Cadets. Also tried to enlist at age 16.  |
| Date and ship embarked for overseas | 16 July 1917<br>HMAT A16 <i>Port Melbourne</i>   |
| Stated age/DOB (if known)           | 18 years (3 May 1899)  |
| Place of birth                      | Port Melbourne, Victoria   |
| Marital status                      | Single   |
| Occupation                          | Labourer   |
| Religion                            | Presbyterian   |
| Next of kin and address             | Ralston, Mr John, father, Portarlington, Victoria  |
| Permanent address                   | Portarlington, Victoria  |
| Appearance                          | Medium complexion, brown hair, grey eyes, height – 5 feet 8 inches, weight – 9 stone, 4 lbs, chest measurement – 34 inches   |
| Final Rank                          | Private  |
| Final Unit                          | 59 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion  |
| Theatres of war served in           | France   |
| Fate                                | Died of disease (meningitis)   |
| Date and place died                 | 21 July 1918<br>5 <sup>th</sup> General Hospital, Rouen, France  |
| Cemetery details                    | St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, France.<br>Block Q, Plot III, Row B, Grave 5   |
| Honours/medals                      | British War Medal, Victory Medal   |
| Notes                               | Half-brother of Frederick and Lewis Martinsen.<br>Remembered on the St Leonards Honor Roll, St Paul's Anglican Church Honor Roll, Portarlington Honor Roll, St John's Anglican Church Honor Roll and Portarlington War Memorial. |