

PRIVATE MURRAY JOHN ROSSITER CRABB

SERVICE NUMBER: 6229

UNIT: 10TH BATTALION (INFANTRY)



DATE OF DEATH: 24 APRIL 1918

COMMEMORATED ON: PANEL 58

CONFLICT: FIRST WORLD WAR, 1914-1918

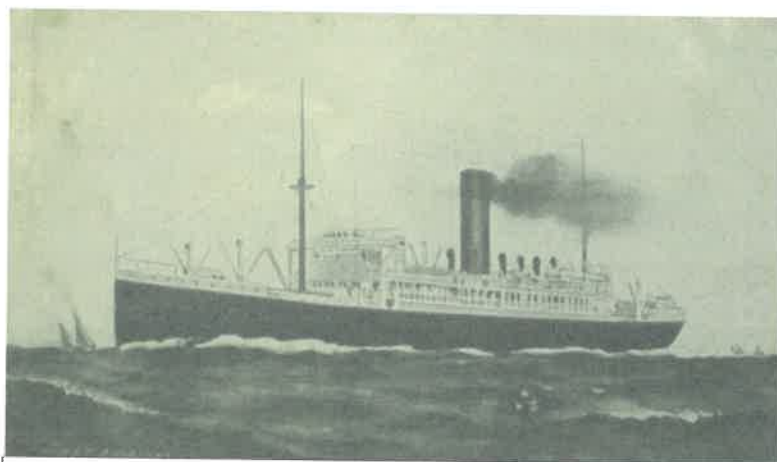
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TYNDALE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
2011

Murray John Rossiter Crabb

The First World War (1914-1918) is still one of the most devastating battles recorded. The name 'World War I' was given to this gruesome battle, due to the amount of countries participating. Germany, Britain, Turkey, Russia, Australia and even the United States of America were involved in this fight, along with many more countries. The war covered vast distances and destroyed families, houses and lives. The Western Front, covering approximately 700 kilometres, consisted of a large group of trenches that started in Belgium and ended near the Swiss border, this was where the worst part of the battle started. Australia was part of the Commonwealth so fighting was essential, as England was in battle. The ANZACs (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) were formed, consisting of men and women from all over Australia and New Zealand, and taken over to endure this terrible battle. With their high spirits they influenced the people around them and, still to this date, are praised for their efforts, spirits, courage and most of all their sacrifice. The ANZAC Spirit is known for 'reckless valour in a good cause... resourcefulness, fidelity, comradeship and endurance that will never own defeat.' (Bean, n.d cited in Burke, n.d). They helped out friends in conflict, lived open lives, seemed fearless and were the only ones of their kind, they were the ANZACs. This ANZAC Spirit was an influential part of the war as it encouraged fellow privates, majors and sometimes even their foes.

Murray John Rossiter Crabb was one of the brave young men who enlisted in the army as a Private, to help support his country by becoming an ANZAC. Crabb was from a small town called Blanchetown in South Australia. He was a member of the Church of England. Crabb was born in July 1890 (See Appendix 1). He was 164.5cm tall with grey eyes and brown hair (See Appendix 2). On the 6th of May 1916, Crabb enlisted for the army, at the age of only 26 and was given the service number 6229. He had no army training before he enlisted, as he worked full time as a market gardener. His mother, Jane Elizabeth Crabb, and brother, Norman Benjamin Lyndon Crabb, are his only known relatives. His brother enlisted on the 17 January 1916, merely four months before Murray. This may have been one of the reasons Murray John Rossiter Crabb decided to join the army. Crabb was just an ordinary man who joined the army, and truly showed the ANZAC Spirit. (NAA, 2011)

Private Murray John Rossiter Crabb left for the war on the 28 August 1916 aboard the HMAT A68 'Anchises' and was sent off to the Western Front. He arrived in Plymouth, England on the 11 October 1916 and began his training at Perham Downs. Crabb spent two months in training at Perham Downs, then proceeded to Etaples, France. The 1st ADBD (Australian Divisional Base Depot) was situated in Etaples, where soldiers would go to be sent off. Private Crabb was on this base depot for 21 days before being sent off to his first job, in France. He was assigned to the 10th Infantry Battalion,



The HMAT A68 'Anchises' was the boat Crabb boarded

20th reinforcement and was placed in the death-trap trenches. Crabb trained hard for two months and because of his strong, dauntless ANZAC Spirit, was able to enter the war only 21 days after completing his training.

Private Crabb served in many different locations throughout his time on the Western Front. Most of the places Crabb served in were around the Franco-Belgian Border (See Appendix 3). Flanders, Somme and Belgium were the main areas Private Crabb served in. The Third Battle of Ypres, as it is known, was the major battle that Crabb served in. This battle started 31st July 1917. This was not Crabb's first battle, however, the Third Battle of Ypres was the most intense. Most of this battle was fought in rain, on waterlogged ground. The Third Battle of

Murray John Rossiter Crabb

Ypres consisted of numerous battles, a few being Menin Road, Polygon Road and Poelcapelle. Australia had strong forces in this battle, however it didn't help as they lost valuable ground. Private Crabb's final battle was fought in the Nord Region, France. Meteren was the area in which Crabb was fighting. The town of Meteren was based directly on the front line, because of this the town sustained substantial damage. Murray John Rossiter Crabb fought valiantly in all his battles, showing his ANZAC pride.

Private Crabb was admitted to hospital numerous times throughout his period at war; however he never let that hold him back. Crabb stayed strong through all his ailments, from trench fever to unknown sicknesses. Within the first two months in the trenches, Crabb was admitted into hospital with an unknown sickness. He was kept in one of the military hospitals for approximately 7 days then let out back into battle. Less than a month after being sent back to fight, Crabb was readmitted to hospital with a serious case of trench fever. This horrid illness kept Private Crabb in hospital having different tests for over 4 months. He was released from hospital on the 26 August 1917. Crabb was only able to fight for a month before he was readmitted to hospital on the 20 September 1917. He was wounded in action, as he was affected by a gas shell. On the 29 November Crabb re-joined the 10th Battalion. Despite all the pain Private Crabb went through, his ANZAC Spirit shone brightly, he went back into battle even when he was still sick. Crabb's ANZAC Spirit, courage and passion were evident through his sicknesses, as he didn't let them hold him back as long as he could help it (See Appendix 4).



1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory medal

Private Crabb gave his all in the tragic war, including his life. On 24 April 1918 Murray John Rossiter Crabb was shot in the head (See Appendix 5). Private W. McDonald was one of the first to find Crabb. 'On 24th April at 7am I found [Crabb] behind our lines at Meteren... dead with a frightful shell wound in the head' (McDonald, 1918). Crabb was killed by machine gun fire. Earlier that day the 10th Battalion had tried to advance but were forced to retire from the attack. Crabb was shot on his way back to the trenches. His body was collected once the firing ceased; however his burial place is unknown. Crabb was awarded with war medals, despite his death. He was awarded three medals; 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and a Victory Medal. Crabb's ANZAC determination was what continued to push him, even in his last battle (See Appendix 6).

After Murray Crabb's death, his spirit still lived on and his courage was acknowledged with his name being written on the war memorials. The 'Villers - Bretonneux Memorial', situated in Somme, France, is one of the larger memorials Crabb and his battalion are mentioned on. Within this grave, Australians who fought in France, specifically the ones who died or the ones whose burial places remain unknown, are commemorated. Unfortunately, Crabb was incorrectly listed on this memorial. It is a sad fact that on one of the bigger memorials he was mentioned on, M J R Crabb is recorded as M J K Crabb. Other memorials, including the Australian War Memorial and South Australia's National War Memorial, represent Crabb.

Both of these memorials are smaller than the Villers - Bretonneux Memorial, however they are both built in



Villers - Bretonneux Memorial

Murray John Rossiter Crabb


Australia, Crabbs' home. Murray John Rossiter Crabb's ANZAC Spirit will live on forever because of these memorials, as well as all the other brave ANZACs. (CWGC, 2008)

World War I is indeed one of the most horrific battles to date. Many people gave their lives to stand for what their country believed was right, even if they didn't agree. The ANZACs gave up so much, not just to save their country, but to show their fearlessness, courage and above all, their willingness to help out other countries. The spirits of the ANZACs, no matter where they battled, will never be forgotten. Their unique flair continues to touch people even to this date. The spirit of the ANZACs truly was an important part of the Great War. The soldiers' courage was tremendous, specifically Murray John Rossiter Crabb. He fought valiantly, and with purpose. Crabb gave up his old life to support his country, strived for greatness and even in the face of death never gave up. His fighting spirit, tremendous courage and impeccable endurance all contained the exact qualities of the ANZACs. Crabb fought the war to the death, and will never be forgotten for it.

Murray John Rossiter Crabb

Appendix 1

[DENTAL "B" CLASS]

AUSTRALIAN  MILITARY FORCES

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

ATTESTATION PAPER OF PERSONS ENLISTED FOR SERVICE ABROAD

Name CRABB ^{MURPHY} John Rossiter ^{20/10}

Unit 2ND DEPOT BATTALION AIF

Joined on MAY 6 - 1916

Long leave granted 20/10

FOR MARCH CAMP OCEANIA - 1917

3600

Crabb

Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

1. What is your Name? Murray John Rossiter Crabb

2. In the Parish of _____ in or near the Town of Blancetown in the County of South Australia

3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown.) Natural Born

4. What is your age? 26 1/2 years

5. What is your trade or calling? Market Gardener

6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? No

7. Are you married? No

8. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) Father Mr. J. Crabb, Gladstone Avenue, Magoad, South Australia.

9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? No

10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Incurable and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with disgrace from the Navy? Yes, discharged to father, Wuychubok, Capt. for 2 years, Officer i/c Base Records 25/10/22

11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge. No

12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? yes

13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? No

14. ~~Are you a married man, widower with children, and soldier who are the sole support of widowed mother?~~

15. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against smallpox and enteric fever? yes

I, Murray John Rossiter Crabb do solemnly declare that the above answers made to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

~~And I further agree to allow my share of the pay payable to me from time to time during my absence from my home to be paid to my wife and children~~

Date MAY 6 - 1916

M. J. R. Crabb
Signature of Person Enlisted.

* This clause should be struck out in the case of unmarried men or widowers without children under 18 years of age.
† Two-fifths must be allotted to the wife, and if there are children three-fifths must be allotted.

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Appendix 2

3

Description of Murray John Rossiter Crabb on Enlistment

Age <u>26</u> years <u>10</u> months Height <u>5</u> feet <u>4 3/4</u> inches Weight <u>112</u> lbs. Chest Measurement <u>32-34</u> inches Complexion <u>Meddian</u> Eyes <u>Grey</u> Hair <u>Brown</u> Religious Denomination <u>C of Eng</u>	DISTINCTIVE MARKS. Vis <u>R 9/16</u> <u>L 1/12</u> Trace
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CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

I HAVE examined the above-named person, and find that he does not present any of the following conditions, viz.:-

Scrofula; phtthisis; syphilis; impaired constitution; defective intelligence; defects of vision, voice, or hearing; hernia; hæmorrhoids; varicose veins, beyond a limited extent; marked varicocele with unusually pendent testicle; inveterate cutaneous disease; chronic ulcers; traces of corporal punishment, or evidence of having been marked with the letters D. or B.C.; contracted or deformed chest; abnormal curvature of spine; or any other disease or physical defect calculated to unfit him for the duties of a soldier.

He can see the required distance with either eye; his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his joints and limbs; and he declares he is not subject to fits of any description.

I consider him fit for active service.

Date 29-11-16.
 Place ADELAIDE.

W. P. B. Capt
 Signature of Examining Medical Officer.

CERTIFICATE OF COMMANDING OFFICER.

I CERTIFY that this Attestation of the above named person is correct, and that the required forms have been complied with. I accordingly approve, and

appoint him to B Coy 2ND DEPOT BATTALION A.I.F.
 Date 22-5-16 *W. Hancock* LT. COL. CAMP COMMANDANT
 Place Adelaide Commanding 2ND DEPOT BATTALION A.I.F.
Clair A. P. Mayo Lt. for o.c. 20/10

Appendix 3

The Western Front, 1914–1918



Murray John Rossiter Crabb

Appendix 4

C R A B B	Murray John Rossiter	6229	20/10 th Bn
Surname.	Other Names	Regimental No.	Unit.
PURPORT.			AUTHORITY.
Embarked at Adelaide per S.S. A68 "Anchisis" 28/8/16.			
Pte			
12-10-16. Marched into 3rd Inf Bn Parkham Downs. from O/Seas.			LORD 68/10-16.
27/1/17. T.O.S. OF 10th. Bn from Reinfds.			BEFO 10/2-17
27/2/17 To Hos. Sick			BEFO 17/3-17
5/3/17 Rejd. Bn. from Sick			BEFO 20/5-17
3/4/17 To Hos. Sick			BEFO 28/1-17
26/8/17. Rejoined Bn from Hosp. France,			BEFO 59/4-17
20/21/9/17. WOUNDED IN ACTION			BEFO 65/1-17

PURPORT.		AUTHORITY.
29.11.17. Rej. Bn. from Hosp. France.	(MOK)	BEFO 27/1-18.
19.3.18. Detl for duty with 184th Tunnelling Coy.	(MOK)	BEFO 24/1-18.
24.4.18. KILLED IN ACTION.	(MOK)	BEFO 31/2-18.
5.4.18. Rejd. Bn. from on Det.	(M'K)	BEFO 26/4-18.

Murray John Rossiter Crabb

Appendix 5

10th Ba
A.I.F.

CRABB
M.J.R. Pte. 6229

"KILLED 24-4-18"

He was in D.Coy which was my Coy. also. I knew him well. There was no other of his name in that Coy. He was short, dark and about 25 years old. He was Lieut. Sprott's Company runner. On 24th April at 7 a.m. I found him behind our lines at Meteren on the left of Tracele, dead with a frightful shell wound in the head. I was S/B but did not carry him back, but took his Pay Book and Wallet to Coy. H.Qrs. We were retiring to supports but fighting all the time. The Germans did not take the ground which remained no-man's land. I know nothing of his burial. Sgt. Major Dummett D.Coy. attended to the burials after that stunt.

Informant - McDonald. Pte. W. 2739
10th Battn. D.Coy. 13th Plat
B.26
DARTFORD

J.O.M.K.
London
22-10-18

Note - Written S/M Dummett 22-10-18

A.

Murray John Rossiter Crabb

Appendix 6

WAR GRATUITY SCHEDULE *HC 115*

PENSION *X10 B.P.*

Transferred to **AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.**

D *2299*

No. *6229*

Rank *Pte* Name *CRABB M.J.R*

Unit *10th Bk*

Casualty *Wounded* *9/18* *C. 59. 52. 1003 9912 dated London 7/17/18*

405 *2.4.18* *DIBL 261291457*

DATE	A.F. B. 103 Received	PURPORT	REF. NO.
5 OCT 1917			
20 1918			
10. 1. 19			
18 SEP 1922			

HISTORY INDEX

W.D.F. advised, killed in action

M.O. 4 ADVISED, KILLED IN ACTION,

COPY MADE FOR WAR PENSIONS

Effects ex "Barunga" lost at sea 10/18/18

CONFIRMATION RECEIVED OF

Oblig No. *6229 2512 vide 12/394 Dd 10/5/18*

Bank Receipts in Australia

PERSONAL EFFECTS EX *"Barunga" (lost at sea)*

NO EFFECTS IN KIT *M 4/1867*

Ex. 10 C.P.M. 45/1005 & Booklet re. 1.12.19. Int. 1.1922

BRITISH WAR MEDAL

VICTORY MEDAL to *Harber* B.S.P.F. 45

Registered Post No. *4196* G.P.O. Valence

100% 1st STAR *in A.E.*

BRITISH WAR MEDAL *2/47* *46047* *Hills*

VICTORY MEDAL *2/47* *43318*

Order WAR RECORD

CERTIFICATE OF ATTESTING OFFICER.

The foregoing questions were read to the person enlisted in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to by him.

W.S.D.

~~I have examined his naturalization papers and am of opinion that they are correct.~~

(This to be struck out except in the case of persons who are naturalized British Subjects.)

Date MAY 6 - 1916

W.S.D. Dray

Signature of Attesting Officer. LEUT.

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY PERSON BEING ENLISTED.*

I, Murray John Rossiter Crabb swear that I will well and truly serve our Sovereign Lord the King in the Australian Imperial Force from MAY 6 - 1916 until the end of the War, and a further period of four months thereafter unless sooner lawfully discharged, dismissed or removed therefrom; and that I will resist His Majesty's enemies and cause His Majesty's peace to be kept and maintained; and that I will in all matters appertaining to my service, faithfully discharge my duty according to law.

SO HELP ME GOD.

M. J. R. Crabb
Signature of Person Enlisted.

Taken and subscribed at ADELAIDE in
the State of SOUTH AUSTRALIA
this _____ day _____ of
MAY 6 - 1916 19 _____, before me—

W.S.D. Dray

Signature of Attesting Officer. LEUT.

* A person enlisting who objects to taking an oath may make an affirmation in accordance with the Third Schedule of the Act and the above form must be amended accordingly. All amendments must be initialled by the Attesting Officer.

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Burke, n.d, Australian National Library's PANDORA, 'The Spirit of the ANZAC', NLA, accessed 30 August 2011, <<http://www.anzacday.org.au/spirit/spirit2.html>>

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National Archives of Australia, 'Mapping our Anzacs', National Archives of Australia, accessed 24 August 2011, <<http://mappingouranzacs.naa.gov.au/list-birth.aspx?birth=Blanchetown%2C%20SA%2C%20Australia>>

National Archives of Australia, 2011, 'National Archives of Australia', NAA, accessed 25 August, <<http://www.naa.gov.au/>>

The AIF Project, 2011, 'Murray John Rossiter Crabb,' UNSW@ADFA, accessed 27 August 2011, <<http://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/showPerson?pid=65611>>