



STUART TOWN COMMEMORATES WWI SOLDIER WHO DIED IN COMBAT

Private Thomas Cohen was a soldier from Stuart Town, born in Mookerawa, and sadly died in 1918 during WWI in France. Until late 2020, he was buried as an unidentified soldier, at a gravesite at Templeux-le-Guérard British Cemetery. Private Cohen married Mary Lee Cohen in 1908 and subsequently, their daughter Lilian was born. Private Cohen was a Fitter's Assistant, and worked hard to provide for his family.

By 1916, Private Cohen and his family had moved from Mookerawa, and were living in Stuart Town where he enlisted on 13 March, 1916, assigned to the 2nd Battalion. After a few months of training in Australia, Private Cohen began the long journey to France in August 1916, alongside his colleagues. They sailed on the HMAT Wiltshire, and more than two years after he was first enlisted, Private Cohen's unit was engaged in fighting in the Mont St Quentin area.

Private Cohen was alongside soldiers in the “Last Hundred Days” – the final major period of hostilities involving Allies, and among them, the Australian Corps, on the Western Front. On 18 September 1918, Private Thomas Cohen was killed in action, less than two months before guns fell silent with the declaration of Armistice, and the end of the Great War. He was 37-years-old.

After more than 100 years, Private Cohen’s family now have closure, after his unmarked grave was identified in 2020. A commemoration service for Private Cohen was held at the Memorial Gates in Stuart Town on Saturday 17 April, 2021 where a bronze plaque was erected and unveiled, in memory of Private Thomas Cohen.

The event was organised by the Stuart Town ANZAC Committee, and supported by Dubbo Regional Council. To this day, Private Cohen’s family remains in the area, and were in attendance at the special ceremony.

Image caption: Studio portrait of 5985 Private (Pte) Thomas (Tom) Cohen, of Mookerawa, near Stuart Town, NSW.



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