

MATHER, Alan James



A.J. Mather

Photograph courtesy of Kim Blomfield, President Inverell Kurrajong Re-enactment Committee

Alan James Mather was born at Inverell, NSW, in 1879 to parents Thomas and Mary Ann. Alan was the third of four children born to the couple. Thomas was a wine grower at Inverell and was Mayor of Inverell between 1876 and 1879. Mary Ann died in 1889, and Thomas remarried Annie in 1890. Annie and Thomas had three children, one of whom died in the first year of his life.

Alan attended New England Grammar School at Armidale, and entered HAC in 1897. Graduating in 1898 he was amongst the earliest groups of HAC graduates.

Alan worked at a vineyard at Ettamogah near Albury and then took up a 99 year lease on a grazing property near Ashford in the New England area.

Alan served in the Inverell Light Horse for 3 years, and was one of the 114 Inverell men who marched from the town on 12 January 1916 as part of the Kurrajongs, a mass recruitment march. At the time this was the largest group to leave a country town together.

Mathers enlisted 12 January 1916 as part of the 33rd Battalion 2nd Reinforcement.

Embarking from Sydney on board HMAT A15 *Port Sydney* on 4 September 1916, Alan served in France and Belgium.

Alan was Killed in Action 8 June 1917 during the battle of Messines in Belgium, he was 37 years old.

Formerly listed as 'No known grave' and commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium; Alan's remains were discovered in 2008 by members of the Ploegsteert project, led by members of No Man's Land- The European Group for Great War Archaeology and the Comines-Warneton Historical Society when exploring sites around Comines-Warneton and Messines in Belgium.

Alan was positively identified using DNA from relatives in 2010, and was buried at Prowse Point Military Cemetery, Belgium, 22 July 2010.