

**St. George's Churchyard,
Fovant, Wiltshire, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



3284 PRIVATE

W. COLEMAN

36TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

20TH NOVEMBER, 1917 Age 34

William COLEMAN

William Coleman was born at Michelago, New South Wales on 30th May, 1886 to parents Joseph Henry and Matilda Downs (nee Barber). His birth was registered as William Downs in the district of Queanbeyan.

Matilda Downs married William Coleman in 1898 in Sydney NSW.

William Coleman attended Grafton Public School, NSW.

William Coleman married Grace Violet Forbes on 1907 in the district of Grafton, NSW.

Births were registered for the following children with parents William & Grace Coleman – Charles William Roy Coleman (born 1909 in the district of Grafton); May E. Coleman (Born 1911, in the district of Maclean) & Dorothy P. Coleman (born 1913, in the district of Bellingen).

The 1913 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Armidale, subdivision of Guy Fawkes, NSW listed William Coleman, Carpenter and his wife Grace Violet Coleman, Domestic duties, living at Ebor.

William Coleman, husband of Matilda Coleman, died on 11th May, 1916 at Kempsey, NSW.

William Coleman was a 31 year old, married, Carpenter from Macksville, Nambucca River, NSW when he enlisted at Kempsey, NSW on 30th March, 1917 with the 36th Infantry Battalion, 8th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 3284 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Matilda Coleman, of Macksville, Nambucca River, NSW. William Coleman stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's service due to Varicose veins.

Private William Coleman was posted to Recruit Camp at Sydney Show Grounds on 5th April, 1917. He was transferred to 25/2nd Battalion on 7th May, 1917 then transferred to 8th Reinforcements of 36th Infantry Battalion at Liverpool, Sydney, NSW on 25th July, 1917.

Private William Coleman embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Miltiades* (A28) on 2nd August, 1917. Private Coleman was written up for an Offence while aboard HMAT *Miltiades* – he was A.W.L. (Absent without Leave) at Halifax from 2 pm on 20th September till midnight on 20th September, 1917. He was awarded 10 days confined to Barracks & forfeited 1 days' pay.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Private William Coleman was marched in from Australia to 9th Training Battalion at Durrington, Wiltshire on 2nd October, 1917.

Private William Coleman was admitted to Parkhouse Military Hospital, Wiltshire with Mumps on 8th October, 1917 & discharged to Depot on 29th October, 1917.

Private William Coleman was admitted to Military Hospital, Fovant, Wiltshire on 10th November, 1917 cause NYD (Not yet determined). He was reported seriously ill on 13th November, 1917.

Private William Coleman died at 4.15 pm on 20th November, 1917 at Military Hospital, Fovant, Wiltshire from Purulent Bronchitis.

A death for William Coleman, aged 32, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Wilton, Wiltshire, England.

Private William Coleman was buried on 25th November, 1917 in St George's Churchyard, Fovant, Wiltshire, England – Plot number II. C. 2 and now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private Coleman - *The funeral was attended by the Officer in charge of the 7th Reinforcements and about 200 of his*

comrades marched in procession. It was conducted in a quiet and reverent manner and a full military Band was in attendance.

Private William Coleman requested in his Will dated 31st July, 1917 that all his property & effects be given to his mother – Matilda Coleman of Macksville, Nambucca River, NSW.

A War Pension was issued to Grace Violet Coleman, widow of the late Private William Coleman, in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 24th January, 1918. Pensions were also granted from the same date for his children – Roy Coleman - £1 per fortnight; May Coleman – 15/- per fortnight & Dorothy Coleman 10/- per fortnight.

Base Records contacted Mrs M. Coleman, of Tozer Street, West Kempsey, NSW on 31st May, 1921 that upon enlistment she was recorded as the next-of-kin of her son - the late Private William Coleman but it was noticed from the file that he left a widow and children. According to the “Deceased Soldiers Estates Act 1918” which stated that the War Medals & Mementoes of a deceased soldier were to be handed in the following order of relationship – Widow, eldest surviving son, eldest surviving daughter, father, mother, eldest surviving brother, eldest surviving sister etc. Base Records asked if there were any reasons why the medals should not go to the deceased’s widow.

Private William Coleman was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Coleman’s widow - Mrs G. V. Coleman, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque sent January, 1923).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private William Coleman – service number 3284, aged 34, of 36th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of William and Matilda Coleman, of Kempsey, New South Wales. Born at Michelago.

Private W. Coleman is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 126.



(Photos Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

William Coleman is remembered on the Michelago & District War Memorial, located in front of Railway Station, Ryrie Street, Michelago, NSW.



Michelago & District War Memorial (Photos from Monument Australia)



W. Coleman is remembered on the Kempsey War Memorial located at The Triangle, corner of Lord Street and Pacific Highway, Kempsey, NSW.



Kempsey War Memorial (Photo from Register of War Memorials in NSW – David Roden/Ken Hills)



(54 pages of Private William Coleman's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



Newspaper Notices

CASUALTY LIST

The 377th casualty list includes

Died of wounds and other causes

W. Coleman (Macksville)

(Daily Examiner, Grafton, NSW – 8 January, 1918)

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. 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 6th July, 1921, to Mrs M. Coleman, of Tozer Street, West Kempsey, NSW, mother of the late Private W. Coleman & listed as next-of-kin, advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone for her son in Fovant Cemetery 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.

Private W. Coleman does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

St George's Churchyard, Fovant, Wiltshire, England

There was a 600 bed hutted military hospital at Fovant during the First World War, and the concentration of Australian depots and training camps in the area is reflected in the 63 First World War burials in this churchyard. The war graves form two groups, one west of the church and the other at the east end. There is also one burial of the Second World War. There are 44 War Graves belonging to those who served with the Australian Imperial Force in World War 1.

(Information from CWGC)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00299

(Photo c 1919) Graves of Australian soldiers in the Fovant Churchyard.

*Identified, left to right, front row: 3662 Private (Pte) Louis Watt, 28th Battalion, killed in action 1 November 1917; **3284 Pte William Coleman, 36th Battalion, died 20 November 1917, aged 34 years;** 7179 Pte Frank Leslie Gardner, 17th Battalion, died of sickness 7 March 1918; 1992 Pte John Wright, 41st Battalion, died of sickness 28 March 1918.*





St George's Churchyard, Fovant – War Graves at front & rear (*Churchyard photos courtesy of Andrew Stacey*)



Photo of Private W. Coleman's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St George's Churchyard, Fovant, Wiltshire, England.





Cross of Sacrifice (Photo courtesy of Andrew Stacey)