

**Durrington War Graves,
Wiltshire, England
World War 1**



Lest We Forget



2707 PRIVATE

H. COLES

33RD BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

18TH FEBRUARY, 1917

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte H. Coles is located in Grave Plot # 203
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

Harry COLES

Harry Coles was born at Moss Vale, NSW in 1886.

Harry Coles was a 29 year old, single, Labourer from 97 Burren St, Newtown when he enlisted on 6th November, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2707 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Edwin Coles 97 Burren St, Newtown, Sydney, NSW.

Private Harry Coles embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Port Napier* (A22) on 17th November, 1916 with the 33rd Battalion, 5th Reinforcements & disembarked at Devonport, England on 29th January, 1917. Pte Harry Coles was admitted to ship's hospital from 18th December, 1916 & discharged 17th January, 1917.

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

Private Harry Coles was marched in to 9th Training Battalion at Durrington from Australia on 30th January, 1917. He was Absent without Leave from 8th - 9th February, 1917 and forfeited a total of 6 days pay.

Private Harry Coles was admitted to Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire on 12th February, 1917 with Laryngitis.

Private Harry Coles died of Broncho-Pneumonia at 9 a.m. on 18th February, 1917 at Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire. Private Victor William Hindhaugh, 6756 from 2nd Training Battalion died at 3.15 a.m. on same day, also of pneumonia. Both men were buried next to each other in Durrington Cemetery.

A death for Harry Coles, aged 29, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

Private Harry Coles was buried at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire - plot number 203 on 20th February, 1917 and has a Commonwealth War Graves headstone.

Private H. Coles is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 121.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Private Harry Coles was entitled to British War Medal only. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Coles' next-of-kin – his eldest brother, Mr James Coles of Paddington, NSW (March, 1923 & August, 1923).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Harry Coles – service number 2707 as being 29 years old & served with 33rd Battalion Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

(46 pages of Private Harry Coles' Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll) & National Archives



Newspaper Reports

ROLL OF HONOUR

COLES – Died of pneumonia, Military Hospital, Salisbury Plains, Feb. 18, 1917. Pte Harry Coles, of Newtown, aged 30 years. Inserted by his loving father, brothers and sisters. Deeply regretted.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW Wednesday 21 February, 1917)

CASUALTIES - 276th LIST

NEW SOUTH WALES – DIED OF ILLNESS

Pte H. Coles, Newtown

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW Saturday 3 March, 1917)

ON ACTIVE SERVICE

COLES – In loving memory of our dear brother, Private Harry Coles, who died at Salisbury Plains, February 18, 1917. Inserted by his loving sisters and brothers.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW Monday 18 February, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

COLES – In loving memory of our dear brother, Pte Harry Coles, who died at Salisbury Plains, February 18, 1917.

We pictured your safe returning,
And longed to see your face again,
But God has postponed our meeting
Till we meet in the land above.
Inserted by his sisters and brothers.

(The Scrutineer and Berrima District Press, NSW – Wednesday 20 February, 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 at Durrington War Graves Cemetery. 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, dated 6th July, 1921, from Base Records to Mr E. Coles of 97 Burren St, Newtown requested that a communication from Defence Dept. in connection with a permanent headstone for Pte H. Coles had not been replied to & that non-receipt of a reply within 21 days would indicate a non desire to further action.

Pte H. Coles does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire, England

Durrington Cemetery contains burials of both wars. The 204 First World War burials were mostly from nearby Larkhill Camp. Many of the graves are of Australian servicemen (141) and there is a separate Australian memorial in the cemetery. The Second World War burials number 22. In addition to the war graves, there are a number of post-war service graves in the cemetery, mostly of the Royal Air Force. *(Information from CWGC)*



Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire *(Photo by Dave Healing 2013)*

Photo of Private H. Coles' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire, England.



(Photo © Ian King - with permission)