

**Efford Cemetery,  
Plymouth, Devon, England**

**War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**6000 PRIVATE**

**M. A. COLWELL**

**13TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**15TH OCTOBER, 1916 Age 24**

*In Memory  
Of Our Dearly Beloved Son  
And Brother*

## Major Austin COLWELL

Major Austin Colwell was born on 27th July, 1891 in New South Wales to parents Arthur George & Martha Colwell (nee Barlow). (Note: According to information supplied by his father for the Roll of Honour, Major Colwell was born at Green Oak; according to his Attestation Papers he was born in "Walcha, near Coonamble, NSW.") His birth was registered in 1891 in the district of Coonamble, NSW.

The 1913 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Namoi, Polling Place of Ceelnoy, New South Wales, recorded Major Austin Colwell, Mill Hand, of Rosewood.

Major Austin Colwell was a 24 year old, single, Farmer (listed as a Saw Miller by his father for the Roll of Honour) from Colrose, P.O., Coonamble, NSW when he enlisted at R.A.S. (Royal Agricultural Show) Grounds, Sydney, NSW on 6th March, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 6000 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr A. A. Colwell, Post Office, Colrose, Coonamble, NSW.

Major Austin Colwell was posted to "C" Company, Depot Battalion, A.I.F. at Bathurst, NSW on 10th March, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to "C" Company, 13th Battalion on 17th April, 1916. Private Colwell was transferred to 19th Reinforcements of 13th Battalion on 15th May, 1916 at Kiama, NSW. He was reported as AWL (Absent without Leave) for 1 day on 22nd May, 1916 & forfeited 1 day's pay.

Private Major Austin Colwell embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Wiltshire (A18)* on 22nd August, 1916 with the 13th Infantry Battalion, 19th Reinforcements. He was admitted to Ship's Hospital on 25th September, 1916 with Broncho Pneumonia & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 12th October, 1916.

### 13th Battalion

The 13th Battalion AIF was raised from late September 1914, six weeks after the outbreak of the First World War. The battalion was recruited in New South Wales, and with the 14th, 15th and 16th Battalions formed the 4th Brigade, commanded by Colonel John Monash.....

*(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

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 Major Austin Colwell was sent sick & admitted to Military Hospital, Devonport, England on 12th October, 1916. His condition was reported as dangerous.

Private Major Austin Colwell died at 6.10 am on 15th October, 1916 at Military Hospital, Devonport, England from Pneumonia.

A death for Major A. Colwell, aged 25, was registered in the December quarter, 1916 in the district of Devonport, Devon, England.

Private Major Austin Colwell was buried on 17th October, 1916 in General Burial Ground, Egguckland Cemetery, Grave No. 3937.

Base Records wrote to Mr A. A. Colwell, Colrose, P.O., Coonamble, NSW, father of the late Private Major Austin Colwell, on 8th January, 1925 stating "*At the request of the Imperial War Graves Commission I am forwarding herewith a circular order form relative to the purchase of copies of the register of the EFFORD CEMETERY, wherein the remains you yor son, the late No. 6000 Pte M. A. Colwell, 13th Btn, are interred.....*"

Private Major Austin Colwell is listed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as being buried in Efford Cemetery, Plymouth, Devon, England – Plot number – General. C. 3939 and now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Mr A. A. Colwell, Post Office Colrose, Coonamble, NSW, father of Private Major Austin Colwell, was advised by Base Records on 19th October, 1916 that his son Private Major A. Colwell was dangerously ill with Pneumonia.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Major Austin Colwell contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of the relatives to obtain any information on his sufferings death and burial.

- Private Atkins, No. 59, No. 1 Hut, No.4 Australian General Hospital, Randwick, NSW wrote: *"I knew Colwell. We used to call him Major. He caught Pneumonia on the way to England, just after we left Capetown. He died at Plymouth in hospital, two or three days after we landed. I used to go and see him on board whenever they would let me. He was a great pal of mine. He had all possible attention on board."*
- The Matron, Military Hospital, Devonport wrote the following: *"In reply to your letter of the 5th inst. I regret to be able to give you very few details of 6000 Pte M. A. Collwell's illness. He was admitted to this hospital from the transport on the evening of the 12.10.16. He was then very seriously ill with double Pneumonia, and no doubt had been for some days previously. On his arrival here everything possible was done to aid his recovery, but unfortunately of no avail. He had not much pain, but coughed incessantly and was quite exhausted. Although oxygen was administered continuously he never regained strength, but passed peacefully away at 6.10 am 15.10.16. He left no message, and was far too ill to ask for his relatives. We wrote to tell them all we could at the time of his death. Pte Colwell was buried with full military honours at the cemetery near here at 10 am 17.10.16. I very much regret being unable to tell you more, and can well understand how his relatives would value any information regarding the poor boy, and hope this will be of some little use to you."*

Private Major Austin Colwell 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 Colwell's father – Mr A. A. Colwell, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent March, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Major Austin Colwell – service number 6000, aged 24, of 13th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Arthur and Martha Colwell.

Private M. A. Colwell is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 68.



*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*



M. A. Colwell is remembered on the Gilgooma Soldiers' Memorial Gates, located on Pilliga Road, Gilgooma, NSW.



**Gilgooma Soldiers' Memorial Gates** (Photos from Monument Australia – Frank Edwards)



M. A. Colwell & his brother L. S. Colwell are both remembered on the Gilgooma Roll of Honour, located in Coonamble RSL, 18 Castlereagh Street, Coonamble, NSW.



**Gilgooma Roll of Honour** (Photo from Monument Australia – Sandra Brown)

The Coonamble District Roll of Honour is a framed paper roll which commemorates those from the District who served in World War One. It is located in Coonamble RSL, 18 Castlereagh Street, Coonamble, NSW.



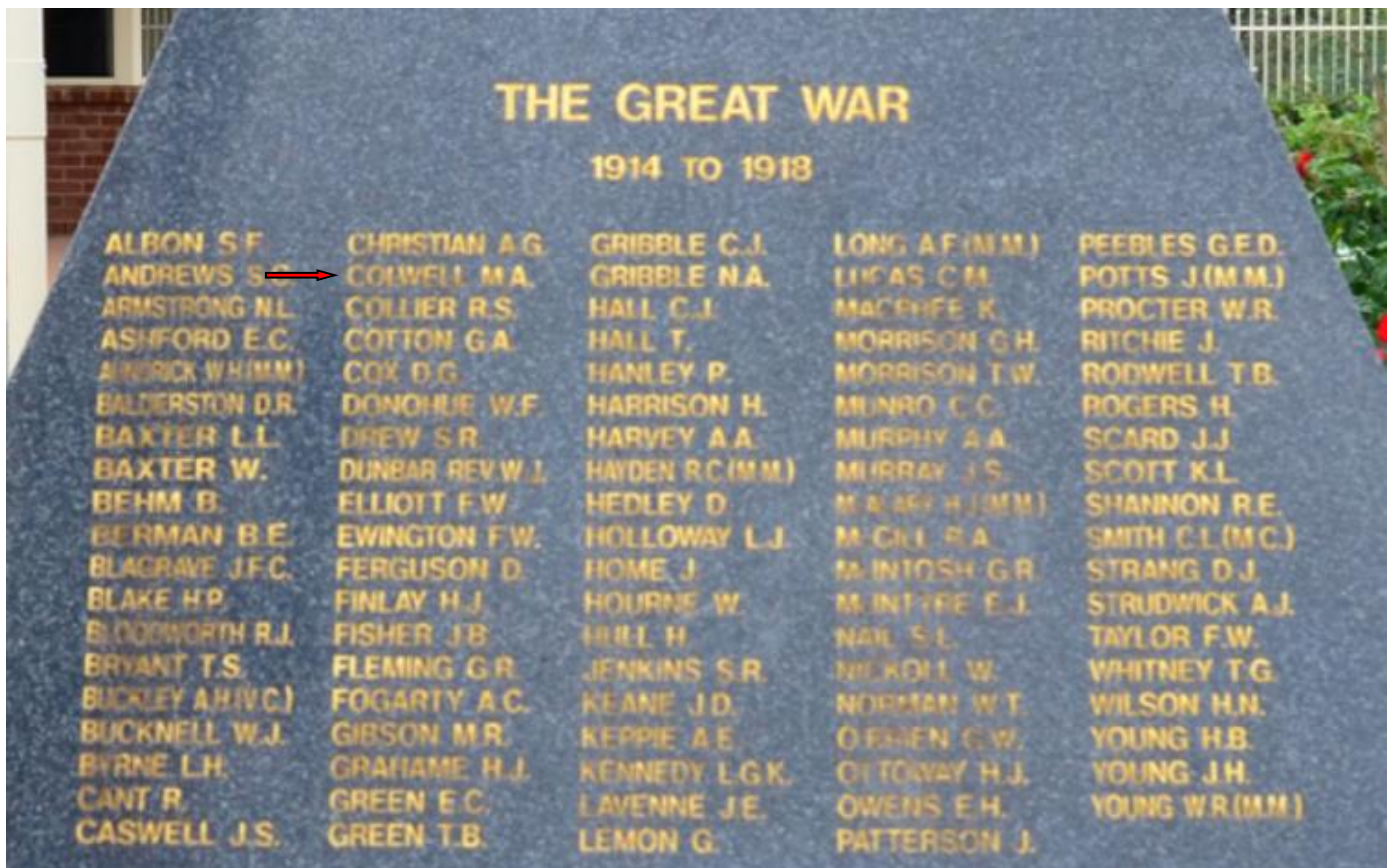
**Coonamble District Roll of Honour** (Photo from Monument Australia – Sandra Brown)



M. A. Colwell is remembered on the Coonamble War Memorial, located at Castlereagh Street, Coonamble, NSW.

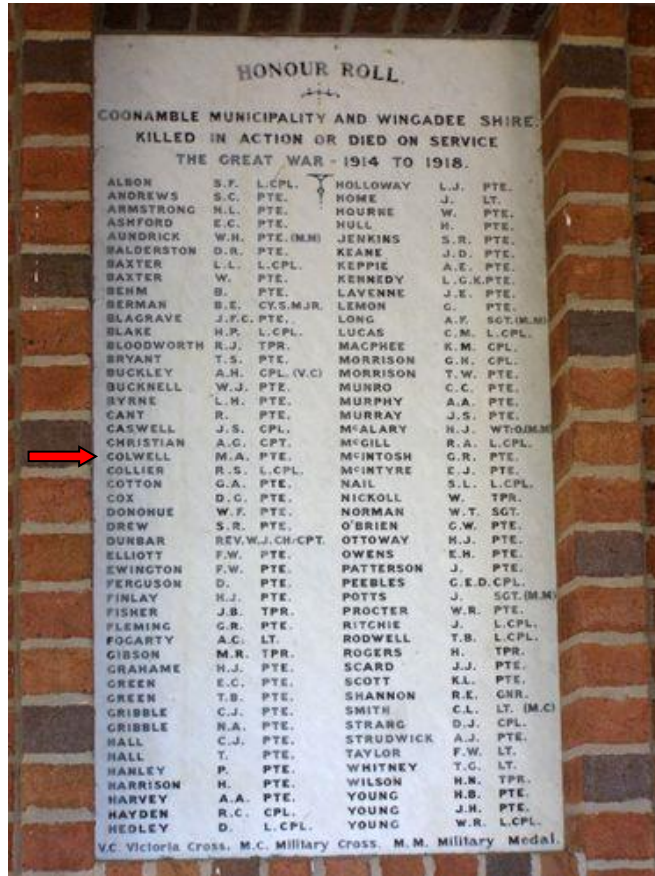


**Coonamble War Memorial** (Photo from AWM – Places of Pride – Henry Moulds)





M. A. Colwell is remembered on the Coonamble Municipality & Wingadee Shire Honour Roll, located on Coonamble Shire Council, 80 Castlereagh Street, Coonamble, NSW.



Coonamble Municipality & Wingadee Shire Honour Roll (Photo from Monument Australia – Sandra Brown)

M. Colwell is remembered on the Baradine & District Roll of Honour, located in Memorial Hall, Narren Street, Baradine, NSW.



Baradine & District Roll of Honour (Photo courtesy of Geoffrey Hotchkiss & Rosie Ritorto)



M. Colwell is remembered on the Coonabarabran War Memorial, located on Newell Highway & Dalgarno Street, Coonabarabran, NSW.



**Coonabarabran War Memorial** (Photos from AWM – Places of Pride)





(41 pages of Private Major Austin Colwell'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*



**Connected to Private Major Austin Colwell:**

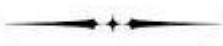
Older brother – Leslie Sherringham Colwell – Enlisted on 18th December, 1917 as a 32 year old, single Farmer. Embarked with 12th NSW General Service Reinforcements on 17th July, 1918 on HMAT *Borda* (A30) from Sydney, NSW as Private 59299 .

Disembarked at Capetown on 23rd August, 1918 with Pneumonia & admitted to No. 2 General Hospital, Maitland, Cape Town. Discharged on 24th September, 1918. Embarked on HT *Marathon* on 4th December, 1918 from Cape Town for return to Australia.

Admitted to No. 4 Australian General Hospital then transferred to No. 21 Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Georges Heights, on 7th January, 1919.

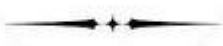
Medically discharged from Australian Imperial Force on 28th January, 1919.

Entitled to British War Medal only.



PRIVATE A. A. COLWELL.  
Died in Hospital.

(Note: initials are incorrect but there is no "A. A. Colwell" listed on AWM Roll of Honour – assuming it is "M. A." Colwell)



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **Australian Casualties**

#### **Lists Nos. 238 and 239**

Died of Illness

Pte M. A. COLWELL (Coonamble) 15/10/16

*(Australian Town and Country Journal, Sydney, NSW – 1 November, 1916)*

---

### **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)*

Private M. A. Colwell does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*In Memory Of Our Dearly Beloved Son And Brother*

### **Efford Cemetery, Plymouth, Devon, England**

During the First World War, Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse contained between them the Royal Dockyard, Royal Naval Barracks (known as H.M.S. Vivid), the Royal Marine Barracks of the Plymouth Division, and naval and military hospitals. For the duration of the war, Devonport was made headquarters of the Auxiliary Patrol Area. Plymouth was a naval station second only to Portsmouth during the Second World War. Devonport was also an important military station and there was a R.A.F station at Mount Batten, opposite Plymouth. PLYMOUTH (EFFORD) CEMETERY contains 338 scattered burials of the First World War. The 109 Second World War burials, including 5 unidentified, are also scattered apart from a small group in Section C, in a plot set aside for service burials that was actually little used. The Commission also maintains five non-war burials within the cemetery and 12 war graves of other nationalities, most of them Greek merchant seamen. PLYMOUTH CITY CREMATORIUM is situated in Plymouth (Efford) Cemetery and 61 servicemen and women of the Second World War whose remains were cremated there are commemorated on a screen wall set into a recess in the hedge behind the Cross of Sacrifice.

*(Information & photos from CWGC)*





**Cross of Sacrifice in Efford Cemetery, Plymouth** *(Photo from CWGC)*



**War Graves in Efford Cemetery, Plymouth** *(Photo from CWGC)*





**War Graves in Efford Cemetery, Plymouth** *(Photos courtesy of Rebecca Smith)*





Photo of Private M. A. Colwell's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Efford Cemetery, Plymouth, Devon, England.



*(Photos from Find a Grave – Woose 2)*



