

**Hollybrook Memorial,
Southampton, Hampshire, England
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



5968 SERGEANT

R. A. COOMBE

15TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

6TH OCTOBER, 1916

Roy Albert COOMBE

Albert Roy Coombe was born at Bundaberg, Queensland on 16th September, 1896 to parents Albert Augustus & Louisa Christina (Lucy) Coombe (nee Benstead).

Roy Albert Coombe attended One Mile State School, Gympie, Queensland. He had been an apprentice with J. J. Coombe & Sons, Gympie, Queensland.

Roy Albert Coombe was a 19 year old, single Motor-expert from Hughenden, Queensland when he enlisted on 29th November, 1915 at Charters Towers, Queensland with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 5968 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr A. A. Coombe, Red Hill, Gympie, Queensland. Roy Coombe stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served with Senior Cadets for 4 years. From information provided by his father for the Roll of Honour – Roy Coombe had been a Second Lieutenant with Senior Cadets.

Private Roy Albert Coombe was posted to No. 9 Depot Battalion – “C” Company on 29th November, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to 17th Reinforcements of 15th Battalion on 16th January, 1916.

Private Roy Albert Coombe was promoted to Corporal on 1st March, 1916 & promoted to Sergeant on 8th April, 1916. He was transferred to 19th Reinforcements of 15th Battalion on 10th April, 1916.

On 15th April, 1916 he was promoted to Sergeant & Platoon Sergeant with No. 1 Platoon.

Private (rank as per Embarkation Roll)/ Sergeant (provisional) Roy Albert Coombe embarked from Brisbane, Queensland on HMAT *Itonus* (A50) on 8th August, 1916 with the 4th Infantry Brigade, 15th Infantry Battalion, 19th Reinforcements.

15th Battalion

The 15th Battalion AIF was raised from late September 1914, six weeks after the outbreak of the First World War. Three-quarters of the battalion were recruited as volunteers from Queensland, and the rest from Tasmania. With the 13th, 14th and 16th Battalions it formed the 4th Brigade, commanded by Colonel John Monash.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Sergeant (provisional) Roy Albert Coombe was written up for Crime while at Sea on Troopship A50 *Itonus* – Conduct to the prejudice of good order & military discipline. He was severely reprimanded by Lieutenant Colonel D. W. Dawson on 16th September, 1916 for misconduct.

Sergeant Roy Albert Coombe died at 3.45 am on 6th October, 1916 at Sea on board HMAT *Itonus* (A50) from Meningitis.

Sergeant Roy Albert Coombe was buried at Sea at 8 am on 6th October, 1916 from HMAT *Itonus* (A50). He is commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England as he has no grave. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Lieutenant Colonel D. W. Dawson, Officer Commanding Troops, H.M.A. Transport A 50 *Itonus*, wrote to Base Records from Dakar on 6th October, 1916: “*I very much regret to report that Reg. No. 5968 Prov/Sergt. COOMBE Roy Albert, died at 3.45 am today from cerebro-spinal meningitis and was buried at sea at 8 am today. Both the Senior Medical Officer and the Master of the ship considered it inadvisable to keep the corpse with a hope of burial at Dakar. Letters have been written to his relatives. Sergeant Coombe reported ill on Tuesday, the 3rd instant, when he was admitted to the Isolation Hospital, where every care and attention were given to him. He became unconscious shortly after admission and never regained consciousness.*”



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H02240

Troopship *Itonus* (A50)

BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND. C. 1915. TROOPSHIP ITONUS (A50) IN THE BRISBANE RIVER HEADING SEAWARDS CARRYING TROOPS FOR OVERSEAS SERVICE. THE ITONUS WAS LATER TORPEDOED AND SUNK IN THE MEDITERRANEAN ON 1916-12-20.

Sergeant Roy Albert Coombe 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 Sergeant Coombe's father – Mr A. A. Coombe, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent May, 1922 & Plaque sent December, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Sergeant Roy Albert Coombe – service number 5968, of 15th Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Sergeant R. A. Coombe is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 75.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

R. Coombe is remembered on the Gympie & Widgee War Memorial Gates, located in Memorial Lane, Gympie, Queensland.



Gympie & Widgee War Memorial Gates (Photos from AWM Places of Pride – Tony Ledger)



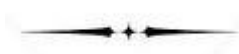
R. A. Coombes is remembered on the First World War Honour Roll, located in Cooloolo Regional Council Office (old Town Hall), 2 Caledonian Hill, Gympie, Queensland.



Gympie First World War Honour Roll (Photos from Monument Australia)

(29 pages of Sergeant Roy Albert Coombe'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) & National Archives



Newspaper Notices

THE ROLL OF HONOR

The 237th Australian casualty list was issued to-day....

QUEENSLAND

Died of Illness: Sergeant A. R. Coombe, Gympie.

(*The Northern Miner*, Charters Towers, Queensland – 23 October, 1916)

BIOGRAPHICAL PARTICULARS

THE LATE PROVOST-SERGEANT A. R. COOMBE

News has been received that Provost-Sergeant A. R. Coombe died of meningitis on October 7, and was buried at sea. He was the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Coombe, Redhill, Gympie, Queensland, and a grandson of Mr. J. K. Coombe, of Gympie, who was for some years a well known chorister at St. Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide.



Provost-Sergeant A. R. Coombe.

Provost-Sergeant Coombe was esteemed by all who knew him. He was a second lieutenant in the local senior cadets, and last November enlisted at Hughenden. On going into camp he joined the school of instruction, passed as sergeant, and afterwards acted as instructor. He left for the front about August 9 last, and must have been nearly at the end of the voyage, when he succumbed to his illness, three weeks after his 20th birthday."

(*Chronicle*, Adelaide, South Australia – 2 December, 1916)

ROLL OF HONOUR

COOMBE – Aboard a troopship, bound for the Front, on 7th October, from meningitis, Provost Sergeant Albert Roy Coombe, eldest son of Mr and Mrs A. A. Coombe, Red Hill, Gympie, Queensland.

Loved by all who knew him.

(*The Brisbane Courier*, Queensland – 25 November, 1916) & (*The Queenslander*, Brisbane, Queensland – 9 December, 1916)

IN MEMORIAM

COOMBE – In loving memory of Provost Sergeant Albert Roy Coombe, who died at sea on October 6th, 1916.

Inserted by his parents, sisters and brothers.

(Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette, Queensland – 6 October, 1917)

ROLL OF HONOUR

COOMBE – In loving memory of Sergeant Albert Roy Coombe, 15th Battalion, eldest son of Mr and Mrs A. A. Coombe, who gave his life for his country, October 6th, 1916.

Loved by all who knew him.

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 5 October, 1918)

ROLL OF HONOUR

COOMBE – In loving memory of Sergeant Albert Roy Coombe, who died at sea on October 6th, 1916.

Inserted by his parents, sisters and brother.

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 6 October, 1919)

ROLL OF HONOUR

COOMBE – In loving memory of Sergeant Albert Roy Coombe, 15th Batt., eldest son of Mr and Mrs A. A. Coombe, who died at sea on October 6, 1916.

Inserted by his parents, brother and sisters.

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 6 October, 1920)

ROLL OF HONOUR

COOMBE – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Segt. Albert Roy Coombe, who gave his life for his country on October 6th, 1916.

Loved by all who knew him.

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 6 October, 1921)

ROLL OF HONOUR

COOMBE – In loving memory of our dear son, and brother, Sgt. Albert Roy Coombe, who gave his life for his country, on October 6th, 1916.

Inserted by his parents, sisters and brother.

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 6 October, 1922)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for cemeteries and memorials in 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. In all 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth forces from WWI and WWII have been honoured and commemorated in perpetuity.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of its mandate, is responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead individually and equally. To this end, the war dead are commemorated by name on a headstone, at an identified site of a burial, or on a memorial. War dead are commemorated uniformly and equally, irrespective of military or civil rank, race or creed.

Not all service personnel have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. In some instances the relative chose to have their own memorial/headstone placed on the deceased's grave. These private headstones are not maintained by the CWGC as they have no jurisdiction to maintain them.

Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England

The Hollybrook Memorial is situated in Southampton (Hollybrook) Cemetery behind the plot of First World War graves near the main entrance.

The Hollybrook Memorial commemorates by name almost 1,900 servicemen and women of the Commonwealth land and air forces* whose graves are not known, many of whom were lost in transports or other vessels torpedoed or mined in home waters (*Officers and men of the Commonwealth's navies who have no grave but the sea are commemorated on memorials elsewhere). The memorial also bears the names of those who were lost or buried at sea, or who died at home but whose bodies could not be recovered for burial. Almost one third of the names on the memorial are those of officers and men of the South African Native Labour Corps, who died when the troop transport Mendi sank in the Channel following a collision on 21 February 1917. Other vessels sunk with significant loss of life were: HS Anglia, a hospital ship sunk by mine off Dover on 17 November 1915. SS Citta Di Palermo, an Italian transport carrying Commonwealth troops, sunk by mine off Brindisi on 8 January 1916. In rescuing survivors, two Royal Naval Otranto drifters were themselves mined and blown up. HMTs Donegal and Warilda, ambulance transports torpedoed and sunk between Le Havre and Southampton on 17 April 1917 and 3 August 1918. HS Glenart Castle, a hospital ship torpedoed and sunk off Lundy on 26 February 1918. SS Galway Castle, torpedoed and sunk in the Atlantic on 12 September 1918. RMS Leinster, the Irish mail boat, torpedoed and sunk in the Irish Sea on 10 October 1918. Among those commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial is Field Marshall Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, who died when the battle cruiser HMS Hampshire was mined and sunk off Scapa Flow on 5 June 1916.

The memorial was designed by T. Newham and unveiled by Sir William Robertson on 10 December 1930.

There are approximately 162 Australian World War 1 Service Personnel commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England.

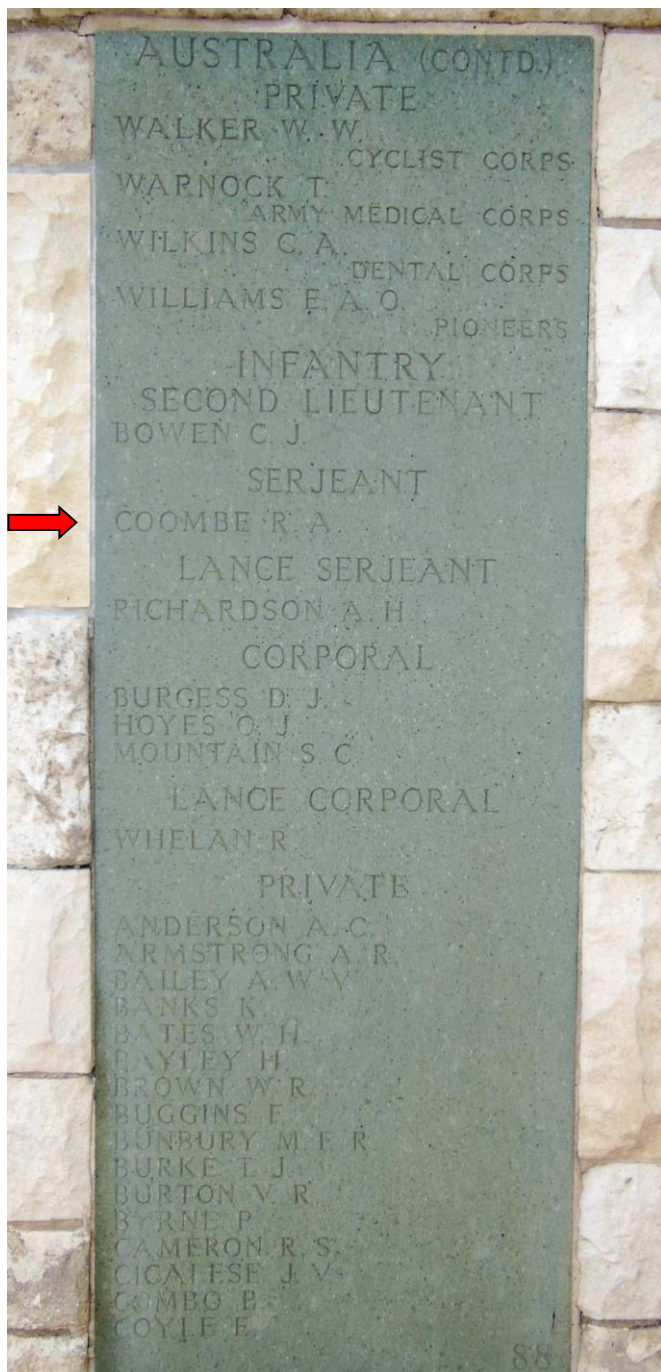
(Information & photos from CWGC)



CWGC Graves in Hollybrook Cemetery with Cross of Sacrifice & Hollybrook Memorial

(Photo from CWGC)

Photo of Sergeant R. A. Coombe's name on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England.



(Photo by julia&keld – Find a Grave)

