

**Brookwood Military Cemetery,
Brookwood, Surrey
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



849 PRIVATE

R. H. COUTTS

39TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

18TH OCTOBER, 1917 Age 30

*Father In The Gracious
Keeping
Leave We Now Thy Servant
Sleeping*

Robert Hamilton COUTTS

Robert Hamilton Coutts was born at Evansford, Victoria in 1887 to parents John and Mary Coutts (nee Grant). (Place of birth listed as Lexton, Victoria on Victorian Births, Deaths & Marriages website0.

Robert Hamilton Coutts attended Evansford State School, Victoria.

The 1909 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Grampians, subdivision of Learmonth, Victoria recorded Robert Hamilton Coutts, farmer, of Evansford.

Mary Coutts, mother of Robert Hamilton Coutts, died on 25th August, 1910 at Evansford, Victoria.

The 1914, 1915 & 1916 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Corangamite, subdivision of Lexton, Victoria recorded Robert Hamilton Coutts, farmer, of Evansford.

Robert Hamilton Coutts was a 29 year old, single, Farmer from Evansford, Victoria when he enlisted on 14th March, 1916 at Ballarat, Victoria with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 849 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr John Coutts, Evansford, Victoria.

Private Robert Hamilton Coutts was posted to “C” Company, 39th Battalion at Ballarat, Victoria on 14th March, 1916 for recruit training.

Private Robert Hamilton Coutts embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Ascanius* (A11) on 27th May, 1916 with the 10th Infantry Brigade, 39th Infantry Battalion, “C” Company & disembarked at Devonport, England on 18th July, 1916.

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 Robert Hamilton Coutts was marched out to No. 4 Command Depot at Wareham, Dorset from Larkhill, Wiltshire on 11th November, 1916.

Private Robert Hamilton Coutts proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 24th January, 1917 on S.S. *Princess Clementine* from 10th Training Battalion.

Private Robert Hamilton Coutts was marched in to 3rd A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France from England on 25th January, 1917. He was marched out to his Unit on 27th January, 1917 from 3rd A.D.B.D. & was taken on strength of 39th Battalion on 28th January, 1917.

Private Robert Hamilton Coutts was sent to Hospital sick on 21st April, 1917. He was admitted to 11th Australian Field Ambulance on 21st April, 1917 with Defective vision then transferred the same day to D.R.S. (Divisional Rest Station). Private Coutts was transferred & admitted to 15th Casualty Clearing Station on 23rd April, 1917 with Pleurisy. He was transferred & admitted to 13th Stationary Hospital at Boulogne, France on 7th May, 1917 then on the 10th May, 1917 was invalided to England on Hospital Ship *Peter de Conik* with Pleurisy.

39th Battalion

The 39th Battalion was formed on 21 February 1916 at the Ballarat Showgrounds in Victoria and drew most of its recruits from the state's Western District. It became part of the 10th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division. Sailing from Melbourne on 27 May, the battalion arrived in Britain on 18 July and commenced four months of training. It crossed to France in late November and moved into the trenches of the Western Front for the first time on 9 December, just in time for the onset of the terrible winter of 1916-17.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Robert Hamilton Coutts was admitted to No. 3 London General Hospital on 10th May, 1917 with Neuralgia (as listed on Casualty Form – Active Service). The Hospital Admissions form recorded Broncho Pneumonia & the

following information “ *Reported sick in France 20.4.17. Had measles & (R) Broncho pneumonia Oct 1916. Pains round right side.*” He was transferred & admitted to Grove Military Hospital on 15th May, 1917.

Private Robert Hamilton Coutts died at 5.30 am on 18th October, 1917 at Grove Military Hospital, Tooting Grove, London, England from Pneumonia & Empyema.

A death for Robert M. Coutts, aged 30, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Wandsworth, London, England.

Private Robert Hamilton Coutts was buried at 1.30 pm on 20th October, 1917 in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England – Grave reference XI. B. 17 (Plot 11, Row B, Grave 17) and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private Robert Hamilton Coutts - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military Funeral, Firing Party supplied by the South African Regiment station at Farnborough being in attendance. The service at the graveside was conducted by Chaplain Shannon, A.I.F. Headquarters, London. The “Last Post” was sounded at the graveside. The coffin was draped with the “Australian Flag.” No relatives were present at the funeral. An oak cross will be erected by the A.I.F.*

Private Robert Hamilton Coutts was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Coutts’ father – Mr J. Coutts, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent February, 1922 & Plaque sent September, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Robert Hamilton Coutts – service number 849, aged 30, of 39th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of John and Mary Coutts, of Evansford, Victoria, Australia. Native of Evansford.

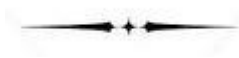
Private R. H. Coutts is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 131.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(43 pages of Private Robert Hamilton Coutts' 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

WAUBRA MEN

WAUBRA, Monday

Pte Donald Coutts, writing from France states that his brother, Robt. Coutts, was still far from well. Another brother, Pte Alfred Coutts, who was severely wounded, was now making satisfactory progress, but was still in the hospital. Pte Alf Coutts sustained severe shrapnel wounds in one of his legs, and also injuries to an eye, which will necessitate an operation to remove a fragment of brass which is embedded in the pupil.....

(The Ballarat Courier, Victoria – 29 May, 1917)

DIED ON SERVICE

COUTTS – On the 18th October, in hospital, London, Private Robert Hamilton Coutts, youngest son of John Coutts, "Woodside," Evansford.

Deeply regretted by all at home.

-Inserted by J. Coutts and family.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 29 October, 1917)

DIED ON SERVICE

COUTTS – A tribute to the memory of Robert Hamilton Coutts, who died at hospital, London, October 18, 1917.

He did not shun his country's call,
He gladly gave his life, his all.
He died the helpless to defend,
An Australian soldier's noble end.

-Inserted by Kitty McLeod

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 3 November, 1917) & (The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 5 November, 1917)

BALLARAT AND DISTRICT MEN

PRIVATE R. H. COUTTS

Mr Jas. Coutts, of Evansford, has been officially informed (our Waubra Correspondent writes) that his son, Pte Robert Hamilton Coutts, has died in hospital in England from an illness contracted whilst in action in France. The news was received with widespread regret throughout the district, where the late Pte Coutts, had spent the whole of his life prior to his enlistment with the 39th Battalion. The deceased soldier was highly respected for his many sterling qualities and manly bearing. He was a general favourite with his associates, and was always to the fore in the advancement of all pertaining to the welfare of the district and stood out conspicuous as an athlete. Not only did he do credit to the uniform, but he was also a true soldier in spirit. Throughout his illness he never once complained, but always corresponded with his aged father and relatives in the most cheerful strain, in order to relieve their anxiety. His death is rendered additionally distressing to the bereaved relatives owing to the fact that his brother, Pte Alf. Coutts has been seriously wounded and is now on his way home. Another brother, Pte Donald Coutts, is still at the Front. The late Pte Coutts' brother, Cr. H. Coutts, is president of the Lexton Shire, and Messrs Charles William and James Coutts, of Waubra are also brothers.

(The Ballarat Courier, Victoria – 3 November, 1917)

EVANSFORD

An in memoriam service was held in the Evansford Presbyterian Church on Sunday last in memory of the late Private R. H. Coutts, youngest son of Mr John Coutts, of " Woodside," Evansford, who died of illness in hospital, London, on 18th October. A very impressive sermon was preached by the Rev J. T. Anderson, of Talbot, who took for his text St. John, chapter 10 and 10th verse, " I am come that they might live." The minister made feeling reference to the estimable qualities of the deceased. Great sympathy is felt for Mr Coutts and family in their bereavement.

(Talbot Leader, Victoria – 10 November, 1917)

ON THE FIELD OF HONOR

352ND OFFICAL LIST

DISTRICT CASUALTIES

DIED FROM OTHER CAUSES

Pte R. H. Coutts, Evansford

(The Ballarat Courier, Victoria – 16 November, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

COUTTS – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Pte Robert H. Coutts, 39th Batt., who died at Grove Military Hospital, Tooting, London, on October 18, 1917.

Mother and son reunited.

Father, in Thy gracious keeping,

Leave we now Thy servants sleeping.

-(Inserted by his loving father, sister, and brothers)

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 18 October, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

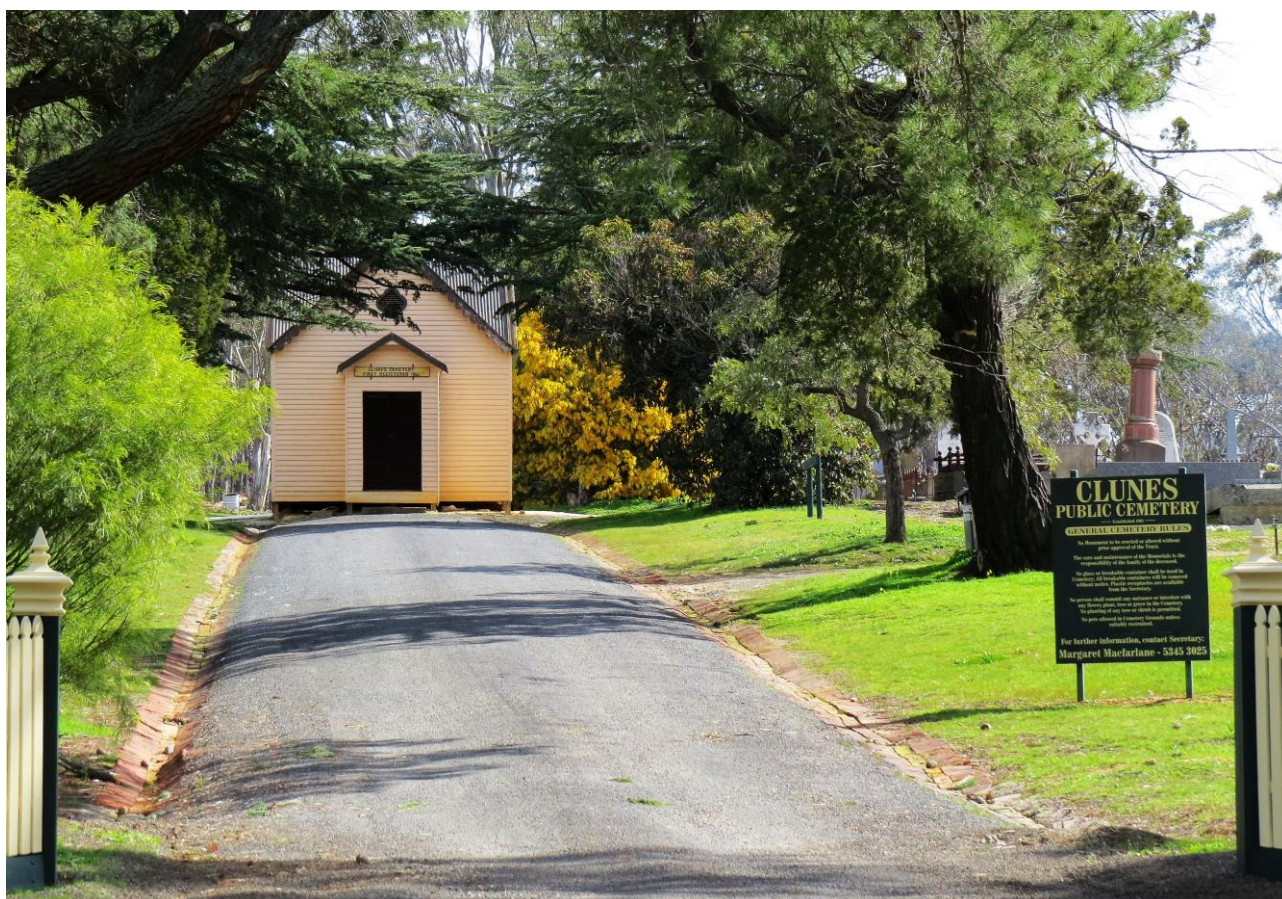
COUTTS – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Robert Hamilton, who died in Grove Military Hospital, Tooting, London, on 18th October, 1917.

Called to higher service above.

-(Inserted by his loving father, sister and brothers.)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 18 October, 1919)

Robert H. Coutts is remembered on his parents' headstone located in Clunes Cemetery, Victoria.

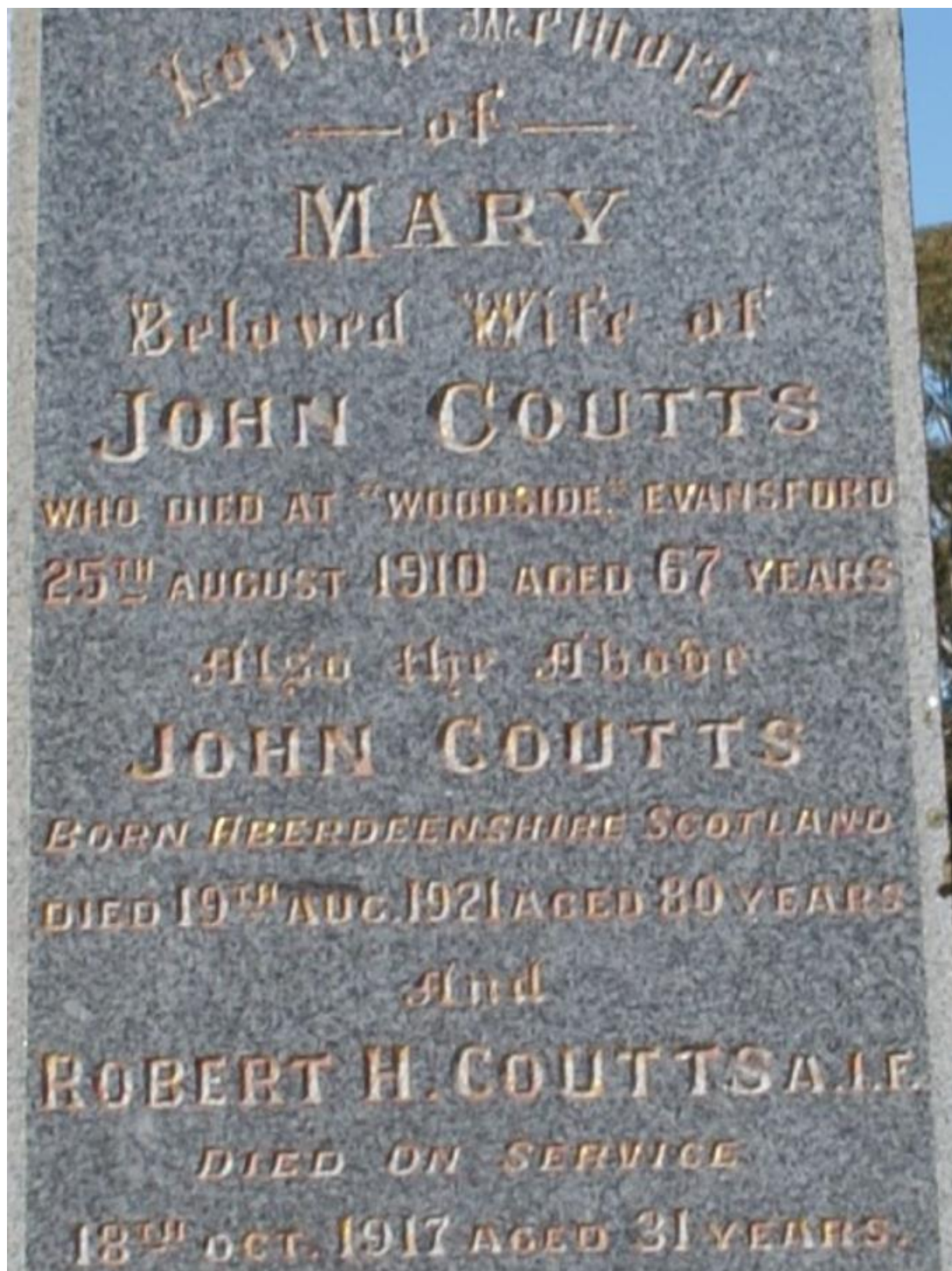


Clunes Cemetery, Victoria

(Photo by Rebecca McIntosh – Find a Grave)



(Photo by Shane – Find a Grave)



And

ROBERT H. COUTTS A.I.F.

Died On Service

18TH Oct. 1917 Aged 31 Years



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)

John Coutts, father of the late Private Robert Hamilton Coutts, wrote to The Secretary of Defence on 25th February, 1920 regarding the “tombstone of ex private R. H. Coutts. Kindly alter the star of David and have the Cross placed on instead, also the words” (see below)

Private R. H. Coutts does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

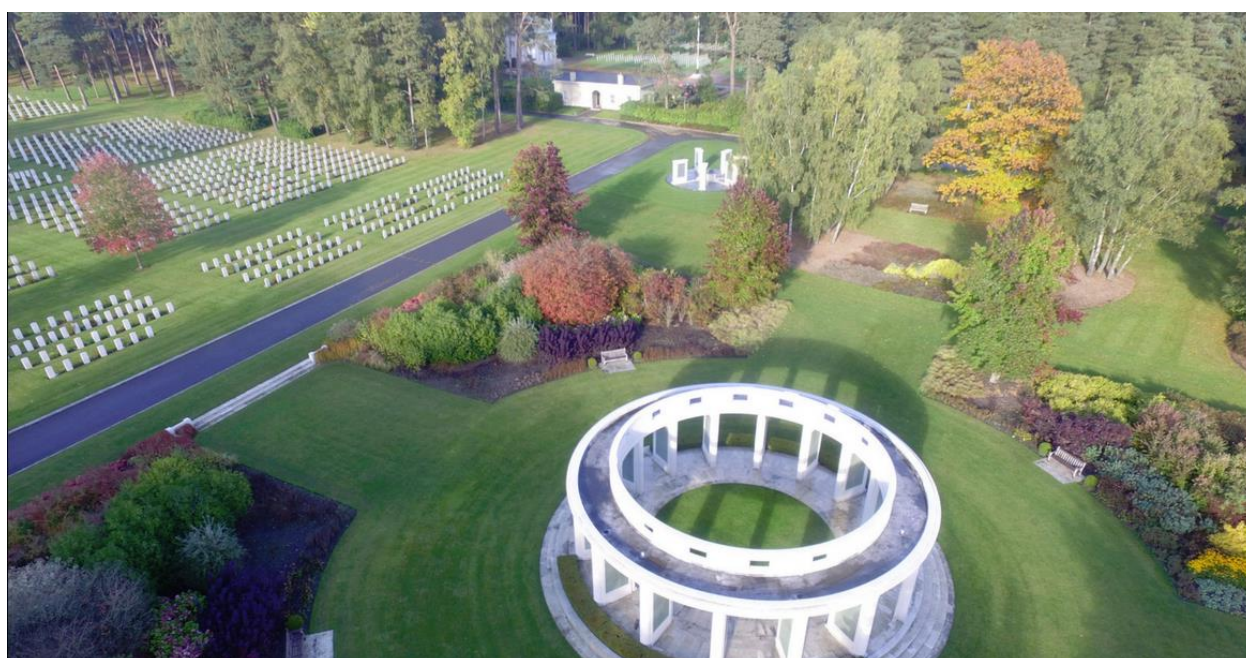
*Father In Thy Gracious Keeping
Leave We Now Thy Servant Sleeping*

Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England

Located 30 miles from London in Surrey, Brookwood Military Cemetery is the largest CWGC cemetery in the United Kingdom. The cemetery contains the graves of more than 1,600 servicemen of the British Empire in the First World War and over 3,470 from the Second World War.

Brookwood Military Cemetery lies adjacent to Brookwood Cemetery (The London Necropolis), a vast space which covers 500 acres. In 1917, an area to the north of the cemetery was set aside as Brookwood Military Cemetery for men and women of Commonwealth forces who died, many of battle wounds, in the London district. This site was further extended to accommodate Commonwealth casualties of the Second World War. *(Information from CWGC)*

There are 446 Australian War Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery – 351 from World War 1 & 95 from World War 2.



Brookwood Military Cemetery *(Photo from CWGC)*



Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photo by Magicfingers)



Australian Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photo by Magicfingers)



Australian Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery



Australian War Graves (Photo courtesy of Neil Bright 2020)

Photo of Private R. H. Coutts' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England.



(Photo by Wertypop – Find a Grave)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00185

A large crowd attends an A.I.F. military funeral at Brookwood Cemetery. In the foreground wooden crosses mark rows of graves. (Photo c1919)

Identified: Front row, left to right: Second Lieutenant Douglas Abbott Ferguson, Australian Flying Corps, died of accidental injuries 18 August 1918; Lieutenant (Lt) Francis John Smedley MC, 7th Battalion, died of wounds 20 August 1918. Second row: 6860 Private (Pte) James Alexander McKeown, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 20 June 1918; 3622 Pte S T Wilson, 2nd Australian Pioneers, died of wounds 4 July 1918; 2390 Sergeant Frederick Charles Stronell, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 9 July 1918; Lt Arthur Melville Lilburne MC, 6th Brigade Australian Field Artillery, died of disease 11 July 1918.

