

**Cambridge City Cemetery,  
Cambridge, Cambridgeshire  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**1695 PRIVATE**

**C. T. COWELL**

**23RD BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**23RD OCTOBER, 1917 Age 40**

## Charles Thomas COWELL

Charles Thomas Cowell was born around 1877 to parents James & Emily Cowell (nee Chamberlain). According to information supplied for the Roll of Honour by a next-of-kin - Charles Thomas Cowell was stated to have been born at Mortlake, Victoria. According to details on the Attestation Papers, Charles Cowell stated that he was born at Mulwala, New South Wales.

Charles Thomas Cowell attended Mortlake State School, Victoria.

Charles Thomas Cowell was a 38 year old, single, Labourer from Mortlake, Victoria when he enlisted at Yarrowonga, Victoria on 13th May, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 1695 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs J. Cowell, of Mortlake, Victoria.

Private Charles Thomas Cowell was posted to Depot on 13th May, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to 2nd Reinforcements of 23rd Battalion on 11th June, 1915.

Private Charles Thomas Cowell embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT Demosthenes (A64) on 16th July, 1915 with the 6th Infantry Brigade, 23rd Infantry Battalion, 2nd Reinforcements.

Private Charles Thomas Cowell disembarked at Alexandria on 10th January, 1916 from *Minneva* from Mudros.

Private Charles Thomas Cowell was absent without leave from 07.00 hrs on 18th January, 1916 to 21.30 hrs on 22nd January, 1916 – 98 hours while posted at Tel-el-Kebir. He was awarded 9 days detention & forfeited 5 days' pay.

Private Charles Thomas Cowell proceeded to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) from Alexandria on 19th March, 1916 & disembarked at Marseilles, France on 26th March, 1916.

Private Charles Thomas Cowell was absent without leave from 9.30 pm on 31st August, 1916 to 4 pm on 1st September, 1916 while posted in France. He was awarded 96 hours F. P. (Field Punishment) No. 2 & forfeited 2 days' pay.

Private Charles Thomas Cowell was wounded in action in France on 9th November, 1916. He was admitted to the 5th Australian Field Ambulance on 9th November, 1916 with shrapnel wounds to the face. Private Cowell was transferred to 38th Casualty Clearing Station on 9th November, 1916 then transferred to 7th Ambulance Train the same day. He was admitted to 9th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 10th November, 1916 with gunshot wounds to face. Private Cowell was listed to be invalided to England on 12th November, 1916 & embarked from Havre, France on 14th November, 1916 on Hospital Ship *Asturias*.

### **War Diary – 23rd Battalion:**

#### *Front Trenches*

*8th November, 1916 – Line heavily shelled at night. "A" Company relieved "C" Company on left flank at 6.30 pm. Part of "C" Coy moved to Carlton Camp remainder at Flers trench. Casualties 7 killed, 17 wounded. Strength 34 Officers 755 ORS.*

*9th November, 1916 – D Company moved up from Support in Wattle Trench to front line & relieved B Company on right flank. B Company moved back to Carlton Camp. Casualties 1 killed 7 wounded. Strength 34 Officers 715 ORS.*

*(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)*

Private Charles Thomas Cowell was admitted wounded to Beaufort War Hospital, England on 15th November, 1916. He was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot from Hospital in 25th November, 1916 & granted furlough.

Private Charles Thomas Cowell was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire from furlough on 12th December, 1916 & was medically classified as B1 A. (fit for overseas Training Camp in a few weeks).

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. Convalescing soldiers were also posted in various counties – one being Wiltshire.

Private Charles Thomas Cowell was Absent without Leave from No. 1 Command Depot from 9.30 am on 26th Decemebr, 1916 till 9 am on 15th January, 1917. For Breaking Camp he was awarded 21 days F. P. No. 2 (Field Punishment) & forfeited 21 days' pay on 16th January, 1917.

Private Charles Thomas Cowell proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 3rd February, 1917 from Infantry Draft Depot per S.S. *Victoria*.

Private Charles Thomas Cowell was marched in from England to 2nd Australian Divisional Base at Etaples, France on 4th February, 1917. He was marched out to join his Unit on 6th February, 1917 & re-joined his Unit ("B" Company, 23rd Battalion) in France from wounded on 8th February, 1917.

Private Charles Thomas Cowell was sent to Hospital on 2nd October, 1917. He was admitted to 3rd Australian Field Ambulance on 2nd October, 1917 with Renal Calculus. He was transferred to 10th Casualty Clearing Station & admitted - Cause N.Y.D. (Not yet determined). Private Cowell was transferred to Ambulance Train No. 20 on 3rd October, 1917 & was admitted top 2nd Australian General Hospital at Boulogne, France on 4th October, 1917 – N.Y.D. He was invalided to England on 5th October, 1917 on Hospital Ship *St. Denis* with Haematuria (blood in urine).

### **23rd Battalion**

The 23rd Battalion was raised in Victoria in March 1915 as the third battalion of the 6th Brigade. After initial training, it left Australia in March and arrived in Egypt, where it would complete its advanced training, in June.

As part of the 2nd Australian Division, the 6th Brigade landed at ANZAC Cove in early September. The 23rd Battalion was soon manning one of the most trying parts of the Anzac front line - Lone Pine. The fighting here was so dangerous and exhausting that battalions were relieved every day. The 23rd manned Lone Pine, alternating with the 24th Battalion, until they left Gallipoli in December 1915.

The battalion was next "in the line" on 10 April 1916, when it occupied forward trenches of the Armentieres sector in northern France. This relatively gentle introduction to the Western Front was followed in July by the horrific battles of Pozieres and Mouquet Farm, after which it was estimated that the Battalion lost almost 90 per cent of its original members.

After manning the front line throughout the bleak winter of 1916-17, the battalion's next trial came at the second battle of Bullecourt in May. After the failure of the first attempt to capture this town, by troops of the 4th Australian Division, this new attack was heavily rehearsed. The 23rd Battalion succeeded in capturing all of its objectives, and holding them until relieved, but, subjected to heavy counter-attacks, the first day of this battle was the battalion's single most costly of the war. Later in 1917 the battalion moved with the rest of the AIF to the Ypres sector in Belgium, and in October participated in the battle to secure Broodseinde Ridge.

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

Private Charles Thomas Cowell was admitted to 1st Eastern General Hospital, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England on 5th October, 1917 with Haemature – slight.

Private Charles Thomas Cowell died at 7.50 am on 23rd October, 1917 at 1st Eastern General Hospital, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England. A Post Mortem was conducted on 24th October, 1917 & the cause of death was found to be from Chronic Nephritis.

A death for Charles T. Cowell, aged 40, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England.

Private Charles Thomas Cowell was buried at 2 pm on 26th October, 1917 in Cambridge City Cemetery, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England – Plot number C. 3641 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private Charles Thomas Cowell - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was buried with Military Honours, Buglers and Bearers attached to the Hospital being in attendance. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside. Rev F. Foster, attached to 1st Eastern General Hospital, Cambridge, conducted the burial service. The coffin was draped with the Australian Flag and surmounted with several lovely floral tributes. An oak cross will be erected by the A.I.F.*

Names of relatives and friends present at the funeral: - Mr A. Cowell, 42 Marshall Road, Cambridge (Cousin), Miss M. Cowell and Miss A. Cowell, St. Ivo, Fan's Lane, West Byfleet, Surrey and Mr Marshall, 132 Norfolk Street, Cambridge.

The personal effects of the late Private Charles Thomas Cowell were forwarded to his mother – Mrs Emily Cowell as she was listed as the next-of-kin.

Base Records contacted Mrs J. Cowell, mother of the late Private Charles Thomas Cowell as she was listed as the next-of-kin, in October, 1920 asking if there were any nearer blood relatives than herself due 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 & specifically asking if the late Private Cowell's father was still alive. Mrs Emily Cowell replied to Base Records on 27th October, 1920 stating that the father of the late Private Charles Thomas Cowell – James Cowell had died on 25th February, 1917. Her son was unmarried so she was the closest blood relative.

Private Charles Thomas Cowell was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Cowell's widowed mother – Mrs E. Cowell, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent August, 1921 & Plaque sent September, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Charles Thomas Cowell – service number 1695, aged 40, of 23rd Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of James and Emily Cowell.

Private C. T. Cowell is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 98.

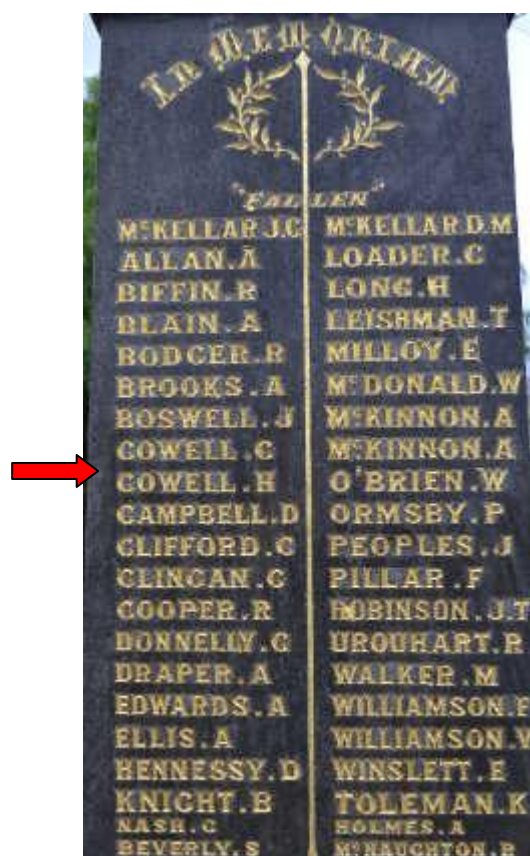


*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

C. Cowell & his brother H. Cowell are both remembered in the "Fallen" section of the Shire of Mortlake War Memorial, located at Jamieson Avenue & Officer Street, Mortlake, Victoria. Their brother C. M. Cowell is remembered on the "returned" section of the War Memorial.



Shire of Mortlake War Memorial (Photos from Carol's Headstones)





C. Cowell & his brother H. Cowell are both remembered in the “Fallen” section of the Mortlake State School No. 397 Honour Roll, located in Mortlake RSL Club, Shaw & Townsend Streets, Mortlake, Victoria. Their brother C. Cowell is remembered on the “returned” section.



**Mortlake State School No. 397 Honour Roll** (Photo from Monument Australia - Arthur Garland)

An Avenue of Honour is located on Hamilton Highway (Darlington Road), Mortlake, Victoria in which Monterey cypress pine trees were planted in 1919 to commemorate those who served in World War 1.

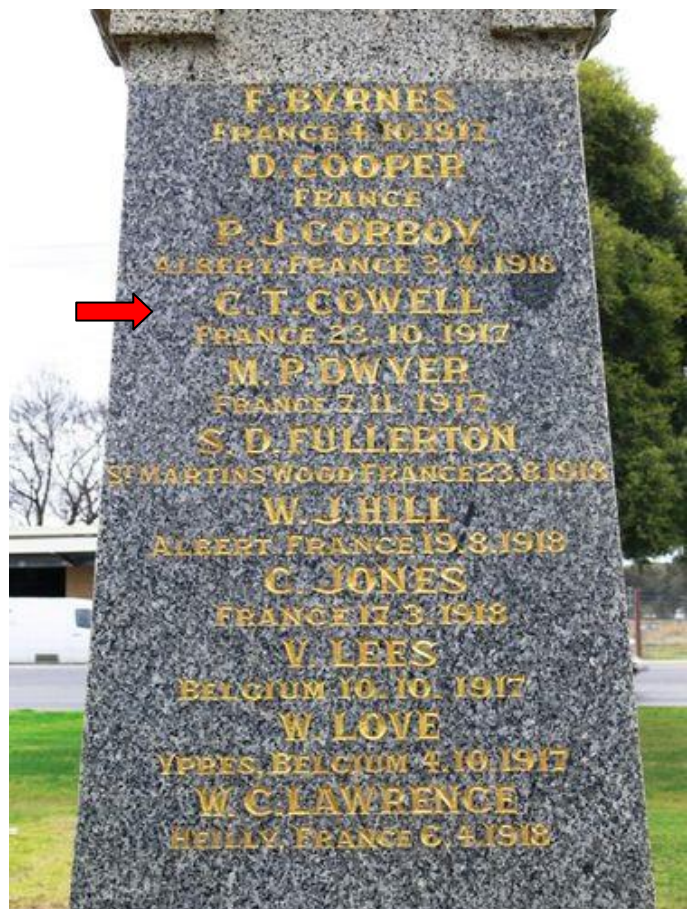


**Mortlake's Avenue of Honour** (Photos from Monument Australia – Graeme Saunders)





C. T. Cowell is also remembered on the Mulwala War Memorial, located in Lonsdale Park, Old Mill Road & Melbourne Street, Mulwala, NSW.



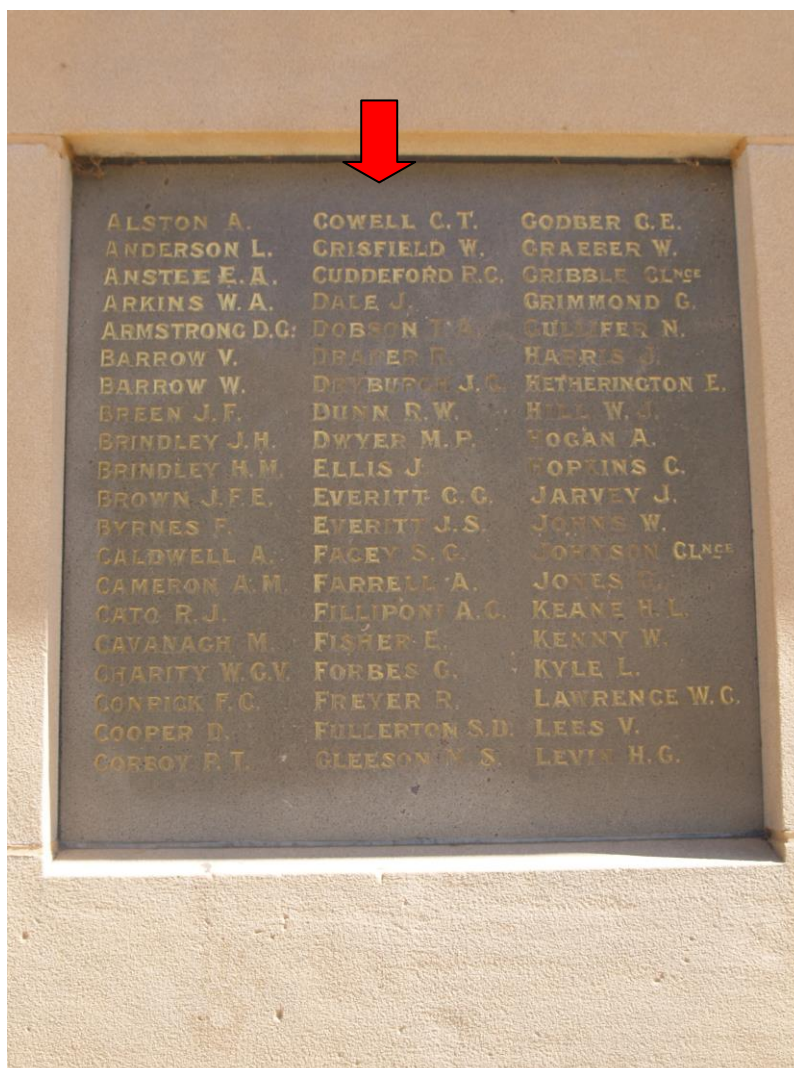
**Mulwala War Memorial** (Photos from Monument Australia – Graeme Saunders)



C. T. Cowell is also remembered on the Corowa & District War Memorial, located at Honour Ave & Sanger Street, Corowa, NSW.



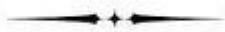
**Corowa & District War Memorial** (Photos from Register of War Memorials in NSW)





(78 pages of Pte Charles Thomas Cowell's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

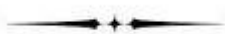
*Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll) & National Archives*



### Connected to Private Charles Thomas Cowell:

Younger Brother – Private Harry Stephen Cowell – 1403, 16th Battalion. Enlisted 18th November, 1914, aged 30. Embarked 22nd December, 1914. Died of wounds 3rd May, 1915 received at Gallipoli. Remembered on the Lone Pine Memorial, Turkey. Entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal.

Younger Brother – Private Claude Maxwell Cowell – 4269, 21st Battalion. Enlisted 27th November, 1915, aged 27. Embarked 7th March, 1916. Wounded in action in France 3rd May, 1917. Returned to Australia 15th September, 1918 for discharge for family reasons. Entitled to British War Medal & Victory Medal.



### Newspaper Notices

#### **248th and 249th CASUALTY LISTS**

The Victorian names are:-

Wounded

Pte C. T. Cowell, Mortlake

*(The Mildura Cultivator, Victoria – 13 December, 1916)*

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#### **IN MEMORIAM SERVICE**

At St. James' Church of England on Sunday evening, the vicar (Rev. T. Cole) made reference to the death of Mr. James Cowell, a former vestryman, and Pte. P. G. Webb, who made the supreme sacrifice on the battlefields of France. The words of the discourse were. "I am the resurrection of the life." After dealing with the great love for Jesus Christ by the sisters of Lazarus and his resurrection, the vicar said : "To-night they specially thought of one who had gone before, and who had passed to that other life. He referred to the late Mr. James Cowell. And whilst they thought of him that evening, he asked them to also think of one other person who a short time ago worshipped in St. James' Church, and was a member of the C.E.M.S., Pte. P. G. Webb, who has laid down his life on the battlefields of France for each one of them. When speaking of Mr. Cowell they thought of his long life now drawn to a close. They thought of him as a devoted husband and father, and in the various other relationships of his life. They remembered him as a neighbour, and the testimony of those who had known him for years and years—and he was for over fifty years in Mortlake—was his true friendship. He was a friend to many. Engaged in business during those trying early times, many was the person he befriended, "who perhaps came to him for help without the where withall; none went away empty. Such was the character of Mr. Cowell. They remembered him as a neighbor and a friend, and thought of him as a church-man. There was a time in his younger life when he was a regular church goer, when he was a member of the vestry, and whatever he did was well accomplished. They also thought, of him as one possessed with strong imperialistic feelings. Mr. Cowell was proud of the fact that he was an Englishman, and his sons were imbued with the same feelings. **Mr. Cowell gave three sons to the Empire. The first to enlist — Pte. Harry Cowell— gave his life at Gallipoli. The second — Pte. Charles Cowell — has been wounded in France, and the third — Pte. Claude Cowell—was a devoted member of St. James' Church, who always remembered his church and pastor. They thanked God for the man who gave such fine sons,** and they thanked God for the long life which had drawn to a close. It drew to a close in quietness and peace. During the last few months Mr. Cowell's mind went back to his boyhood days, remembering the hymns he learned at Sunday school. What a memory! One hymn in particular was :

"There is a happy Land

Far, far away.,,

That evening they prayed and hoped Mr. Cowell had found that happy land, and perfect peace and joy. They left Mr. Cowell in God's gracious keeping."

*(Mortlake Dispatch, Victoria – 7 March, 1917)*

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## **DEATHS ON SERVICE**

Late on Monday evening the Rev. T. Cole, vicar of St. James' Church of England, Mortlake, received the sad message that Private Chas. Cowell had died of illness in Cambridge Hospital, A few days ago the relatives were notified that Pte Cowell had been admitted to a hospital. Deceased was a son of Mrs and the late Mr James Cowell, or Mortlake, and enlisted from New South Wales in the early stages of the war. He was on the troopship Southland when torpedoed.

*(Terang Express, Victoria – 2 November, 1917)*

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## **DIED ON SERVICE**

COWELL – On the 23rd October, at Cambridge, England, Private Charlie Cowell, second son of Emily and the late James Cowell, Mortlake.

*(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 17 November, 1917)*

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## **LATEST CASUALTY LIST**

### **DIED OF WOUNDS**

Pte C. T. Cowell, Mortlake

*(Warrnambool Standard, Victoria – 26 November, 1917)*

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## 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 C. T. Cowell does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

## Cambridge City Cemetery, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England

Cambridge City Cemetery, Cambridge (known locally as Newmarket Road Cemetery) contains 1,019 Commonwealth War Graves – 186 from World War 1 & 833 from World War 2.

The 1st Eastern General Hospital, with 1,173 beds, was posted to Cambridge during the First World War, initially at the Leys School and Trinity College, later in huts. The First World War burials in Cambridge City Cemetery are mostly in two plots, one in the southern part of the burial ground, known as the Dominion Plot, and the other on the northern boundary. The Cross of Sacrifice stands on the western border of the Dominion Plot, while in the centre of the other is a memorial cross of Portland stone which was erected by private subscription. The Second World War graves are also mainly in two War Graves Plots with a few others scattered throughout the cemetery. The general Service plot was established in 1940, and the Air Force plot in 1942 for the burial of casualties from the Air Force stations set up in the eastern counties during the war. These included Bomber Command bases in Lincolnshire and fighter stations in Norfolk and Suffolk. The Stone of Remembrance, which was unveiled by Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Tedder in July 1951, stands near the centre of the Air Force plot. Cambridge City Cemetery contains 181 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and 829, (inclusive 3 unidentified), from the Second World War. The cemetery also contains four non-war service burials and ten war graves of other nationalities.

*(Information & photos from CWGC)*









Photo of Private C. T. Cowell's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Cambridge City Cemetery, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England.



*(Photo by Julia&keld – Find a Grave)*





**Entrance to Cambridge City Cemetery & Map (below)** (Photos by Julia&keld – Find a Grave)

