Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England

War Graves

Lest We Forget

World War 1

5572   PRIVATE

E. W. COX

21ST BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

6TH APRIL, 1917   Age 44

Edward William COX

Edward William Cox was born at Adelaide, South Australia in 9th December, 1865 to parents Luke & Hannah Cox (nee Saunders).

The 1913, 1914 & 1916 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Kooyong, subdivision of Auburn, Victoria recorded Edward William Cox, Carpenter of 29 Loch Street, Auburn & his wife Bessie Alma Cox, Home Duties, of 20 Loch Street, Auburn.

The 1919 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Kooyong, subdivision of Auburn, Victoria recorded Edward William Cox, Carpenter of 29 Loch Street, Auburn & his wife Bessie Alma Cox, Home Duties, of 31 Loch Street, Auburn.

Edward William Cox stated he was a 44 year old, married, Carpenter from 31 Lock Street, Auburn, Victoria when he enlisted in Melbourne, Victoria on 12th April, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 5572 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Bessie A. Cox, 31 Lock Street, Auburn, Victoria. Edward Cox stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served for 3 years with Volunteer 2nd Battalion Infantry in Adelaide & had been discharged in 1891 for Time expired.

Private William Cox was posted to "C" Company, 22nd Depot Battalion at Royal Park, Victoria on 14th April, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 14th Reinforcements of 21st Battalion at Royal Park on 26th May, 1916. Private Cox was transferred to 21st Battalion on 1st August, 1916.

Private Edward William Cox embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Shropshire (A9)* on 25th September, 1916 with the 6th Infantry Brigade, 21st Infantry Battalion, 15th Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 10th November, 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 Edward William Cox proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 13th December, 1916 on *Princess Henrietta* from 6th Training Battalion.

Private Edward William Cox was discharged to Etaples T. B. on 5th January, 1917 from 2nd Divisional Rest Camp at Boulogne, France.

21st Battalion

The 21st Battalion was raised, as part of the 6th Brigade, at Broadmeadows in Victoria in February 1915. Its recruits hailed from all over the state. The later enlistment of these men, and their average age of 29, would seem to indicate a more considered decision to enlist that set them apart from those who did so amidst the heady enthusiasm of late 1914…..

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

[Note: There is no record of when or how Private Cox was returned to England]

Private Edward William Cox was admitted to The County of Middlesex War Hospital, Napsbury, near St. Albans, England on 17th January, 1917 with Lumbargo, He was discharged on 2nd February, 1917 for furlough & was to report to Perham Downs on 17th February, 1917.

Private Edward William Cox was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 19th February, 1917 from furlough.
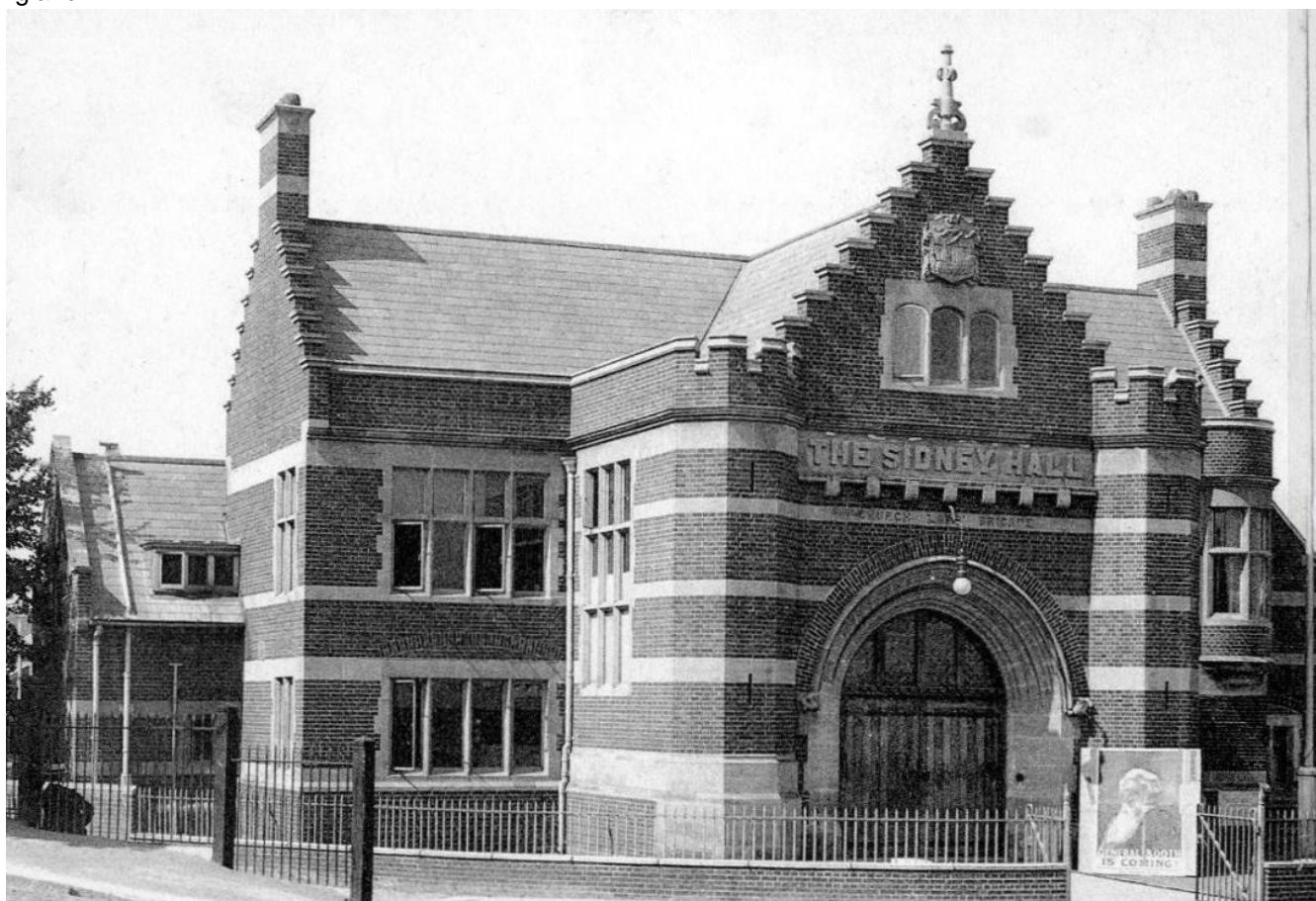
A Medical Report was completed on Private Edward William Cox on 22nd February, 1917 at No. 1 Command Depot, Perham Downs, Wiltshire, England. His disability was listed as Rheumatism & Senility which had originated in January, 1917 at Etaples, France. "*Had been in France since 12th December but had been in Hospital for*

Rheumatism for two weeks before arriving at Etaples. Broke down there under Training, being unable to carry pack. He never reached the line." The Medical Report stated that Private Edward William Cox was "51 years of age – Activity limited." The Officer in charge of the case recommended that Private Edward William Cox be discharged as permanently unfit. The Medical Board found that Private Edward William Cox was permanently unfit for General Service but fit for Home Service.

Private Edward William Cox was marched out from No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 23rd February, 1917 & was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, Dorset on the same day.

Private Edward William Cox died on 6th April, 1917 at Sidney Hall Military Hospital, Weymouth, Dorset, England from Haemorrhage of Brain.

A death for Edward W. Cox, aged 44, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Weymouth, Dorset, England.

Private Edward William Cox was buried on 10th April, 1917 in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England – Grave number 2683.

This is now recorded by Commonwealth War Graves as Plot number III. C. 2609 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

From the burial report of Private Edward William Cox - *Coffin was Elm Wood. Deceased arrived here from Perham Down 23.2.17 and was finally classed "C.2" – Hammock. He took seriously ill on 4.4.17 and was immediately removed to Sidney Hall. He died at 12.30 pm (midday). The cause of death was Cerebral Appoplexy.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Edward William Cox contains a letter from Medical Officer, Military Hospital, Weymouth which reads: "*On the evening of the 5th April 1917 Pte Cox A.I.F. who had been sent tot England from Etaples suffering from Rheumatism and was awaiting a boat to Australia; whilst sitting before a fire had an attack of giddiness and fell to the floor. He was picked up and seen by the medical officer who found he was*

unable to speak coherently and had lost the use of his right arm and leg. He was sent into the Weymouth Military Hospital in an unconscious condition did not regain consciousness and died on the following day from Haemorrhage of the brain."

Private Edward William Cox was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Cox's widow – Mrs B. A. Cox, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent November, 1921 & Plaque sent May, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Edward William Cox – service number 5572, aged 44, of 21st Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Luke & Hannah Cox; husband of Bessie Alma Cox, of 31 Loch St., Auburn.

Private E. W. Cox is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 93.

Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(62 pages of Private Edward William Cox'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

———+———

THE 288th CASUALTY LIST

DIED OF OTHER CAUSES

Private E. W. Cox, Auburn

(*The Mildura Cultivator*, Victoria – 25 April, 1917)

<u>Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones</u>

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 E. W. Cox does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England

Weymouth became a depot for Australian forces in 1916 and 83 of the 147 First World War burials in Melcombe Regis Cemetery are of Australian servicemen; most of these graves are scattered in the old part. The 36 Second World War burials are in the extension. The cemetery also contains seven war graves of other nationalities and one non-war burial.

(Information from CWGC)

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL   D00333

Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919

Identified, front row, left to right: unidentified; Butler; 5917 Private Edgar Allan Thornell, 22nd Battalion (Bn), died 9 August 1918; 1207 Corporal Jesse Adams Davis, 12th Bn, died 15 November 1918.

Back row: 5329 Private Frederick Albert Archer, Anzac Provost Company, died 6 November 1918; 5990 Private Albert Robert Blackmore, 12th Bn, died 2 November 1918; 11099 Driver Matthew Charles Percival Nettle, 6th Australian Field Artillery Brigade, died 22 October 1918; 3942 Private Walter Alick Weckman, 51st Bn, died 9 November 1918.

Some of the Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919

Identified, left to right: Captain Francis Arthur Deravin, Australian Army Medical Corps, died 8 July 1917 aged 41 years (large headstone); 138 Private Louis Nelson Matthews, 27th Battalion, 4 July 1917; 5082 Private Victor George Smith, 21st Battalion, died 13 November 1918.

(Photo courtesy of Steve Stewart)

(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

Photo of Private E. W. Cox's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England.

(Photo courtesy of Allan Wood)