

**Ocklynge Cemetery,
Eastbourne, East Sussex**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2314 PRIVATE

H. C. GEE

33RD BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

21ST JUNE, 1917 Age 23

Ever Beloved

Our Hero

Harry Charles (Peter) GEE

Harry Charles Gee was born at Singleton, NSW around 1893 to parents Charles Hong Gee and Caroline Jane Gee (nee Cleworth). (Charles Hong Gee was born in 1865 in Guangdong, China). Charles Gee married Caroline J. Cleworth in 1894 in Singleton, NSW.

Harry Charles Gee was a 22 year old, single, Labourer from Manilla, NSW when he enlisted on 11th May, 1916 with the 9th Infantry Brigade, 33rd Infantry Battalion, 4th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2314 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Charles Hong Gee, P.O., Manilla, NSW.

Private Harry Charles Gee was posted to Depot Battalion at Armidale, NSW from 11th May, 1916 to 25th August, 1916. He was transferred to 5th Reinforcements, 33rd Battalion at Rutherford, NSW from 26th August, 1916 to 19th September, 1916. Pte Gee was transferred to 4th Reinforcements, 33rd Battalion at Rutherford on 19th September, 1916.

Private Harry Charles Gee embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Borda* (A30) on 17th October, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 9th January, 1917.

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.

Pte Gee was marched into 9th Training Battalion at Durrington, Wiltshire from Australia on 12th January, 1917.

Pte Gee proceeded overseas from 9th Training Battalion at Durrington, Wiltshire via Folkestone on 13th March, 1917.

Pte Gee was marched in to 3rd A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples on 14th March, 1917. He was marched out to his Unit on 17th March, 1917.

Pte Gee was taken on strength with 33rd Battalion in the field on 19th March, 1917.

Pte Gee wounded in action in the field (according to family information he was wounded in the Battle of Messines) on 8th June, 1917. He was taken to 9th Field Ambulance with a gunshot wound to mouth then transferred to Casualty Clearing Station. Pte Gee was admitted to 83rd General Hospital at Boulogne on 9th June, 1917. Pte Gee was invalided to England on 14th June, 1917 on Hospital Ship "*St. Patrick*".

Pte Gee was admitted to Military Hospital (Fairfield Court Hospital) at Eastbourne, East Sussex on 15th June, 1917 wounded slightly. However, the Hospital Admissions form states "G.S.W. Face, lip, tongue, tonsil." Another Hospital form states "G.S.W. through lip, upper maxilla, tongue, tonsil & muscles of neck."

Private Harry Charles Gee died at 10.10 pm on 21st June, 1917 at Military Hospital (Fairfield Court Hospital), Eastbourne, East Sussex, England from wounds received in action in France.

A death for Harry C. Gee, aged 23, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Eastbourne, East Sussex, England.

A Jury Inquest was held into the death of 2314, Pte H. C. Gee on 25th June, 1917. The finding was "*Failure of respiration and of the hearts action while under anaesthetic (Ether and Chloroform) properly administered for a necessary operation for wound of throat received in action in France.*"

Private Harry Charles Gee was buried at 3 pm on 26th June, 1917 in Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne, East Sussex, England – Plot number Y. 1473 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Pte H. C. Gee - Coffin was good, polished Elm. The deceased soldier was buried with full Military Honours. Band, Firing Party and Trumpeters of the Cavalry Command Depot, Eastbourne were in attendance. The coffin was draped with the "Union Jack" and surmounted with several lovely floral tributes. A party of Australian and British

patients from the various Military Hospitals in Eastbourne followed the remains to the Cemetery. The Service at the graveside was conducted by the Rev. J. C. Piper, Chaplain to the Military Hospital, Eastbourne. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside. No relatives were present at the funeral. Temporary memorials are not permitted to be erected in the above Cemetery.

A War Pension was granted to Caroline Gee, mother of the late Private Henry Charles Gee, 2314, 33rd Battalion, in the sum of £1 per fortnight from 26th August, 1917.

Pte Harry Charles Gee was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Gee's father, Mr C. H. Gee, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent September, 1921 & Plaque sent August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Harry Charles Gee – service number 2314, aged 23, of 33rd Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Charles and Caroline Jane Gee, of Manilla, New South Wales. Born at Singleton, New South Wales.

H. C. Gee & his younger brother R. C. Gee are both remembered on the Manilla & District Soldiers Memorial Hall located at 193 Manilla Street, Manilla, NSW.



Manilla & District Soldiers Memorial Hall

(Photo from War Memorials Register NSW – Des Stark, Manilla RSL Sub Branch)



Private H. C. Gee is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 122.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(55 pages of Pte Harry Charles Gee'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 Harry Charles Gee:](#)

Younger brother – Private Raymond Clifford Gee, 4007, 1st Field Ambulance, 6th Reinforcements. Enlisted 3rd April, 1915, aged 19. Wounded in action in France. Returned to Australia 2nd January, 1919. Entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal. Awarded the Gallipoli Medallion. All medals donated to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Raymond Clifford Gee died in 1979, aged 83.



Newspaper Notices

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

LIST No. 326

NEW SOUTH WALES

DIED OF WOUNDS

Pte Harry C. Gee (Manilla)

(*The Maitland Weekly Mercury*, NSW – 28 July, 1917)

Fallen Heroes

THREE MANILLA SOLDIERS MAKE THE GREAT SACRIFICE

On Thursday morning Rev. T. J. Redhead was advised that Private 2314, H. C. Gee had died in Eastbourne Hospital. The deceased soldier was 23 years of age, and was the eldest son of Mr and Mrs Chas. Gee, of Manilla. His younger brother (Bob), who enlisted prior to him, and has seen severe active service, is at present an inmate in a military hospital suffering from trench fever. In the hush of sorrow, which has come upon the community, genuine feeling is expressed for the parents and other members of the bereaved family. No particulars have been received regarding the cause of the death of the gallant young man who now lies in an honoured grave far from home.

(Manilla Express, NSW – 30 June, 1917)

ROLL OF HONOUR

NORTHERN MEN WOUNDED AND FALLEN

Manilla, Friday

Mr and Mrs Gee have received a letter from Lieut.-Colonel Morhead, referring to the death of their son Pte H. C. (Peter) gee, in which he writes: "I deeply deplore the death of such a fine soldier. Of his conduct and work I can speak only in the highest terms. He was reliable, conscientious, hard-working, courageous, honourable. His comrades miss him, and we all mourn the death of so splendid a man."

(Daily Observer, Tamworth, NSW – 27 October, 1917)

ROLL OF HONOUR

GEE – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Private Henry Charles Gee age 23 years, who died of wounds received at Messines on 21st June, 1917.

*Under the flag with the five starred cross
The pride of the southern sea
He laid down his life in the deadly strife
To Keep Australia free.*

*In a soldier's grave he lies sleeping,
One of earth's bravest and best,
In our hearts we shall miss him for ever,
Though we know he is only at rest.*

Inserted by his sorrowing parents and brothers and sister.

GEE – In loving memory of our my beloved brother, Private Henry Charles Gee, age 23, who died of wounds received at Messines on 21st June, 1917.

In the bloom of his life God claimed him,
In the prime of his manhood days,
None knew him but to trust him,
None spoke his name but to praise

There came a day when the roll was called
That he did not answer "Here"
He slept with his comrades his long sleep
And died without a fear.

Inserted by his sorrowing sister, Doll.

(Manilla Express, NSW – 20 June, 1918)

In Memoriam

In loving memory of our dear son and brother Private H. C. Gee, 33rd Batt. died at Eastbourne Hospital, England, from wounds received at battle Messines.

*Our thoughts often wander
To our dear one far away
Where they laid our dear son and brother
Just two years ago to day
One of the best that God could send
Beloved by all, a faithful friend
Only those who have lost are able to tell
The pain at heart
At not saying farewell*

Inserted by his loving Parents, Brothers, and Sister Doll.

(*Manilla Express*, NSW – 23 June, 1919)



Pte Harry Charles (Pete) Gee



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)

A letter from Base Records, dated 5th November, 1920, to Mrs C. J. Gee, Post Office Manilla, NSW, advised that the inscription that she had requested for the headstone of her son, the late Private H. C. Gee, needed to be abbreviated as there was only space for 66 letters (including the spaces between words). Base Records also pointed out that the Star of David had been requested and as the late Pte Gee was a member of the Church of England they suggested that she may prefer to have the Cross inscribed.

Pte H. C. Gee does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Ever Beloved Our Hero

Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne, Sussex

Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne, Sussex contains 175 War Graves. There are 129 War Graves from World War 1 & 44 War Graves from World War 2. There are also 1 Belgian & 1 Brazilian Foreign National burials from World War 1. A Cross of Sacrifice stands near the Chapel, facing the main entrance.

During World War 1, Eastbourne contained a very large Military Convalescent Hospital, originally called Eastbourne Military Hospital, which opened in April, 1915. From January, 1917 to October, 1919 it became No. 14 Canadian General Hospital.

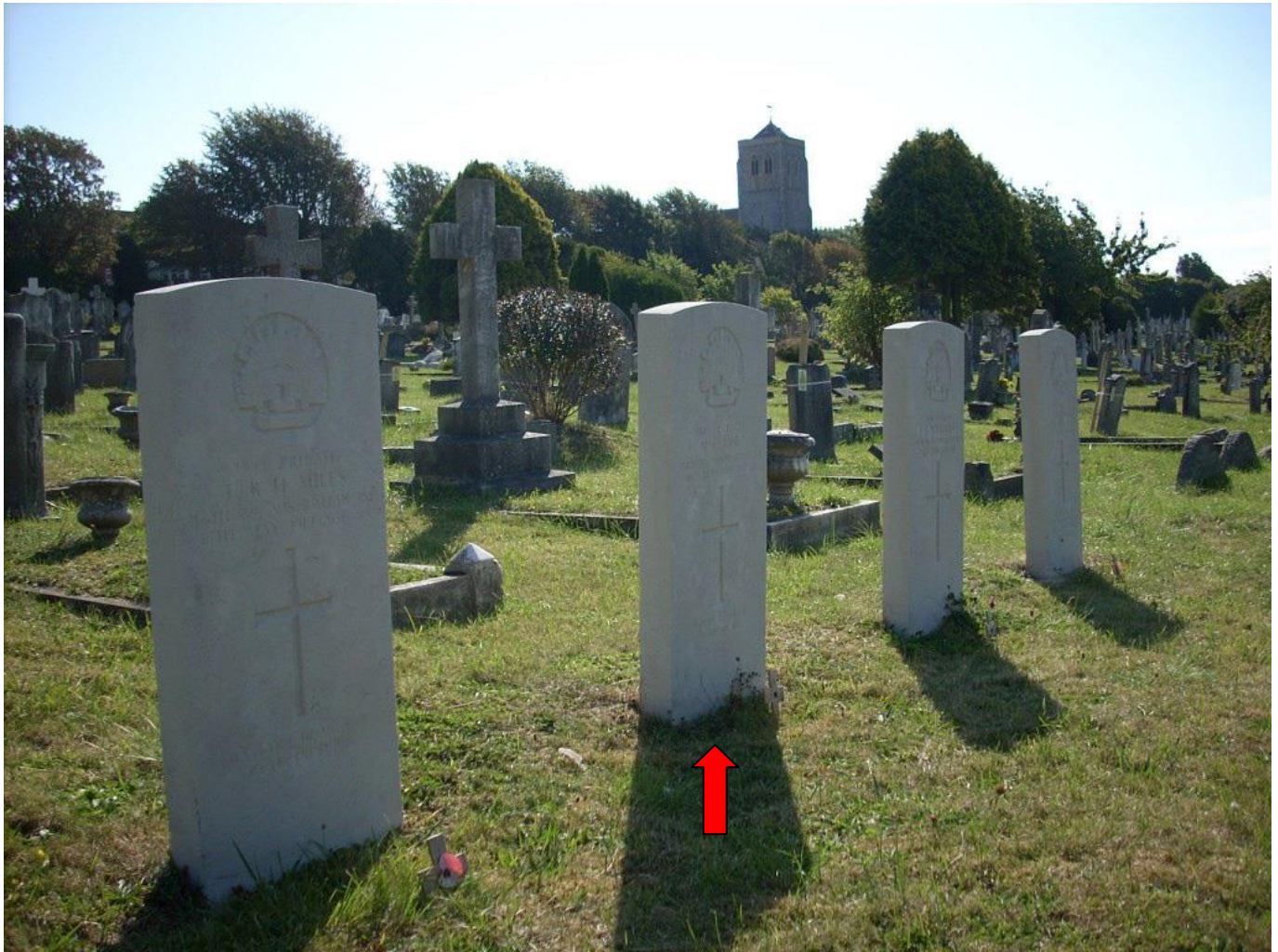


Cross of Sacrifice at Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne, Sussex *(Photos from CWGC)*

Photo of Pte H. C. Gee's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne, Sussex, England.



(Photo courtesy of Roberto Lagnado)



The four Australian Soldiers together

(L to R): Pte T. R. H. Miles, 46th Battalion (died 16 May, 1917); **Pte H. C. Gee, 33rd Battalion (died 21 June, 1917);** Pte J. S. Williams, 29th Battalion (died 25 January, 1918); Pte C. E. Emblen, 32nd Battalion (died 2 October, 1916).