

**Netley Military Cemetery,  
Hampshire, England  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**1865A PRIVATE**

**T. A. HARDING**

**46TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**16TH SEPTEMBER, 1916 Age 19**

*Thy Will Be Done O Lord*

## Thomas Arthur HARDING

Thomas Arthur Cross was born at Deptford, near Bairnsdale, Victoria in 1897 to mother Emily Leah Cross. The father was listed as "unknown" on the Victorian Births, Deaths and Marriages.

Thomas Arthur Harding attended School at "The Farm" Deptford, Victoria.

John Edward Harding, father of Thomas Arthur Cross/Harding, died in 1915 in Victoria.

Thomas Arthur Harding was a 19 year old, single, Sleeper-cutter from Deptford, via Bairnsdale, Victoria when he enlisted on 14th January, 1916 in Melbourne, Victoria with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 1865A & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Emily L. Harding, of Deptford, via Bairnsdale, Victoria.

Private Thomas Arthur Harding was posted to "B" Company, 22nd Depot Battalion for recruit training. He was transferred to Signal School at Broadmeadows from 31st January, 1916 to 2nd March, 1916. Pte Harding was transferred to Broadmeadows Reserve in 3rd March, 1916 then transferred to 2nd Reinforcements of 46th Battalion at Broadmeadows on 29th March, 1916.

Private Thomas Arthur Harding embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT Euripides (A14) on 4th April, 1916 with the 46th Infantry Battalion, 2nd Reinforcements.

Private Thomas Arthur Harding was transferred from 12th Training Battalion & taken on strength with 46th Battalion at Serapeum on 2nd June, 1916 from 2nd Reinforcements.

Private Thomas Arthur Harding proceeded to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) from Alexandria on *Kinfauns Castle* on 2nd June, 1916. He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 8th June, 1916.

Private Thomas Arthur Harding was sent sick to Hospital on 19th June, 1916. He was admitted to 12th Field Ambulance on 19th June, 1916 then transferred to 12th Casualty Clearing Station the same day with Mumps. Pte Harding was transferred & admitted to 7th General Hospital at St. Omer on 20th June, 1916. He was discharged to duty on 8th July, 1916 & rejoined his Unit on 11th July, 1916.

Private Thomas Arthur Harding was wounded in action on 30th August, 1916. He was admitted to 12th Field Ambulance on 30th August, 1916 then transferred to Casualty Clearing Station with shrapnel wounds to back & abdomen. Pte Harding was transferred & admitted to 3rd Stationary Hospital at Rouen, France on 10th September, 1916. He embarked for England on 13th September, 1916 on Hospital Ship *Aberdonian*.

### 46th Battalion

The 46th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 24 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Approximately half of its new recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 14th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 14th, the new battalion was composed mostly of men from Victoria, although some of the reinforcements hailed from New South Wales and Western Australia.

As part of the 12th Brigade of the 4th Australian Division, the 46th Battalion arrived in France on 8 June 1916, destined for the Western Front. It participated in its first major battle at Pozieres. Initially, the battalion provided carrying parties for supplies and ammunition during the 2nd Division's attack on 4 August, and then, with its own division, defended the ground that had been captured. The 46th endured two stints in the heavily contested trenches of Pozieres, as well as a period in reserve.

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

War Diary – 46th Battalion

Albert – Aug 29/Sept 2

Relieved 28th Battalion, 7th Brigade, A.I.F. at 8 am.

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*Climatic Conditions – Very heavy rain commenced on 29th about mid-day and continued without stop till morning of 31st. Trenches being Waist Deep un mud and water in many places.*

*Enemy – A few Germans were seen in front of our line at intervals but no working parties or movement of troops was observed. The enemy Artillery was very active during the whole time – especially at night. On night of 31st this culminated in a very heavy bombardment of High Explosive and shrapnel accompanied by considerable use of tear shells and indirect M.G. fire.*

*On afternoon of 30th August from mid-day till 6 pm bombardment was also intense.*

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*Patrols – Owing to wet weather patrols could do very little but they went out at night and reported enemy holding trench in our front about 200-500 yards distant. Patrols could not work by day as they were under direct observation by enemy.*

*Operations – Left company under Captain Waine assisted in operations by 4th A.I. Brigade against MOUQUET FARM on night of 29/30 by forming a defensive right flank to the attack.*

*Remarks – Conditions under which line was held were bad owing to the wet and cold, and many men suffered from climatic conditions and from strain as the trenches afford practically no cover from enemy fore owing to there being no dug-outs and being exposed to enfilade fire from both flanks. It was necessary to leave the cooks in CHALK PIT but every endeavour was made to get hot meals into the line. This was impossible for the first two days during the wet weather and the food and tea was cold when it reached the line. This was most unfortunate as the men were greatly in need of something warm. When the weather cleared, conditions improved slightly and some wort of warm meal was provided.*

Casualties	Officers	Other ranks
<i>Killed</i>		11
<i>Wounded</i>	2	102
<i>Missing</i>		6

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Thomas Arthur Harding was admitted to the University War Hospital, Southampton, Hampshire, England on 15th September, 1916 with gunshot wounds to back & abdomen. His condition was listed as dangerously wounded.

Private Thomas Arthur Harding died on 16th September, 1916 at Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, Hampshire, England from wounds received in action in France– gunshot wounds to back & abdomen. (Place of death – Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley – listed on “Casualty Form – Active Service”, “Field Service “ form, “Statement of Service” form

[Note: The “Report of Death of a Soldier “form has the place of death listed as University War Hospital, Southampton. The O/C of the University War Hospital, Southampton sent a telegram to Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F., London stating that Pte Harding had “died today”. The final summary form (page 33/34) in the Service Record file for Private Thomas Arthur Harding has “*Died wounds 16.9.16 University War Hosp. Southampton.*”]

A death for Thomas A. Harding, aged 19, was registered in the September quarter, 1916 in the district of South Stoneham, Hampshire, England.

Private Thomas Arthur Harding was buried on 18th September, 1916 in Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire, England – Plot number C.E.1852 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Private Thomas Arthur Harding was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Harding's widowed mother – Mrs E. L. Harding, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent January, 1922 & Plaque sent July, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Thomas Arthur Harding – service number 1865A, aged 19, of 46th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of John Edward and Emily Leah Harding, of corner of Main & Dawson Sts., Bairnsdale, Victoria.

Private T. A. Harding is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 141.



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

T. H. Harding is remembered on the Shire of Bairnsdale Roll of Honour, located at East Gippsland Historical Society Museum, 40 Macarthur Street, Bairnsdale, Victoria.

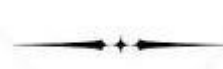




Shire of Bairnsdale Roll of Honour (Photos from Monument Australia – Chris McLaughlin)

(34 pages of Private Thomas Arthur Harding'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





AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

DA14350

**Private Thomas Arthur Harding**



### **Newspaper Notices**

**FIELD OF HONOR**

**FOR KING AND COUNTRY**

**PTE T. A. HARDING**

Pte T. A. Harding, of Deptford, died in the University Military Hospital at Southampton on the 15th inst.

*(Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle, Victoria – 30 September, 1916)*

## **Death**

### **ON ACTIVE SERVICE**

HARDING – Died on 16th September, of wounds in France, Thomas Arthur, beloved son of E. L. and late John Harding, of Deptford. Aged 19 years and 9 months.

Deeply mourned.

*(Every Week, Bairnsdale, Victoria – 5 October, 1916)*

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### **AUSTRALIA'S ROLL OF HONOR**

The 229th and 230th casualty lists.....

WOUNDED AND DANGEROUSLY ILL

VICTORIA

T. A. Harding, Deptford

*(The Age, Melbourne, Victoria – 9 October, 1916)*

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### **728 NAMES IN 232ND LIST**

Died of Wounds

Pte T. A. HARDING, Deptford

*(The Bendigo Independent, Victoria – 10 October, 1916)*

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### **BEREAVEMENT NOTICE**

Mrs J. HARDING and Family, of Deptford, thank their many friends for letters, cards and kind expressions of sympathy in the sad loss of their son on active service.

*(Every Week, Bairnsdale, Victoria – 19 October, 1916)*

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### **IN MEMORIAM**

#### **On Active Service**

HARDING – In loving memory of my dear son, Private T. A. Harding, Deptford, who died on 16th September, 1916, of wounds received in France. (Inserted by his loving mother.)

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

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#### **On Active Service**

HARDING – In loving memory of my dear son, and our dear brother, Tom, who died of wounds in England, 16th September, 1916.

“To live in hearts you leave behind is not to die.”

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.

Tho' the rolling seas divide us

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And you sleep on a foreign shore,  
Remembrance is a relic  
That will live for evermore.  
-Inserted by his loving mother, brothers and sisters.  
(Every Week, Bairnsdale, Victoria – 20 September, 1917)

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### **On Active Service**

HARDING – In loving memory of my dear son and our dear brother, Tom, who died of wounds 16th September, 1916.

Over the seas lies our young hero sleeping,  
In years but a boy yet he did a man's part,  
Bravely and nobly he bore all war's hardships;  
He fought for his country with true loyal heart  
So sadly we miss him, our dear son and brother.  
He was always light hearted and happy and free.  
We shall meet him again in God's Heavenly Kingdom,  
When the bright morn shall break, and all shadows flee.

-Inserted by his loving mother, sisters and brothers.  
(Every Week, Bairnsdale, Victoria – 19 September, 1918)

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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 T. A. Harding does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*Thy Will Be Done O Lord*



## Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire, England

Netley Military Cemetery is a permanent military cemetery, the property of the Ministry of Defence. The cemetery was at the back of the Royal Victoria Military Hospital and was used during both wars for burials from the hospital. The cemetery contains 637 First World War burials but only 35 from the Second World War. In addition to the Commonwealth graves, there are a number of war graves of other nationalities including 69 German graves dating from the First World War.

*(Information & photos from CWGC)*



Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire





**Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire** (Photo above - Andrea Charlesworth; below - darealjolo)



Photo of Private T. A. Harding's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire, England.





**Original Cross markers – Netley Military Cemetery**