

**No. 2 Burial Ground,  
Cromer, Norfolk  
War Grave**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**5392 PRIVATE**

**A. HARRIS**

**37TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**12TH NOVEMBER, 1917 Age 36**

*Your Name*

*Will Ever Be Sacred*

*To Those*

*That Love You Dear*

## Albert HARRIS

Albert Ernest Harris was born in 1881 at Benalla, Victoria to parents William and Catherine Harris (nee Murphy).

Albert Harris married Ada Mary Clifford (nee Ryan), a widow, on 27th December, 1911 at St. John's Church, Alexandra.

Grace Clifford, daughter of Ada Clifford had been born in 1911 at Alexandra, Victoria. Violet Irene Harris, daughter of Albert & Ada Harris, was born in 1914 in Wangaratta, Victoria. Ada Mary Clifford also had a daughter from her first marriage – Ruby Clifford.

Albert Harris was a 34 year old, married, Creamery Man from Wangaratta, Victoria when he enlisted on 14th January, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 5392 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs A. Harris, of Wangaratta, Victoria.

Private Albert Harris was posted to "N" Company of 4th Depot Battalion at Seymour on 19th January, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 11th Reinforcements of 23rd Battalion on 11th March, 1916. Private Harris was transferred to Reserve Company at Broadmeadows on 18th March, 1916 then transferred to 17th Reinforcements of 8th Battalion on 23rd March, 1916.

Private Albert Harris embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Euripides (A14)* on 4th April, 1916 with the 8th Infantry Battalion, 17th Reinforcements & disembarked at Suez on 14th May, 1916.

Private Albert Harris embarked from Alexandria on H.M.T. *Huntgreen* on 31st May, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 12th June, 1916.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training (& convalescing) was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Private Albert Harris proceeded to France from No. 2 Training Battalion at Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 29th August, 1916. He was marched in to 1st A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples from England on 30th August, 1916.

Private Albert Harris was sent to Hospital on 19th September, 1916 from 1st A.D.B.D. at Etaples. He was admitted to 26th General Hospital at Etaples, France on 19th September, 1916. Private Harris embarked from Calais on 26th September, 1916 for England on Hospital Ship *Stad Antwerpen* with a skin disease.

Private Albert Harris was admitted to The Royal Infirmary, affiliated with Sunderland Hospital, on 27th September, 1916 with Peristitis Tibia right (serious). He was discharged to furlough on 29th January, 1917 & was then to report to Perham Downs.

Private Albert Harris was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire from furlough on 14th February, 1917 & medically classified as B1 A (Unfit for service for several weeks).

Private Albert Harris was marched in from Parkhouse, Wiltshire to Infantry Draft Depot on 5th May, 1917.

Private Albert Harris proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 22nd May, 1917 from Perham Downs.

Private Albert Harris was marched in to 1st A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Havre on 23rd May, 1917. He was marched out to 37th Battalion on 15th June, 1917 & was taken on strength of 37th Battalion in the Field on 18th June, 1917.

Private Albert Harris was set to Hospital sick on 20th September, 1917. He was admitted to 10th Field Ambulance on 20th September, 1917 with Appendicitis. Private Harris was discharged to duty on 24th September, 1917 & rejoined his Battalion the same day.

Private Albert Harris was wounded in action on 12th October, 1917. He was admitted to 11th Field Ambulance on 13th October, 1917 with "S.W. L. Leg, S.W. R. thigh & leg" (shrapnel wounds) then transferred to 3rd Field Ambulance on 14th October, 1917 with shrapnel wounds to left leg. Private Harris was transferred to 2nd Canadian

Casualty Clearing Station on 14th October, 1917 where he was operated on due to shrapnel wounds to left leg with gas gangrene & a fractured tibia. Amputation occurred. He was then transferred to Ambulance Train on 15th October, 1917 & was admitted to 3rd Canadian General Hospital at Etaples, France with shrapnel wounds to legs, right thigh amputated. Private Harris was transferred to Boulogne & embarked on 20th October, 1917 on Hospital Ship *Princess Elizabeth* for England.

#### War Diary – 37th Battalion

12. 10. 17 – *Battalion attacked. (Diary from 7/10/17 until 15/10/17 is attached in Narrative vide Appendix III)*

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#### *THE ATTACK*

*At 5.25 am at Zero Hour – on the 12th the attack began: the formation being.....*

#### *SUMMARY*

*An area of enemy country some 200 yards in depth by 500 yards in width was captured by the Battalion; also about 100 prisoners who belonged chiefly to Bavarian Regiments.*

<i>OUR CASUALTIES</i>	<i>Killed</i>	<i>Wounded</i>	<i>Missing</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Officers</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Other Ranks</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>170</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>232</i>

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Albert Harris was admitted to Auxiliary Military Red House Hospital, Cromer, Norfolk, England on 21st October, 1917 with shrapnel wounds to left leg (amputated leg).

Private Albert Harris died on 12th November, 1917 at Red House Hospital, Cromer, Norfolk, England from Uraemia (following wounds received in action).

A death for Albert Harris, aged 36, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Erpingham, Norfolk, England.

Private Albert Harris was buried at 2 pm on 15th November, 1917 in New Cemetery Cromer, now known as Cromer No. 2 Burial Ground, Norfolk, England – Plot number A. 389 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private Albert Harris - *Coffin was good, polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a full Military Funeral. The Gun Carriage, drawn by 6 horses, was supplied by the Royal Engineers stationed at Cromer. The funeral left the Red House Hospital at 2 pm and Australian soldier patients followed the remains in 3 mourning coaches. A Firing Party and Pipe Band was furnished by Cameron Highlanders. A service was conducted in the Cemetery Chapel, and at the graveside by Rev. Davey, The Vicarage, Cromer, Norfolk. The "Lament" was played by a Piper of the Cameron Highlanders. No. 2829 Pte, G. V. Harris, 4th Pnr Bn (Brother of deceased) Brigadier-General R. Scott-Kerry, Lt. Col. Campbell, Lieut Wishart, Captain W. K. Anderson, 5th Black Watch, Surgeons Gordon of Sherringham and Grant of Cromer, all the nurses of the Hospital, and members of Kings Own Scottish Borderers, Black Watch, Seaforth and Gordon Highlanders and Royal Scots were present at the funeral. Wreaths from the following persons were placed on the grave:-*

*Household Staff, Red House Hospital.*

*Australian Patients*

*Nursing Staff.*

*Wounded "Tommies"*

*Lady Ladyland Barratt (for deceased's Mother)*

*Mr Gray, of Sunderland*

*Mr & Mrs Pattison of Sunderland*

*Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral. An oak cross will be erected by the A.I.F. Names of relatives or friends present at the Funeral – Brother 2829 Pte G. V. Harris, 4th Pioneer Battalion, No. 3 Command Depot, Hurdcott.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Albert Harris contains a letter from Ella G. Taylor, Registrar, Auxiliary Hospital, The Red House, Cromer which reads: "*Re Pte A. Harris who died in the above Hospital 12.11.17, Lady Layland Barratt the Commandant wrote personally to the mother of deceased at Wangaratta. Pte Harris was admitted to Hospital from overseas 21.10.17 in a very bad condition. He was wounded 12.10.17 in the left leg and the Tibia fractured. Gas gangrene made it necessary to amputate the left leg 14.10.17. On admission the stump was in good condition and nearly healed. From the date of admission Pte Harris was in a drowsy condition, the kidneys being in a bad state and he passed peacefully away 12.11.17 from Uraemia. Pte Harris was buried with full military honours, the General in charge of the District and other Officers being present, the interment took place at the New Cemetery Cromer in a private grave No. A 380.*"

Private Albert Harris requested in his Will dated 16th July, 1917, that all his personal estate be bequeathed to his wife Ada Harris, Rowan St, Wangaratta, Victoria.

A War Pension was granted to Ada Harris, of Ely Street, Wangaratta, widow of the late Private Albert Harris, in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 15th January, 1918. Pensions were also granted to Ruby Clifford, stepdaughter of the late Private Albert Harris, in the sum of 20/- per fortnight; Grace Harris, daughter of the late Private Albert Harris, in the sum of 15/- per fortnight & Violet Harris, daughter of the late Private Albert Harris, in the sum of 10/- per fortnight – all commencing from 15th January, 1918.

Base Records contacted Mrs C. Harris, Murphy Street, Wangaratta, mother of the late Private Albert Harris, in March, 1918, enquiring into the whereabouts of her son's next-of-kin - his wife Ada Harris, as communications addressed to her at Wangaratta had been returned. Notcutt & Purbick Solicitors replied to Base Records on behalf of Mrs C. Harris, stating that she did not know the address of Mrs Ada Harris who had left Wangaratta soon after the death of her husband was notified. Base Records then contacted the Deputy Commissioner of Pensions to enquire about the present address of Mrs Ada Harris, widow of the late Private Albert Harris.

Private Albert Harris was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Harris's widow - Mrs A. Harris, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent December, 1921 & Plaque sent October, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Albert Harris – service number 5392, aged 36, of 37th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of William and Catherine Harris; husband of Ada Harris, of 478 Union St., West Brunswick, Victoria, Australia.

Private A. Harris is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 128.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

A. Harris is remembered on the Benalla War Memorial, located in Benalla Botanical Garden, Bridge Street (Midland Highway), Benalla, Victoria.



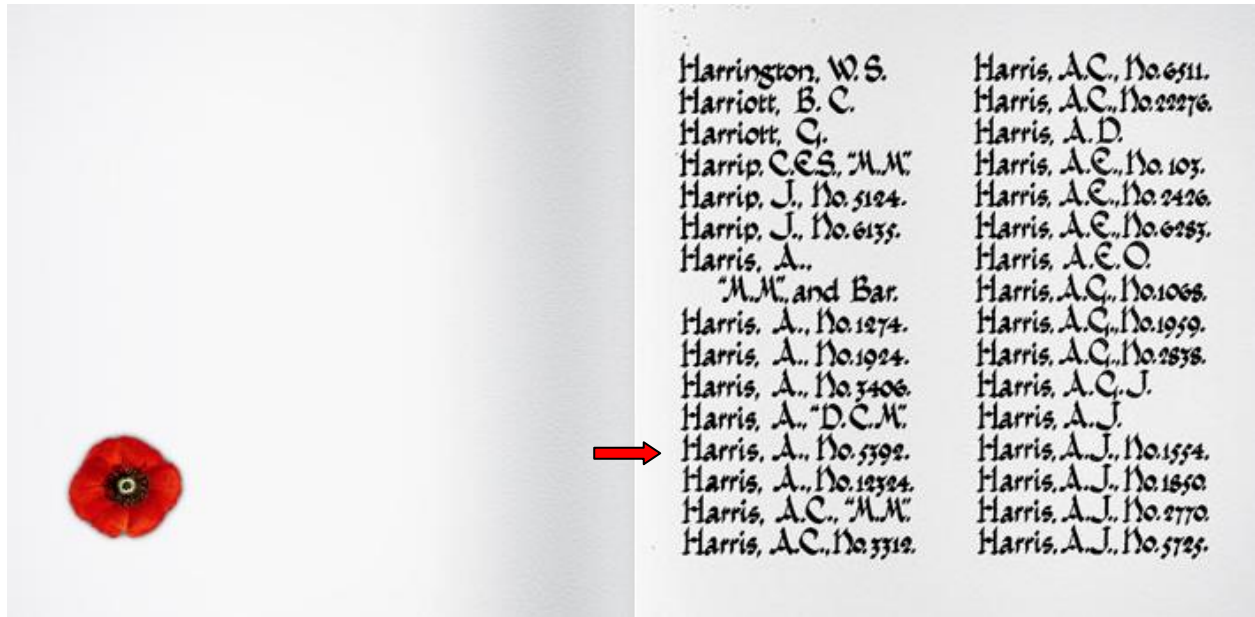
**Benalla War Memorial** (Photos from AWM – Places of Pride)

A. Harris is remembered on the Wangaratta War Memorial, located in Monument Gardens, Docker & Ovens Streets, Wangaratta, Victoria.



**Wangaratta War Memorial** (Photos from Monument Australia)

A. Harris is remembered in the Book of Remembrance at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, Victoria.



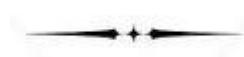
(70 pages of Private Albert Harris's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

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





**Private Albert Harris**



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **NEWS OF SOLDIERS**

#### **KILLED IN ACTION**

#### **PTE A. HARRIS**

Official information was conveyed to Mr. Walter Harris, blacksmith, Wangaratta, by Rev. O. Seward, that his son, Pte. Albert Harris was, killed in action last month in France. The late Pte. Harris, was a married man, and leaves a wife and two young children, for whom with the parents heartfelt sympathy will be expressed. At the time of enlisting he was engaged as manager of a butter factory at Alexandra, and left Australia early in 1916. He had been in France for about 12 months. Brothers, and sister of deceased are:--Messrs M. J. and W. O. Harris, and Pte. Wm. Harris (recently returned wounded), Wangaratta, Mesdames T. Brown, Balldale, A. Speary, Eldorado; Misses Lucy and Bertha Harris, Wangaratta.

*(Wangaratta Chronicle, Victoria – 17 November, 1917)*

## **Australians and the War**

### **Killed**

Pte ALBERT HARRIS, son of Mr and Mrs W. Harris, Wangaratta, was killed in in action on France on 23rd October,. When he enlisted early in 1916 he was manager of a butter factory at Alexandra. He leaves a widow and two young children. A brother, Pte W. Harris, has just returned home wounded.

*(The Age, Melbourne, Victoria – 20 November, 1917)*

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## **AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES**

### **LISTS Nos. 365 AND 366**

#### **Victoria**

#### **DIED OF WOUNDS**

HARRIS, A., Wangaratta, 12/11/17

*(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 10 December, 1917)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

HARRIS – In loving memory of Private A. Harris, who died of wounds received in France 12th November, 1917. Gone, but not forgotten.

-Inserted by his wife and children

*(The Age, Melbourne, Victoria – 12 November, 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)*

A letter from Base Records, dated 15th July, 1921, to Mrs A. Harris. 478 Union Street, West Brunswick, Victoria advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of her husband, the late Pte A. Harris, had not been answered & non-receipt of a reply within 21 days would have to be accepted as indicating that no further action was to be taken.

Private A. Harris does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*Your Name Will Ever Be Sacred To Those That Love You Dear*



## Cromer No. 2 Burial Ground, Norfolk, England

There are 11 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-18 war and a further 13 of the 1939-45 war, 1 of which is an unidentified seaman of the Merchant Navy.

*(Information from CWGC)*



**Cromer No. 2 Burial Ground, Norfolk** *(Photo above by Adrian S. Pye; below by ColinA - Find a Grave)*



Photo of Private A. Harris's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Cromer No. 2 Burial Ground, Norfolk, England.



*(Photo by Nigel Battley – Find a Grave)*

## Australian woman travelled thousands of miles to visit soldier grandfather's grave in Cromer

David Bale

david.bale2@archant.co.uk @DBaleReporter



David Rowley pictured at the headstone of Albert Harris at Cromer cemetery a few years ago.  
Picture: ANTONY KELLY

*Former soldier David Rowley will once again make his way to Cromer's new cemetery over the festive period to leave poppies on the military graves and make sure those that died are remembered.*



Judith Chapman, left, on her visit to Cromer. With David Rowley on the right. In between them are Ian and Margaret Alexander.  
Picture: David Bale

One of those he particularly looks out for is that of Private Albert Harris, an Australian soldier who was buried at the cemetery in 1917 during the First World War.

Mr Harris' story has been at the forefront of Mr Rowley's thoughts this year as his granddaughter Judith Chapman travelled from Melbourne, Australia, for Armistice Day and to visit the grave on the 100th anniversary of his death.

She found out that her grandfather was buried at the cemetery after an article in the North Norfolk News about Mr Rowley which found its way down under via the internet.

Mr Rowley, 73, who lives near the cemetery in Cromer, said: "I have been in contact with Judith ever since then and she combined a visit to the grave with a lecture she was giving at Cambridge University. She's a professor in Australia.



Albert Harris, who died in 1917, is buried in Cromer Cemetery. Picture: Submitted.

"She was very thrilled to be here on the 100th anniversary of her grandfather's death. She had promised her mum, who is no longer with us, that she would do her best to visit the grave on the 100th anniversary, to put flowers there."

Private Harris was injured in France in 1917, was shipped to the Red House Auxiliary Hospital in Cromer, now Halsey House, but died just weeks later.

The Australian Infantry 8th Battalion private 5392 was from Wangaratta, Victoria. He enlisted on January 14, 1916, and embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on April 4 that year, on board His Majesty's Australian Transport A14 Euripides.

He died just 10 months later on November 12, 1917, age 36, after being wounded a month earlier in his left leg.

It was amputated on October 14, and on his arrival in Cromer a doctor's report said he had been in a good condition.

But with damaged kidneys, Private Harris "passed peacefully away" and was buried with full military honours, more than 10,000 miles away from his wife Ada in Victoria.

(Eastern Daily Press, England – 23 December, 2017)