

**Brookwood Military Cemetery,  
Brookwood, Surrey, England**

**War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**2711 PRIVATE**

**B. J. HARRIS**

**7TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**22ND JANUARY, 1919**

## Bertie John HARRIS

Bertie John Harris was born at Richmond, Victoria in 1892 to parents James & Catherine Harris (nee Brazzil).

The 1914, 1915 & 1917 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Bendigo, subdivision of Long Gully, Victoria recorded Bertie John Harris, Miner Hayes Street.

Bertie John Harris was a 22 year old, single, Miner from Hayes Street, Ironbark, Bendigo, Victoria when he enlisted on 13th July, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Methodist & his next of kin was listed as his father – Mr J. Harris, Ironbark, Bendigo, Victoria. Bertie John Harris stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously served with 8th Infantry A. I.R. for 3 years.

Private Bertie John Harris was posted to A.I.F. Reserve Company on 20th July, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to 8th Reinforcements of 7th Battalion on 24th August, 1915.

Private Bertie John Harris, Service number 2711, embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Anchises (A68)* on 26th August, 1915 with the 7th Infantry Battalion, 8th Reinforcements.

The Statement of Service form has the following entry "*Recommended by S.M.O. to be examined by Medical Board on arrival in Egypt.*" (S.M.O. = Senior Medical Officer)

[Note: The Embarkation Roll has his name listed as "*John Bertis Harris*"]

Private Bertie John Harris was admitted to Anzac Advance Base at Mudros on 4th December, 1915 from Alexandria. He was discharged to join his Unit on 6th December, 1915 & joined 7th Battalion at Anzac on 7th December, 1915.

Private Bertie John Harris disembarked from Empress of Britain at Alexandria on 7th January, 1916 (after the evacuation of Gallipoli).

Private Bertie John Harris embarked from Alexandria on 2\_ March, 1916 to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) & disembarked at Marseilles, France on 31st March, 1916.

Private Bertie John Harris was wounded in action in France on 19th August, 1916. He was admitted to 2nd Field Ambulance on 20th August, 1916 then transferred the same day to 1st A.R.S. with Shell Shock & was discharged to duty on 23rd August, 1916. Private Harris rejoined 7th Battalion on 24th August, 1916.

### 7th Battalion

The 7th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. Like the 5th, 6th and 8th Battalions, it was recruited from Victoria and, together with these battalions, formed the 2nd Brigade.

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After the withdrawal from Gallipoli in December 1915, the battalion returned to Egypt. In March 1916, it sailed for France and the Western Front and entered the front line trenches for the first time on 3 May. The battalion's first major action in France was at Pozieres in the Somme valley where it fought between 23-27 July and 15-21 August.....

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

Base Records wrote to Mr J. Harris, Hayes Street, Bendigo, Victoria on 19th September, 1916 to advise that No. 2711 Private B. J. Harris, 7th Battalion, had been wounded.

## War Diary – 7th Battalion

### Right Sector IIIV Front Pozieres:

Aug.  
19th.  
1916.

2200

Captain Swift and party reported. Sent to assist in consolidation. "A" & "B" Coys were withdrawn during the morning and Right Portion taken over by "A", and Left Portion by "D" who held salient on BAPAUME ROAD where we linked up with right of 6th. BN. Immediately in rear of this, the ruin of the WINDMILL which is a mound of battered brick about 15 feet high, and which (being in about the highest point of the ridge) forms an excellent aiming mark for his artillery. Consequently during the three succeeding days, the shelling on this portion was very heavy and accurate. However, by careful distribution, casualties were considerably lessened, the majority being shell shock. Work was impossible during the day but at night the construction of a Strong Point on BAPAUME ROAD and at head of PURBRICKS SAP was pushed on with, while communication trenches were improved to forward line. Saps were also commenced running forward toward enemy lines. Word received to relieve 6th BN in POZIERES north of BAPAUME RD. on morning of 13th inst. 8th BN to extend to the left & take over our front. Relief cancelled by BDE. STRENGTH. 27 OFF. 570 O.Rs. (Lt R. Stewart repd. for duty) CASUALTIES. 10 OFF. 154 O.Rs.

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Bertie John Harris was attached for duty to 1st Pioneer Battalion from 28th September, 1916 for Mining duties. He rejoined the 7th Battalion on 3rd January, 1917 from detachment.

Mr James Harris, Hayes Street, Bendigo, Victoria, wrote to Minister of Defence on 22nd September, 1916 stating: "I have been informed from the Base Records Office Victoria Branch Sept 19, 1916 that my son No 2711 Private B. John Harris 7 Battalion 8 Reinforcement A.I.F. has been Wounded in France But I want to know from the Defence Department what date he was wounded also the nature of his wounds, weather serious or other wise also what Hospital he is in. Hoping your Department will favour me with the information I ask for as soon as possible, Hoping to meet with an early and favourable reply."

Senator Albert Blakey, Commonwealth of Australia, wrote to Base Records on 9th October, 1916 with the following letter regarding Private B. J. Harris, No 2711, 7th Battalion, 8th Reinforcements: "Could you kindly inform me the date the above soldier was wounded & the nature of his injuries, His father Mr Jas. Harris of Hayes St, Ironbark, Bendigo has asked me "to enquire."

Base Records replied to Senator Blakey, The Senate, Parliament House, Melbourne, on 15th October, 1916 with the following: ".....beyond the bare cabled advice that he was wounded (somewhere in France) some date prior to 9/9/1916, no further reports have been received. It is the practice of the Overseas Authorities to specify in advices, cases which are either serious or dangerous or which develop into either of these categories, and we are instructed to assume that the absence of further reports is to be taken that satisfactory progress is being maintained. Needless to say, any further reports received, will be promptly transmitted to Mr Harris."

Base Records had sent a similarly worded reply to Mr J. Harris on 4th October, 1916.

Private Bertie John Harris was on Leave to UK from 25th January, 1918 & returned from Leave on 10th February, 1918.

Private Bertie John Harris was "With Unit" on 10th August, 1918. (Note: this was usually recorded when there had been no movement, illness etc noted on a soldier's Casualty Form – Active Service for a period of time).

Private Bertie John Harris proceeded on Leave to England on 5th January, 1919 from the Field. He was approved Leave from 8th January, 1919 to 22nd January, 1919. Private Harris was admitted to 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford, England on 20th January, 1919 with Bronchitis while on Leave. He was reported to be dangerously ill with Influenza on 21st January, 1919. The Hospital Admissions form recorded: "Severe attack of Influenza 21.1.19. Dyspnoea pains in chest & back. Cough & mucus expectorations. Temp 102 / p. 120. 22.1.19 Temp 102.4 / resp 50 mucus expect. Moist Rales over chest & back. Patient steadily became worse and died at 10.55 pm."

Private Bertie John Harris died at 10.55 pm on 22nd January, 1919 at 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford, England from Influenza.

A death for Bertie J. Harris, aged 26, was registered in the March quarter, 1919 in the district of Dartford, Kent, England.

Private Bertie John Harris was buried on 28th January, 1919 in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England – Australian Military Burial Ground - Plot number 182793.

*From the burial report of Private Bertie John Harris - Coffin was good. Polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a full Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Australian Flag, and conveyed to the graveside, where the "Last Post" was sounded by a bugler of the A.I.F. London, and the burial service conducted by Chap the Rev: Bladen of the 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield. The grave will be turfed and an oak cross erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Base Records wrote to Mr J. Harris, Hayes St, Bendigo, Victoria on 28th March, 1923 stating that the site of his son's grave in Brookwood Military Cemetery had been officially registered as Plot 4 Row K Grave 15.

This is now recorded by CWGC as Memorial reference - IV. K. 15. Private B. J. Harris now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Bertie John Harris contains the following letter: *"Died 22.1.19 at 10.55 pm from pneumonia following Influenza. He was on leave from France – he was adm. to 3rd A.A.H. 20/1/19 and was under care of Capt. Proctor and latterly by Cp. McLean (two very attentive doctors, who both have a lot to do with influenza). He belonged to W. Methodist Church & Chaplain Bates & Chaplain Davidson both attended him. He reported sick from Horseferry Rd & walked into hospital but was in high fever. Sister Lee Brown was nursing sister. I saw Drs & Sister who told me Harris was delirious great part of time, while in hospital. All attention & kindness were given him.*

*Effects: - Wristlet watch, Paybook, No. 7044 – original book. Cash £11:11:3. Stamps 1/-, False teeth, 2 wallets (with photos & letter), Identity disc, purse with foreign money (14 coins, 4 notes) tobacco pouch & cigarette case and cloak room ticket for stuff at cloakroom, which is being secured by Military Authorities. The body is to be buried in (Australian) Brookwood Cemetery tomorrow (27-1-19).*

*R.P.T. (?) 26.1.19 3AHH"*

Loyal James Roe Lodge, Bendigo wrote to Base Records on 19th April, 1919 requesting a certificate relating to the death of Private B. J. Harris, 277 for Lodge purposes.

Base Records replied to The Secretary, Loyal James Roe Lodge on 28th April, 1919, enclosing as requested a certificate of report of death of the late No. 2711 Private B. J. Harris, 7th Battalion.

Private Bertie John Harris was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Harris' father – Mr J. Harris, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent September, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Bertie John Harris – service number 2711, of 7th Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

B. J. Harris is remembered on the Roll of Honour located at the Soldiers' Memorial Institute, Pall Mall, Bendigo, Victoria.



**Soldiers' Memorial Institute, Bendigo**

*(Photos from Bendigo Soldiers Memorial Institute Military Museum)*





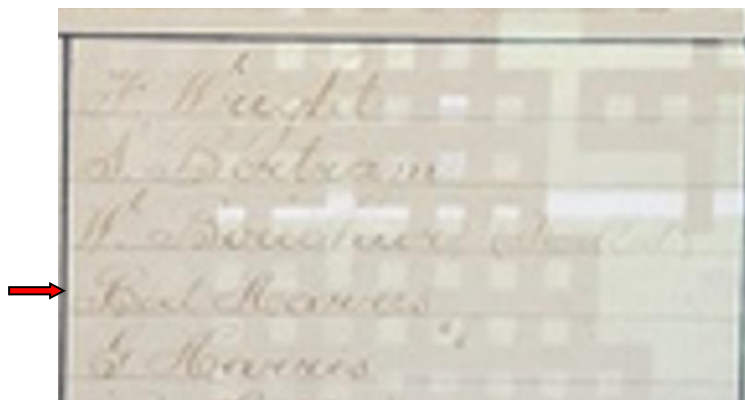
(Panel photo from AWM Places of Pride – John-Paul Ernst)



Bert Harris is remembered on the Webster Street Methodist Church Sunday School Roll of Honour, located in Bendigo Military Museum, Pall Mall, Bendigo, Victoria.



Webster Street Methodist Church Sunday School Roll of Honour (Photo from VWMA – Liz Williamson)



B. J. Harris is remembered on the James Roe Lodge (Manchester Unity Lodge) Honour Roll, located in Bendigo Military Museum, Pall Mall, Bendigo, Victoria.



James Roe Lodge (Manchester Unity Lodge) Honour Roll (Photo from Monument Australia)



Private B. J. 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 50.

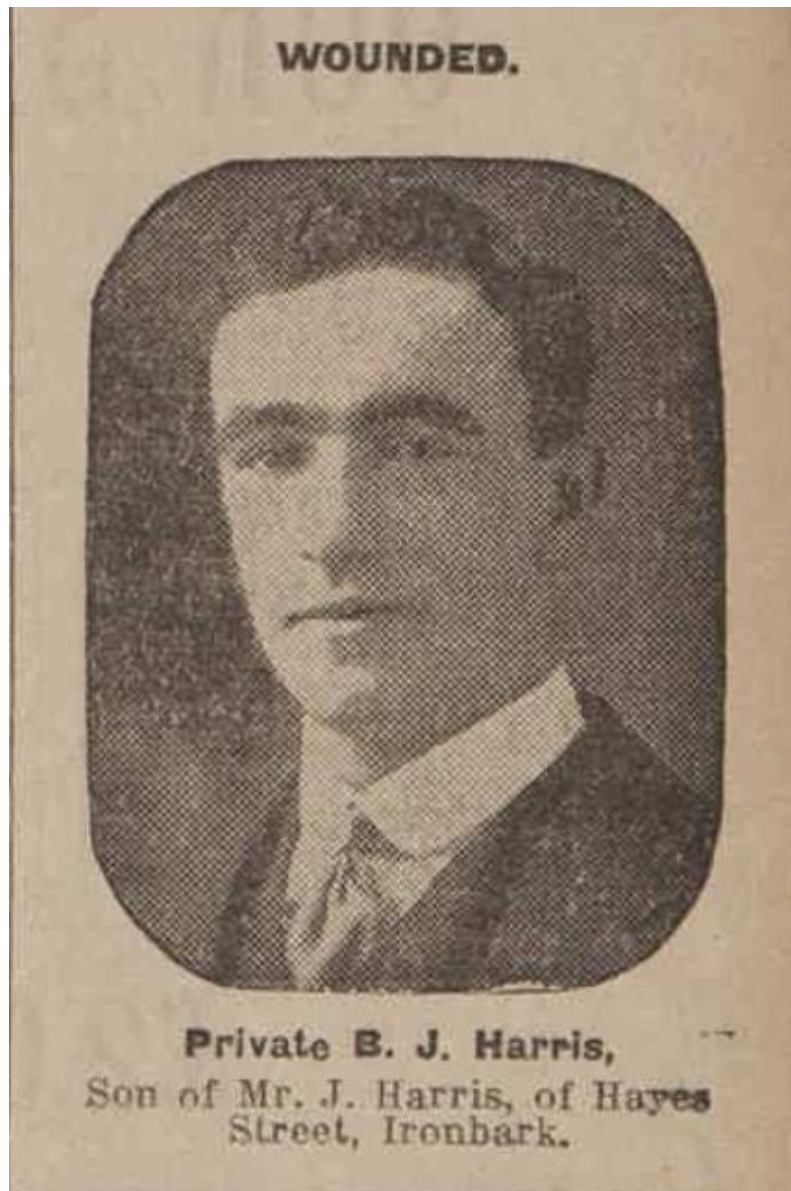


*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

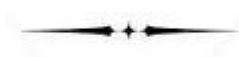
(56 pages of Private Bertie John Harris' Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

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





(*The Bendigo Independent*, Victoria – 26 September, 1916)



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **THE NEW SOLDIERS**

The following applicants passed the medical test at the Bendigo Recruiting Office on Tuesday. Ad on being sworn in will proceed to camp in due course:-.....Bertie John Harris, Miner, Hayes-street, Bendigo.....

(*Bendigo Advertiser*, Victoria – 15 July, 1915)

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## **BENDIGO AND DISTRICT SOLDIERS**

### **PRIVATE B. J. HARRIS**

Mr Jas. Harris, Hayes Street, Ironbark, has been notified by the Defence Department that his son, Private B. J. Harris, has been wounded whilst fighting in France. Private Harris left with the reinforcements in August, 1915. Prior to enlistment Private Harris worked at the Little No. 180 mine.

*(The Bendigo Independent, Victoria – 23 September, 1916)*

& a similar report in *(Bendigo Advertiser, Victoria – 23 September, 1916)*

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## **AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCES**

### **224th CASUALTY LIST**

#### **WOUNDED**

B. J. Harris, Bendigo

*(Bendigo Advertiser, Victoria – 30 September, 1916)*

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## **Red Cross and Comforts Funds**

### **THANKS FROM SOLDIERS**

(To the Editor of the "Advertiser")

Sir, We have read in the "Advertiser" and "Bendigonian" of the successful efforts in Bendigo to swell the funds of our Red Cross and to raise money for the purchase of comforts to brighten our existence out here, and we are thrilled by the generosity, enthusiasm and self sacrifice of you one and all to assist us in this the greatest struggle of all time. Reports have gained circulation frequently to the effect that we in the field do not benefit greatly in regard to comforts. Accept our assurance please, that many gifts directly and indirectly find their way to us. Why, last evening, our boys "made merry" on a general issue of tinned fruit, chocolate, biscuits, ginger bread, cake and cigarettes, all gifts from well wishes in Australia. In these strenuous days it inspires us to know that while we face all the hardships of modern warfare our people stand by us in such a manner, and thoughts of our needs are ever present in their minds. Be it a newspaper or a small gift, it's a link between us to cheer us on our way. So, Sir, we ask you to convey our very best thanks to all through your valuable columns. Thank you, Bendigo. We remain, your gratefully.

Lieut. R. J. Graham; 308, CCpl J. P. McLoughlin; 799a, Pte G. Opie; 4730, Cpl R. G. Ball; 5236, Pte W. J. White; **2711, Pte B. J. Harris**; 1423, L. Cpl R. Stirling; 544, Sgt G. Holland; 798a, Pte B. L. Orton; 6363, L. Cpl A. G. Jewell (Castlemaine); 6629, L. Cpl J. Lynch; 2860, Pte M. A. Lynch; 670, C.S.M. R. Nicholson; 3086, Pte G. Maddams.

Somewhere in France, 3.9.18.

*(Bendigo Advertiser, Victoria – 24 October, 1918)*

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Bertie John Harris is remembered on his parents' headstone in Bendigo Public Cemetery, Victoria – Plot Mon F3, Grave 30127.



**Bendigo Public Cemetery**





*And Their Dear Son*

*BERTIE JOHN*

*"An Anzac"*

*Died 22nd Jan. 1919*

*Age 26 Yrs*

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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 15<sup>th</sup> July, 1921, to Mr J. Harris, Hayes Street, Bendigo, Victoria advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of his son, the late No. 2711 Private B. J. Harris, 7th Battalion, 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 B. J. Harris does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

## Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England

Located 30 miles from London in Surrey, Brookwood Military Cemetery is the largest CWGC cemetery in the United Kingdom. The cemetery contains the graves of more than 1,600 servicemen of the British Empire in the First World War and over 3,470 from the Second World War.

Brookwood Military Cemetery lies adjacent to Brookwood Cemetery (The London Necropolis), a vast space which covers 500 acres. In 1917, an area to the north of the cemetery was set aside as Brookwood Military Cemetery for men and women of Commonwealth forces who died, many of battle wounds, in the London district. This site was further extended to accommodate Commonwealth casualties of the Second World War. *(Information from CWGC)*

There are 446 Australian War Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery – 351 from World War 1 & 95 from World War 2.



**Brookwood Military Cemetery** *(Photo from CWGC)*



**Brookwood Military Cemetery** *(Photos by Magicfingers)*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00185

*A large crowd attends an A.I.F. military funeral at Brookwood Cemetery. In the foreground wooden crosses mark rows of graves. (Photo c1919)*

*Identified: Front row, left to right: Second Lieutenant Douglas Abbott Ferguson, Australian Flying Corps, died of accidental injuries 18 August 1918; Lieutenant (Lt) Francis John Smedley MC, 7th Battalion, died of wounds 20 August 1918.*

*Second row: 6860 Private (Pte) James Alexander McKeown, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 20 June 1918; 3622 Pte S T Wilson, 2nd Australian Pioneers, died of wounds 4 July 1918; 2390 Sergeant Frederick Charles Stronell, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 9 July 1918; Lt Arthur Melville Lilburne MC, 6th Brigade Australian Field Artillery, died of disease 11 July 1918.*



**Australian Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery** (Photos by Magicfingers)







*(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher)*



**Australian War Graves** *(Photo courtesy of Neil Bright 2020)*

Photo of Private B. J. Harris's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England.



*(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher)*



(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher – Jan 2021)

