

**Tidworth Military Cemetery,
Tidworth, Wiltshire, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



3407 PRIVATE

R. S. HARRISON

59TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

15TH MARCH, 1919 Age 42

Have Mercy Upon Him Lord

And Let Perpetual Light

Shine Upon Him

Ralph Swinburne HARRISON

Ralph Swinburne Harrison was born in 1876 at Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham, England to parents James & Hannah Harrison (nee Swinburne). His birth was registered in December quarter, 1876 in the district of Stockton, Durham, England.

The 1881 England Census recorded Ralph S. Harrison as a 4 year old Scholar, living with his family at 41 Mill Street, Stockton upon Tees, Stockton, Durham, England. His parents were listed as James Harrison (Grocer, aged 46, born Staithes, Yorkshire) & Hannah Harrison (aged 38, born Yarm, Yorkshire). Ralph was the youngest of six children listed on this Census – Mary E. Harrison (aged 17, born Yarm, Yorkshire), Josh Harrison (General Clerk, aged 16, born Yarm, Yorkshire), John J. Harrison (Printer, aged 14, born Stockton-on-Tees, Durham), Alice M. Harrison (Scholar, aged 9, born Stockton-on-Tees, Durham), Henry E. Harrison (Scholar, aged 7, born Stockton-on-Tees, Durham) & Ralph.

According to information provided by his niece for the Roll of Honour – Ralph Harrison came to Australia when he was 7 years old. He attended Bundaberg School, Queensland.

The 1906 Australian Electoral Roll for the district of Darling Downs, sub-district of Greenmount, Queensland recorded Ralph Swinburne Harrison, Farm Labourer from Nobby.

The 1908 Australian Electoral Roll for the district of Darling Downs, sub-district of Clifton North, Queensland recorded Ralph Swinburne Harrison, Farm Labourer from Nobby.

The 1912 Australian Electoral Roll for the district of Nanango, Queensland recorded Ralph Swinburne Harrison, Compositor from Kingaroy.

James Harrison, father of Ralph Swinburne Harrison, died on 17th August, 1912 at "Waimui", Albert Street, Leichhardt, Sydney, NSW. He was buried in Rookwood Cemetery, Sydney, NSW on 19th August, 1912 – Mortuary 2, C, Grave 1467.

Hannah Harrison, mother of Ralph Swinburne Harrison, died on 22nd August, 1912 at "Waimui", Albert Street, Leichhardt, Sydney, NSW. She was buried in Rookwood Cemetery, Sydney, NSW on 24th August, 1912 – Mortuary 2, C, Grave 1468.

The 1914 Australian Electoral Roll for the district of Echuca, subdivision of Kilmore, Victoria recorded Ralph Swinburne Harrison, Compositor from Kilmore.

The 1917 Australian Electoral Roll for the district of Wannon, subdivision of Jeparit, Victoria recorded Ralph Swinburne Harrison, Compositor from Jeparit.

Ralph Swinburne Harrison was a 40 year old, single, Printer from Rose Bay, NSW when he enlisted on 10th May, 1917 at Horsham, Victoria with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Roman Catholic & his next of kin was listed as his niece – Mrs Maud O'Reilly, 74 Newcastle Street, Rose Bay, NSW.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison was posted to Recruits Battalion at Broadmeadows from 12th May, 1917. He was transferred to 9th Reinforcements of 59th Battalion / 2nd Depot Battalion at Broadmeadows from 28th May, 1917.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison, Service number 3407, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Port Melbourne (A16)* on 16th July, 1917 with the 59th Infantry Battalion, 9th Reinforcements. He was admitted to Ship's Isolation Ward on 27th July, 1917 with V.D. & was discharged to duty on 20th August, 1917. (Total V.D. Period – 25 days). Private Harrison disembarked at Liverpool, England on 16th September, 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.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison was marched in to 15th Training Battalion at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 17th September, 1917 from Australia.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison was A.W.L. (Absent without Leave) from Codford, Wiltshire on 21st November, 1917 & returned on 22nd November, 1917.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison was written up for a Crime while posted at Codford - A.W.L. (Absent without Leave) from 24.00 hours on 28th December, 1917 to 20.15 hours on 29th December, 1917. He was awarded 7 days confined to Camp by Commanding Officer of 1st Training Battalion & forfeited 1 days pay.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 8th January, 1918 from 15th Training Battalion. He was marched in to A.I.B.D. (Australian Infantry Base Depot) at Havre, France on 9th January, 1918. Private Harrison was marched out from A.I.B.D. on 11th January, 1918 & was taken on strength of 59th Battalion in the Field on 13th January, 1918.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison was detached to 5th Australian Division for duty on Coal Dump from 17th March, 1918 & rejoined his Unit on 25th March, 1918.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison reported sick on 1st May, 1918. He was admitted to 14th Australian Field Ambulance with Trench Fever then transferred on 1st May, 1918 to 61st Casualty Clearing Station. Private Harrison was transferred to Ambulance Train & admitted to 18th General Hospital at Camiers, France on 2nd May, 1918 with P.U.O. T. Fever (Pyrexia (fever) of unknown origin). He was transferred to 6th Convalescent Depot at Etaples, France on 13th May, 1918. Private Harrison was discharged from 6th Convalescent Depot on 31st May, 1918 & was marched in to A.I.B.D. (Australian Infantry Base Depot) at Havre, France on 2nd June, 1918.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison was written up for a Crime while posted to A.I.B.D. at Rouelles, France – A.W.L. from 9.30 pm to 10.40 pm on 5th June, 1918. He was awarded 10 days confined to Camp & forfeited 14 days pay by Commanding Officer, A.I.B.D.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison was marched out from A.I.B.D. on 8th June, 1918 & rejoined his Unit in the Field on 11th June, 1918.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison was wounded in action on 19th June, 1918. He was admitted to 15th Australian Field Ambulance on 20th June, 1918 with Shrapnel wounds to right Arm, Face, Back & Foot. Private Harrison was transferred & admitted to 20th Casualty Clearing Station on 20th June, 1918 with multiple shrapnel wounds. He was transferred to Ambulance Train 25 on 3rd July, 1918 & was admitted to 14th General Hospital at Wimereux, France on 4th July, 1918 with G.S.W. (gunshot wounds) to Arm, Face, left Foot & Back. Private Harrison embarked for England on Hospital Ship *St. Andrew* on 7th July, 1918.

59th Battalion

The 59th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 21 February 1916 as part of the expansion of the AIF. Approximately half of its recruits came from the veteran 7th Battalion, and the other half were fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 7th, the 59th was predominantly composed of men from rural Victoria. The battalion became part of the 15th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.....

With the collapse of Russia in October 1917, a major German offensive on the Western Front was expected in early 1918. This came in late March and the 5th Division moved to defend the sector around Corbie. During this defence, the 59th Battalion participated in the now legendary counter-attack at Villers-Bretonneux on 25 April.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 59th Battalion

Morlancourt Sector – 19th June, 1918:

Weather – wet

Another very quiet night – the rain has made conditions for the men in the line rather bad but so far they are all right.

The C.O. went forward & inspected the whole line during the day. There was very little shelling during the morning but towards midday the enemy livened up and carried out scattered shoots(?) on our area – the reserve company

got the most of it – mostly “whizz bangs” and 4.25. The post line was shelled intermittently by M.W.’s and on two occasions these were silenced (?) by our 18 ___ and another ___ by our own Trench ___

2.30 pm 6 Reinforcements marched in – all old men returning from hospital.

The Battalion was issued with 8 additional Lewis Guns – this brings our establishment up to 36. At present these are being left as a reserve on Battalion H.Q. but are placed on strength of companies. There will eventually be two Lewis Guns per platoon but in view of the tactical situation it is not desirable at present to have all these guns with the companies.

During the evening enemy shelling livened up and for the whole of the early part of the night all our sector as far back as Battalion Headquarters was heavily shelled – mostly 4.2 ___ 77’s H.E. and gas.

The right Company got the worst of it and had about a dozen casualties – all wounded – there were no gas casualties – Respirators were worn several times during the shoot.

The usual working parties – widening & defending trenches and C. 1’s were up but owing to the heavy shelling were unable to do any work.

All ration parties were delayed a little but all got through safely.

Casualties:-

Killed 1 Other Rank

Wounded 13 Other Ranks

(War Diary information from the Australian War Memorial)

Mrs C. M. O’Reilly, 74 Newcastle St, Rose Bay, Sydney, NSW, was advised by Base Records on 1st July, 1918 that Private R. S. Harrison had been wounded. She was advised on 4th July, 1918 that Private Ralph Harrison had been admitted to 20th Casualty Clearing Station, France on 20th June with multiple gunshot wounds & his condition was dangerous.

Mrs C. M. O’Reilly, (late) 74 Newcastle St, Rose Bay, Sydney, next-of-kin of Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison, advised Base Records on 4th July, 1918 of her change of address to “Tharwa” Spencer St. Rose Bay, Sydney.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison was admitted to Central Military Hospital at Eastbourne, England on 7th July, 1918 with shrapnel wounds to Face (slight). He was transferred to 3rd Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford, England on 8th August, 1918.

Mrs Maud O’Reilly, “Tharwa” Spencer Street, Rose Bay, Sydney, NSW was advised by Base Records on 23rd July, 1918 that Private Ralph Harrison’s condition was improving. Further advise on 27th July, 1918 reported that Private R. S. Harrison had been transferred to Eastbourne Military Hospital, England on 7th July, 1918. Mrs O’Reilly was advised on 9th August, 1918 that Private Ralph Harrison was progressing favourably.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison was discharged to Furlo from 14th August, 1918 to 28th August, 1918 & was then to report to No. 4 Command Depot at Hurdcott.

Mrs Maud O’Reilly, “Tharwa” Spencer Street, Rose Bay, Sydney, NSW was advised by Base Records on 17th August, 1918 that Private Ralph Harrison was convalescent.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison was marched in to No. 4 Command Depot at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 28th August, 1918. He was marched out to Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deverill, Wiltshire on 10th October, 1918.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison was admitted to 1st Australian Dermatological Hospital at Bulford, Wiltshire on 30th October, 1918 with V.D. He was discharged to Convalescent Training Depot at Parkhouse, Wiltshire on 1st November, 1918 (Total V.D. Period – 3 days). Private Harrison was marched out from Convalescent Training Depot & marched into No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 28th January, 1919.

(Note: Private Harrison’s Casualty Form – Active Service was stamped “Return to Australia per” & written in red then crossed out was Plassy.)

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison admitted to 1st Australian General Hospital, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 11th March, 1919 with Broncho Pneumonia. He was reported to be dangerously ill. The Hospital Admissions form recorded: *"Acute Broncho pneumonia. Illness began 10.3.19 with pyrexia cough & soon after pain in L side chest. Has had cough for about 3 months. Very ill on admission but not cyanised...."*

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison died at 6 am on 15th March, 1919 at 1st Australian General Hospital, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, England from Broncho Pneumonia. A Telegram was sent from 1st Australian General Hospital, Sutton Veny to Administrative Headquarters, London advising of the death of Private R. S. Harrison & that his cousin Mr T. Lodge, High St, Avon House Farm, Yorkshire had been advised.

A death for Ralph S. Harrison, aged 42, was registered in the March quarter, 1919 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire, England.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison was buried on 22nd March, 1919 in Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire, England – Plot number A. 81 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

From the burial report of Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison - *Coffin was Elm. Brass mounts. Deceased was buried with full Military honors the coffin draped with the Australian flag being borne to the graveside on a Gun-carriage preceded by a Firing Party from Headquarters A.I.F. Depots in United Kingdom. Six Australians supported the Pall and a number of Officers, N.C.O.'s and Men followed the remains and were present at the graveside ceremony. Headquarters, A.I.F. Depots in U.K. were represented at the funeral.*

Mrs M. O'Reilly, Tharwa, Spencer St, Rose Bay, NSW, was advised by Base Records on 24th March, 1919 that Private Ralph Harrison was dangerously ill.

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison requested in his Will dated 5th July, 1917 that in the event of his death *"I give the whole of my property and effects to Catherine Maude O'Reilly (Niece) of 74 Newcastle Street, Rose Bay, Sydney, N.S. Wales."*

Base Records wrote to Mrs J. F. O'Reilly, c/o Mr J. F. O'Reilly, State Engineer's Office, G.P.O., Brisbane Queensland on 18th August, 1919 advising that an extract of her communication had been forwarded to Base Records by the District Paymaster, Melbourne. Base Records advised that A.I.F. Headquarters, London, had forwarded one package containing the personal effects of the late No. 3407 Private R. S. Harrison, 59th Battalion, & had been included in a consignment shipped from England. *"Upon receipt of same, the late soldier's effects will be promptly transmitted to M/S Catherine Maud O'Reilly, Spencer Street, Rose Bay, Sydney, NSW."*

Catherine Maud O'Reilly replied to Base Records on 25th August, 1919 advising them to please forward the package of personal effects of the late No. 3407 Private Ralph S. Harrison to c/- Mr J. F. O'Reilly, State Engineer's Office, G.P.O. Brisbane, Queensland as she had left Spencer Street, Rose Bay, Sydney, NSW.

Base Records wrote to M/s C. M. O'Reilly, c/- Mr J. F. O'Reilly, State Engineer's Office, G.P.O. Brisbane, Queensland, on 1st September, 1919 advising that one package of the personal effects of the late No. 3407 Private R. S. Harrison, 59th Battalion, had been received ex *"Beltana"* & was being forwarded to her.

Maud O'Reilly wrote to Base Records on 22nd September, 1919 stating she had received a letter dated 1st September, 1919 regarding the forwarding of a package *"...I am worried about it for I have not received it yet. Did you post it to the above address. Awaiting further information from you."*

Base Records wrote to Deputy Postmaster General, Melbourne, Victoria on 30th September, 1919 advising that a package (D/S 49688) was forwarded to them for delivery to M/S C. M. O'Reilly, c/- Mr J. F. O'Reilly, State Engineer's Office, G.P.O. Brisbane, Queensland. *"The addressee has advised this Office that the package in question has not yet been received by her, and I shall be obliged if you will institute enquiries and advise me as to its disposal."*

The Deputy Postmaster General, Melbourne, Victoria, replied to Base Records on 1st December, 1919 advising that *"...the Deputy Postmaster General, Sydney, advises this office that the Deputy Postmaster General, Brisbane intimates that the article referred to was duly received by the addressee in Sydney."*

Base Records wrote to Mrs C. M. O'Reilly, c/- Mr J. F. O'Reilly, State Engineer's Office, G.P.O. Brisbane, Queensland on 31st May, 1921 stating she was registered as the next-of-kin of the late No. 3407 Private R. S Harrison, 59th Battalion, but were enquiring if the soldier's father was alive; if the soldier's mother was alive; if any brothers who were living & who is the eldest ...etc in order that War Medals etc issued in connection with the deceased soldier could be sent to the relevant recipient.

Mrs C. M. O'Reilly, Yabba St, near Palm Avenue, Brisbane, replied to Base Records on 10th June, 1921 advising that *"the late soldier had 3 brothers but I do not know their addresses."* *"I am the eldest Niece & my uncle late R.S. Harrison made his home with me."*

Base Records replied to Mrs M. O'Reilly, Yabba St, near Palm Avenue, Brisbane, Queensland on 27th June, 1921 to advise *"...in the circumstances of the late soldier's brothers' present whereabouts being unknown, am prepared to hand over the war medals etc/ of the late No. 3407 Private R. S. Harrison, 59th Battalion, to you, but only on the distinct understanding that they will be preserved with due care as memorials of his services, and produced to the Department upon demand, should his brothers at any time prefer a claim which is upheld by the Minister. If you are agreeable to accept them under these conditions, kindly complete the attached Declaration before a J. P. and return to me at your earliest convenience."*

A Statutory Declaration was completed & signed by C. M. O'Reilly on 1st December 1921 at Brisbane: *"I, (Mrs) C. M. O'Reilly, residing at Yabba Street, near Palm Avenue, Ascot, Brisbane, Q'land, do solemnly and sincerely declare that I will preserve with due care any war medals or other items given into my custody on account of the services rendered by the late No. 3407 Private R. S. Harrison; 59th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, and will return them to the Department of Defence upon demand in writing, should they be required for the purpose of being handed to someone having prior claims."*

Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Harrison's niece – Mrs C. M. O'Reilly, as the closest known next-of-kin. (Scroll sent January, 1922 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

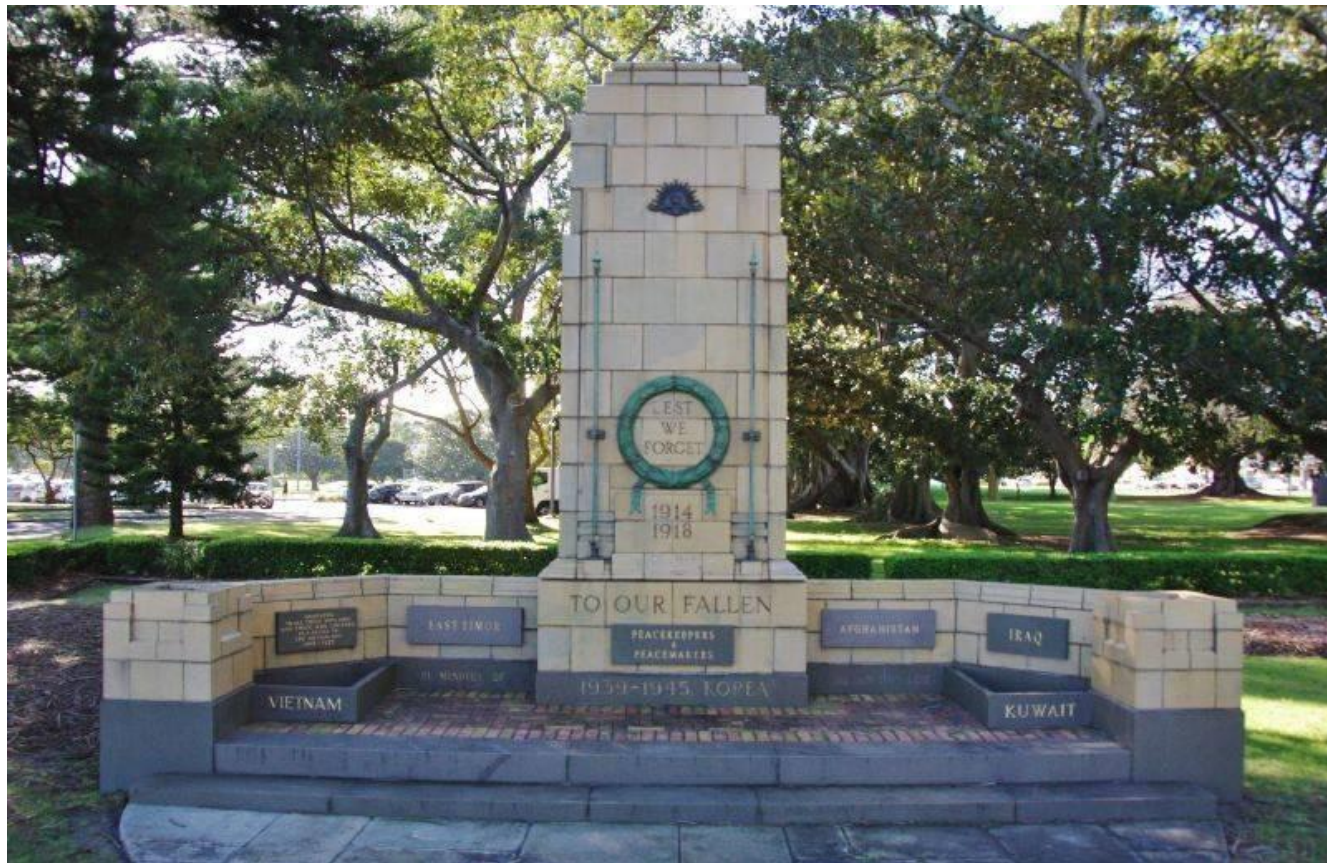
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison – service number 3407, aged 42, of 59th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of James & Hannah Harrison.

R. S. Harrison is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 167.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

The Rose Bay War Memorial, located in Lyne Park, New South Head Road & Rose Bay Ferry Road, Rose Bay, Sydney, NSW does not list individual names.



Rose Bay War Memorial (Photo from Monument Australia)

(83 pages of Private Ralph Swinburne Harrison'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



Newspaper Notices

416th CASUALTY LIST

OTHER STATES

The following are the names of the New South Welshmen who enlisted in other States, and whose names appear in the 416th casualty list:-

WOUNDED

Pte Ralph Swinburne Harrison

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 11 July, 1918)

CASUALTY LIST

The following were included in the 463rd Casualty List:-

ENLISTED IN OTHER DISTRICTS

DIED

Pte RALPH SWINBURNE HARRISON, Rose Bay (ill)

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 19 April, 1919)

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 R. S. Harrison does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Have Mercy Upon Him Lord And Let Perpetual Light Shine Upon Him

Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire, England

Tidworth Military Cemetery, which contains burials of both wars, was directly connected with training grounds on, or near, Salisbury Plain.

During the First World War, the cemetery was used for burials from Tidworth and Fargo Military Hospitals and the 417 graves, many of them of Australian or New Zealand servicemen, are scattered throughout the cemetery.

There are 106 Second World War graves in the cemetery, two substantial groups of which can be found in sections F and D. The rest are scattered.

The cemetery also contains 40 war graves of other nationalities, many of them Polish.

(Information from CWGC)



The AIF Tidworth cemetery under snow. – March 1919.

Identified graves marked by a cross and headstone in the foreground

Front row: 50727 Private Rowland James Dickson, Australian Machine Gun Corps, died 14 October 1918.

Second row, left to right: 18282 Driver John Thalma Jackson, Details Australian Engineers, died 30 October 1917; 17445 Pte Roland Travers Woodville, Australian Army Medical Corps, died 13 September 1917; 31712 Gunner John Alexander McDonald, 15th Field Artillery Brigade, Australian Field Artillery, died 30 July 1917, aged 37, at Tidworth Military Hospital; 3062 Pte Even Thomas Kennedy, 3rd Australian Pioneers, died 7 August 1917.

Note Gunner McDonald has a large headstone which reads in part 'erected by his sorrowing comrades of the Australian Field Artillery. His duty done.'



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00481

Tidworth Military Cemetery – 12 June, 1919

A corner of the Australian cemetery. Front row, left to right: 5840 Private F. W. Heede, 25th Battalion died 3 June 1917; 7350 Private A. E. Campbell, 8th Battalion, died 2 August 1917; 1824 Driver A. C. Jones, 4th Company, Australian Machine Gun Corps, AADC, died 8 August 1917; 8009 Corporal W. J. Giles, Australian Tunnelling Company, died 17 March 1918.



Tidworth Military Cemetery (Photo by *julia&keld* – Find a Grave)



Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire (Photo courtesy of John Prestidge)



Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire (Photo by Chris Talbot 2009)

Photo of Private R. S. Harrison's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of Portsmouth Remembers – Kevin)



(Photo courtesy of Portsmouth Remembers – Kevin)

