

**Arnos Vale Roman Catholic Cemetery,
Bristol, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2428 PRIVATE

H. JOHNSON

56TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

6TH MAY, 1918 Age 34

Dead But Not Forgotten

By His Loving Mother

Sarah Jones

R.I.P.

Henry JOHNSON

Henry Johnson was born near Warren, New South Wales around 1884 to parents Henry and Sarah Jones Johnson.

The 1913 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Wollondilly, subdivision of Picton, NSW, recorded Henry Johnson, Labourer, of Jarvisfield, Picton.

Henry Johnson was a 32 year old, single, Labourer from Picton, NSW when he enlisted at Goulburn, NSW on 28th March, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2428 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Sarah Jones, Girilambone, NSW.

Private Henry Johnson was posted to "B" Company at Goulburn, NSW on 28th March, 1916 for recruit training. He was promoted to Corporal on 16th April, 1916 then transferred to "A" Company of Depot Battalion on 15th May, 1916. Corporal Johnson was transferred on 22nd June, 1916 to "C" Company of 56th Battalion & was reduced to rank of Private.

Private Henry Johnson embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Aeneas* (A60) on 30th September, 1916 with the 56th Infantry Battalion, 5th Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 19th November, 1916.

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 Henry Johnson proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 31st December, 1916 on *Princess Henrietta* from 14th Training Battalion. He was marched in to 5th A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 1st January, 1917. Private Johnson was to be Acting Corporal (E.D.P. – extra duty pay) from 2nd January, 1917. Acting Corporal Johnson was marched out to his Unit on 1st February, 1917 & was taken on strength of 56th Battalion in France on 7th February, 1917. On joining 56th Battalion he reverted to the rank of Private.

Private Henry Johnson reported sick on 16th March, 1917. He was admitted to 14th Australian Field Ambulance on 23rd March, 1917 with "Def Vision" & discharged to duty on 25th March, 1917. He rejoined his Battalion in France on 19th March, 1917. (*dates as listed on Casualty Form – Active Service).

Private Henry Johnson reported sick on 23rd March, 1917. He was admitted to 15th Field Ambulance on 23rd March, 1917 with Ophthalmia then transferred to Casualty Clearing Station. He rejoined his Battalion from Hospital on 27th March, 1917.

Private Henry Johnson was posted as an Absentee on 22nd May, 1917. He rejoined his Battalion on 14th June, 1917.

A Field General Court Martial was held in the Field on 22nd June, 1917. Private Henry Johnson was charged with absenting himself without leave from 2 pm on 22nd May, 1917 until 1.45 pm on 11th June, 1917 (21 days). He was found guilty & sentenced to 6 months detention. This was confirmed by Major General Hobbs. His Sentence was commuted to 90 days Field Punishment No. 1. Private Johnson had been under arrest awaiting trial from 1.45 pm on 11th June, 1917 to 21st June, 1917. He was awarded a total forfeiture of 121 days' pay.

Private Henry Johnson was sent sick to Hospital from detention on 18th July, 1917. He was admitted to 14th Field Ambulance on 18th July, 1917 with Scabies then transferred to 5th D.R.S. (Divisional Rest Station) the same day. Private Johnson was then transferred & admitted to Corps Scabies Station on 18th July, 1917 & discharged to duty on 26th July, 1917. He rejoined his Battalion on 29th July, 1917.

Private Henry Johnson was marched out to Detention on 2nd August, 1917. The Army Commander remitted 7 days Field Punishment No. 1 of Sentence awarded on account of good conduct & industry in Corps on 7th September, 1917. Private Johnson rejoined 56th Battalion on 13th September, 1917 from Detention.

Private Henry Johnson was wounded in action in France on 26th September, 1917. He was admitted to 6th Field Ambulance on 26th September, 1917 with GSW (gunshot wound/s) to left shoulder then transferred to 10th Casualty Clearing Station the same day. Private Johnson was transferred to Ambulance Train on 26th September, 1917 & admitted to 3rd Canadian General Hospital at Boulogne, France on 27th September, 1917 with shrapnel wounds to

shoulder. He was transferred & admitted to 7th Convalescent Depot at Boulogne on 2nd October, 1917. Private Johnson was transferred on 4th October, 1917 to 10th Convalescent Depot at Ecault then transferred on 8th October, 1917 to Rest Camp.

56th Battalion

The 56th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 14 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 4th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 4th, the 56th was predominantly composed of men from New South Wales. The battalion became part of the 14th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division....

After a freezing winter manning trenches in the Somme Valley, in early 1917 the 56th Battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line. It was spared the assault but did, however, defend gains made during the second battle of Bullecourt. Later in the year, the AIF's focus of operations switched to the Ypres sector in Belgium. The 56th's major battle here was at Polygon Wood on 26 September.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Henry Johnson was marched in to 5th D.B.D. (Divisional Base Depot) at Havre on 11th October, 1917 from Hospital. He was written up on 27th October, 1917 for being in Town without a pass on 25th October, 1917. He was awarded a forfeiture of 2 days' pay. Private Johnson was marched out to his Unit on 27th October, 1917 from 5th D.B.D. & rejoined 56th Battalion in the Field on 29th October, 1917.

Private Henry Johnson was sent to UK on leave from 15th February, 1918 & rejoined his Battalion from leave on 6th March, 1918.

Private Henry Johnson was written up for a Crime on 19th April, 1918: 1. Disobedience of Orders in that he left the Company Bivouac contrary to orders. 2. Being improperly dressed in that he was wearing blue trousers which were not part of his uniform on 16th April, 1918. He was awarded 28 days Field Punishment No.2.

Private Henry Johnson was wounded in action (2nd occasion) on 23rd April, 1918. He was admitted to 14th Field Ambulance on 23rd April, 1918 with GSW (gunshot wound/s) to hand. He was transferred to 20th Casualty Clearing Station on 23rd April, 1918 then transferred on 24th April, 1918 to Ambulance Train 41. Private Johnson was admitted to 8th Stationary Hospital at Rouen, France on 25th April, 1918. He embarked for England on 26th April, 1918 on Hospital Ship *Grantully Castle*.

56th Battalion

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. The 14th Brigade, took up positions to the north of Villers-Bretonneux and held these even when the village fell, threatening their flanks.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 56th Battalion

Villers Bretonneux Sector – 23rd April, 1918:

The enemy was unusually quiet along the Brigade front. No unusual movement was reported by front line Battalions. Our artillery carried out the arranged shoots etc during early morning and counter battery work during the day. FOUILLOY, CORBIE, AUBIGNY and HAMLET were subjected to heavy gas bombardments at various times throughout the day.

Intelligence and Signal Officers with N.C.O.'s from Companies and Headquarters proceeded to left front Battalion Headquarters and inspected dispositions prior to expected relief. The gas bombardment of AUBIGNY where Battalion Details and Q.M. Store are located took place between 5 and 6.30 pm. The gas hung very heavily in the village and it was consequently considered advisable to move from the village for a day or so. A move was made to DAOURS at about 8 pm.

Casualties 18 other ranks wounded, the bulk of who are suffering gas. (Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Henry Johnson was admitted to The Beaufort War Hospital, Bristol, England on 27th April, 1918 with shrapnel wounds to left hand.

Private Henry Johnson died at 6 am on 6th May, 1918 at The Beaufort War Hospital, Bristol, England from Jaundice (also G.S.W. to left hand).

A death for Henry Johnson, aged 42, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Bristol, Gloucestershire, England.

Private Henry Johnson was buried at 2 pm on 11th May, 1918 in Arnos Vale Roman Catholic Cemetery, Bristol, England – Plot number C. 3 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private Henry Johnson - *Coffin was plain Oak. The cortege left the Bristol Royal Infirmary at 2.45 pm the coffin being mounted on a Gun Carriage and draped with the Australian Flag. A Guard of Honour consisting of 8 Australia fellow patients were in attendance. The following floral wreaths were placed on the grave from:- Bristol Branch, Bristol Red Cross Society & Matron, Nursing Staff and Patients Beaufort War Hospital. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Henry Johnson contains a letter from Matron Underwood, Beaufort War Hospital, Fishponds, Bristol which reads: *“Re 2428 Pte Johnson, who died in this Hospital on May 6th, was admitted with G.S.W. of hand, not a serious condition at all, and went out on Pass for some days. He was signed up for a transfer to Dartford four days before his death, when he came in from Town saying “he felt ill”. He was then found to have some bladder trouble, nothing apparently serious, and began to look jaundice (yellow). He was kept in bed from that time on. The M.O. notified and poultices applied to his loins where he complained of aching pains. Almost at once he became strange in his manner, wanted no food, and talked queerly, and after about 24 hours he became unconscious and never recovered consciousness again. He was unconscious for about 36 hours, and did not appear to be in pain. He died of “Septic Jaundice” which poisoned his system. He was buried at Arno’s Vale Cemetery, Bristol. Some of the Nursing staff and fellow Patients followed and they subscribed for a very beautiful wreath representing “The Rising Sun”. Three Doctors attended the poor man and I saw him frequently but owing to his comatose condition we could do little for him. He died at 3.20 a.m. in his sleep. You may assure his friends he did not appear to suffer after he once became unconscious and his illness was altogether very sudden.”*

Private Henry Johnson was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Johnson’s mother - Mrs S. Jones, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent October, 1921 & Plaque sent October, 1922).

Sarah Jones, of 32 Clinton Street, Orange, NSW, mother of the late Private Henry Johnson, signed a declaration on 30th December, 1921 stating she desired to make a claim for the War Medals & Decorations awarded to her son & if given into her custody would undertake to carefully preserve them & produce them to the Military Authorities upon demand should any person with a prior claim appear.

Base Records forwarded on to Mrs A. J. Jones, c/- Mrs Sykes, McLachlan Street. Orange, NSW, mother of the late Private Henry Johnson, on 17th June, 1931, a copy of the “Western Daily Press” describing the Anzac Day Pilgrimage made to the graves of the Fallen on the occasion of the Anzac Day Service of Remembrance in Bristol. These items had been sent from Mr Robert Bush, Bishop’s Knoll, Stoke Bishop, Bristol, England.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Henry Johnson – service number 2428, aged 34, of 56th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Henry and Sarah Jones Johnson, of Welli West, Marra Creek, Giralambone, New South Wales.

H. Johnson is remembered on Picton Soldiers Memorial, School of Arts, Menangle Street, Picton, NSW.



Picton Soldiers Memorial (Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)

ROLL OF HONOR
OF THOSE WHO ENLISTED FROM PICTON AND DISTRICT.
— IN THE GREAT WAR... 1914... 1919. —

IRVING, S.G.	MEACHER, J.O.	SCHROTH, J.
IRVING, J.	MONK, D.J.S.	SHIELDS, E.
	MORAGHAN, S.	SHIELDS, F.
JOB, C.C.	MOYES, W.H.	SHOOBRIDGE E.
JOHNSON, J.	MULHALL, L.	SIDEBOTTOM, W.
JOHNSON, H.	MURPHY, P.L.	SINCLAIR, H.
JOHNS, W.V.		SMART, G.
JONES, H.	NICHOLSON, W.	SMITH, R.
	NORRIS, T.M.	SMITH, W.
KELLY, L.J.		SMITH, C.
KELLY, H.J.	OAKS, L.	SQUELCH, E.
KELLY, L.	O'BRIEN, M.	SQUELCH, F.
KELSO, C.	O'CONNELL, R.	STEWART, S.S.
KEATING, P.W.C.		
	PARKES, H.E.	TATE, A.R.
LANE, A.	PARRY, C.	TAYLOR, H.G.
LECWELLYN, A.	PARRY, E.L.	TAYLOR, A.
LE CLERE, J.H.	PARRY, NURSE.	THEARLE, J.R.
LESTER, J.	PERRITT, J.	THOMPSON, E.
LITTLE, J.	PETERS, D.	THOMPSON, C.
	PHELAN, P.	THOMPSON, A.
MacDOUGALL, R.	PHILLIPS, T.	THORPE, E.
MARTIN, C. J.	PIPPING, O.	TRUDGETT, W.H.
MARONEY, J.	PURCELL, L.	
MATHEWS, R. J.		VANDENBERGH, R.
MATHEWS, W.	ROBERTS, C.	
M ^c EWANS, R. A.	ROBERTS, T.	WEDLOCK A.
M ^c GREGOR, P.	ROBERTS, R.	WILLIS W.L.
M ^c GREGOR, T.	ROBERTSON, M.D.	WILSON D.
M ^c KAIGH, J.	ROBERTSON, S.A.	WILSON C.
M ^c KAIGH, J.	ROLBIN, H.	WILSON R. B.
M ^c LENNAN, W.	ROWE, W.L.	WHITE J.
M ^c QUIGAN, E.	RUTHERFORD, C.H.	

Private H. Johnson is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 162.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(65 pages of Private Henry Johnson'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



Newspaper Notices

CASUALTY LIST

LARGE NUMBER GASSED

SOME FOR THE FOURTH TIME

The 405th Casualty list of the A.I.F. was issued to-day....

DIED OTHER CAUSES

H. JOHNSON, Marra Creek (prev. rep. wounded, cause not stated).

(*The Sun*, Sydney, NSW – 30 May, 1918)

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 H. Johnson does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Dead But Not Forgotten By His Loving Mother Sarah Jones

R.I.P.

Arnos Vale Roman Catholic Cemetery, Bristol, England (also known as Holy Souls Roman Catholic Cemetery)

The cemetery was begun in 1856. During both wars, there were a number of military hospitals at Bristol and the city was the depot of the Gloucestershire Regiment. During the Second World War there were also a number of Royal Air Force stations and prisoner of war camps in the area. Bristol (Arnos Vale) Roman Catholic Cemetery contains 52 First World War burials, mostly of men who died at the local hospitals, particularly the 2nd Southern General and the Beaufort, many of whom were landed at Avonmouth from hospital ships from the Mediterranean. Forty of the graves form a war plot, marked by a screen wall bearing the names of the dead. The cemetery also contains 11 Second World War burials and ten Belgian and Portuguese war graves.

(Information from CWGC)



Holy Souls Roman Catholic Cemetery (Photos by JohnM – Find a Grave)



Holy Souls Roman Catholic Cemetery (Photos by JohnM – Find a Grave)



Photo of Private H. Johnson's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Arnos Vale Roman Catholic Cemetery, Bristol, England.



(Photos by JohnM – Find a Grave)



Australian World War 1 CWGC Headstones in Holy Souls Roman Catholic Cemetery

Private Johnson's headstone – back row ; 2nd from left

(Photos by JohnM – Find a Grave)