

**St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard,
Harefield, Middlesex, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



4727 PRIVATE

JOHN HENRY LITTLE

20TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

8TH JUNE, 1917 Age 34

Erected By His Comrades

John Henry LITTLE

John Henry Little was born at Petersham, Sydney, New South Wales on 22nd September, 1882 to parents Charles & Mary Ann Little (nee Schofield). He was baptised on 5th November, 1882 at All Saints Church, Petersham, Sydney, NSW. The family lived at Petersham & Charles Little was recorded as a Station Master.

John Henry Little was a 33 year old, single, Farmer from Colo Vale, New South Wales when he enlisted on 7th December, 1915 at Casula, Sydney, NSW with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his father – Mr C. Little, Colo Vale, NSW.

Private John Henry Little was posted to "D. 17th A" on 14th December, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to A Company, 20th Battalion on 23rd December, 1915.

Mary Ann Little, mother of John Henry Little, died on 28th December, 1915 at Mittagong, New South Wales.

Private John Henry Little was transferred to 12th Reinforcements of 20th Battalion (no date recorded).

Private John Henry Little, Service number 4727, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Ceramic (A40)* on 13th April, 1916 with the 20th Infantry Battalion, 12th Reinforcements.

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 John Henry Little proceeded overseas to France on 9th September, 1916 from 5th Training Battalion at Rolleston, Wiltshire, England. He was marched in to 2nd A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 11th September, 1916 from England. Private Little joined 20th Battalion in the Field on 7th October, 1916.

Private John Henry Little was wounded in action on 14th November, 1916 (Note: date as per Casualty Form – Active Service & Statement of Service form). He was admitted to 5th Australian Field Ambulance on 8th November, 1916 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to Face & Jaw then transferred the same day to 38th Casualty Clearing Station on the same day with G.S.W. to Chest (injuries as listed on Casualty Form – Active Service). Private Little was admitted to 9th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 8th November, 1916 with G.S.W. to Face & Jaw. He was transferred to 6th General Hospital at Rouen on 2nd December, 1916 then embarked for England on the same day on Hospital Ship *St. George*.

6.0.20 th	Joined Battalion	In the field	7.10.16
do.	Wounded in Action	do	14/11/16
9 Gen Hos	G.S.W. face & jaw adm	Rouen	8-11-16
5 AF Amb.	do	"	8-11-16
38 CCS	G.S.W. Chest	"	8/11/16
6 Gen Hos	do	To England Rouen	2-12-16
St George	do	Emb for England Rouen	2-12-16

20th Battalion

The 20th Battalion was raised at Liverpool in New South Wales in March 1915 as part of the 5th Brigade. A sprinkling of the 20th's original recruits had already served with the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF) in the operations to capture German New Guinea in 1914.....

After further training in Egypt, the 20th Battalion proceeded to France. It entered the trenches of the Western Front for the first time in April 1916 and in the following month had the dubious honour of being the first Australian battalion

to be raided by the Germans. The 20th took part in its first major offensive around Pozieres between late July and the end of August 1916. After a spell in a quieter sector of the front in Belgium, the 2nd Division, which included the 5th Brigade, came south again in October. The 20th Battalion provided reinforcements for the attack near Flers between 14 and 16 November, launched in conditions that Charles Bean described as the worst ever encountered by the AIF.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 20th Battalion

8th November, 1916 – SWITCH TRENCH

In reserve in SWITCH TRENCH. Lieut Portman injured & evacuated.

9th November, 1916 – FRONT LINE

On the night 9/10 we relieve 18th Batt in front line. Mud is waist high and we have a large number of sick. Capt Roper leaves sick. Relief complete 9.45 pm.

10th November, 1916 – FRONT LINE

Quiet day. During the night alarm of German attack but nothing eventuated. We were employed (?) digging & jumping off trench. 2/Lieut Gordon fatally wounded.

11th November, 1916 – FRONT LINE

Quiet Day. Our Pioneers buried 38 bodies but no discs were found. Capt Hutchinson A.M.C. returned from leave.

12th November, 1916 – FRONT LINE

Quiet day. At 7.30 pm the Enemy put up a heavy barrage on our front and Support lines. We asked for retaliation. At 7.48 Mills grenades were heard on our front; meanwhile Enemy flares were active. At 7.46 pm Enemy fire began to die down. By 8 pm his artillery had stopped. We were relieved by 25th A.I.F. Relief completed 12.30 am Btn ___ moved to CARLTON TRENCH.

13th November, 1916 - CARLTON TRENCH

Quiet day in Camp. Men in very poor state. At 2 am 14-11-16 we move back to Support trench near Bn HQ for attack by 5th Bde on German line.

14th November, 1916 – SUPPORT TRENCH

Attack starts 6.45 am. 19th Bn on left 25th Centre 26th Right. At 8 am wounded began to arrive back & stated the 2nd objective had been taken. At 8.30 we sent A coy to reinforce 26th & B Coy was also warned to place itself under the orders of the 26th. At noon we sent up the remaining coys & bombers & M.G.'s

15th November, 1916 – SUPPORT TRENCH

2/Lt BAIN arrives from reinforcements. Relieved night 15/16.

Casualties for period from 6th to 14th killed 1 Off 20 or. Wounded 55 or from hospital 10 o.r.

[Note: Off = Officers; or = Other ranks]

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Base Records advised Mr C. Little, Colo Vale, NSW, father of Private John Henry Little, on 1st December, 1916 that No. 4727 Private J. H. Little, 20th Battalion, had been wounded.

Private John Henry Little was admitted to Cambridge Military Hospital, England on 3rd December, 1916 with Shrapnel wound/s to Face. He was transferred to 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, England on 21st April, 1917. A Medical Report was completed on Private John Henry Little on 15th May, 1917 at No. 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield Park, Middlesex, England. His disability was listed as "*Chronic Nephritis (result of shell wound)*" which had originated in November while on Somme, France. "*On November 6th 1916 he suffered shrapnel wound of right jaw & neck. He was up till then perfectly healthy. Wound was very septic & was opened up once in December & again in January 1917. Wound did not heal till end of February. He was very weak during this time & had not improved. He suffered much frequency of micturition.*" The cause of Private Little's disability was listed as Active Service due to a "*septic infection of shell wound producing chronic toxæmia.*" His present condition was listed as "*Wasted & anaemic. Shows cardiac dilation & arteriolosclerosis (?). Oedema of lungs & of legs. Nocturnal frequency of micturition...*" It was recorded that Private Little had been operated on "*pus collection in wound evacuated on two occasions.*" The Officer in charged of the case recommended that Private Little be discharged as permanently unfit. The Medical Board found on 15th May, 1917 that Private John Henry Little was permanently unfit for General & Home Service due to Nephritis Chronic.

Base Records advised Mr C. Little, Colo Vale, NSW, on 15th May, 1917 that Private John Little was dangerously ill. He was advised on 30th May, 1917 that Private John Little was pronounced out of danger. Mr C. Little was advised on 1st June, 1917 that Private John Little was "*again dangerously ill*" & on 7th June, 1917 that Private John Little was still dangerously ill.

Private John Henry Little died at 3 am on 8th June, 1917 at 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield Park, Harefield, Middlesex, England from Nephritis & Heart Failure.

A death for John H. Little, aged 34, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Uxbridge, Middlesex, England.

Private John Henry Little was buried on 11th June, 1917 in St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England – Grave No. 25. This is now recorded by CWGC as Plot number Aust. 22.

From the burial report of Private John Henry Little - *Coffin was polished Elm with Brass Fittings. Buried with Military honours. Coffin draped with "Union Jack" surmounted by three wreaths given by the High Commissioner, Mrs Billyard-Leake, and the Nursing and Massage Staff of the hospital, respectively. It is proposed to erect a permanent memorial to each patient dying in this hospital, out of a fund raised for this purpose within the hospital.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private John Henry Little contains several updates on Private Little's condition in response to a request from the Red Cross on behalf of the relatives in Australia to obtain the fullest details possible of his wounds, death & burial. (Note: The original letter sent from The Red Cross referred to No, 4727 Pte K. H. Little, 20th Battalion, A.I.F.)

- Update on condition – "Dangerously Ill" Admitted Cambridge Hospital Aldershot. Transferred to Harefield 21.4.17. Suffering from Gun-shot wound right thigh and left hand. No improvement (phone message 24.5.17)
- A letter from Major Brown, Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield reads: "*The above soldiers died at 3 am on 8.6.17. Cause of death – primary Nephritis; secondary, heart failure. He was buried in Harefield Churchyard on 11.6.17 at 2.30, the burial service being conducted by Chaplain-Captain Gregg MacGreor, who is attached to this Hospital. The Chaplain has written to the deceased soldier's next of kin, viz., father – Charles Little, of Colo Vale, New South Wales. The Medical Officer in charge of the case was Captain H. C Adams, A.A.M.C. There is a fund in existence at this Hospital, subscribed to by Staff and patients, with the object of erecting Headstones to the memory of the Australian soldiers buried in the Harefield Churchyard, I may also mention that Captain Tarleton R.N. of Breakspears, Uxbridge, has generously arranged to have all the graves turfed, and guaranteed to keep them in order during his own and his children's lifetime. A headstone will be erected out of funds as described in accompanying letter.*"

Private John Henry Little was entitled to British War Medal & Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Little's father - Mr C. Little, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent February, 1922 & Plaque sent August, 1922). His new address was listed as "Eltham" Eastern Rd, Turramurra, NSW.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John Henry Little – service number 4727, aged 34, of 20th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Mr C. Little, of Colo Vale, New South Wales.

J. H. Little is remembered on the Men of Colo Vale District Roll of Honour, located in Colo Vale Public School, 83 – 91 Wattle Street, Colo Vale, New South Wales.



Men of Colo Vale District Roll of Honour (Photo by Ron McIntosh – VWMA)

J. H. Little is remembered on the Colo Vale War Memorial, located at Colo Vale Community Centre, 28 Railway Avenue, Colo Vales, NSW.



(Photo by Sheree Milne)



Colo Vale War Memorial (Photos from War Memorials Register NSW)



Private J. H. Little is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 91.

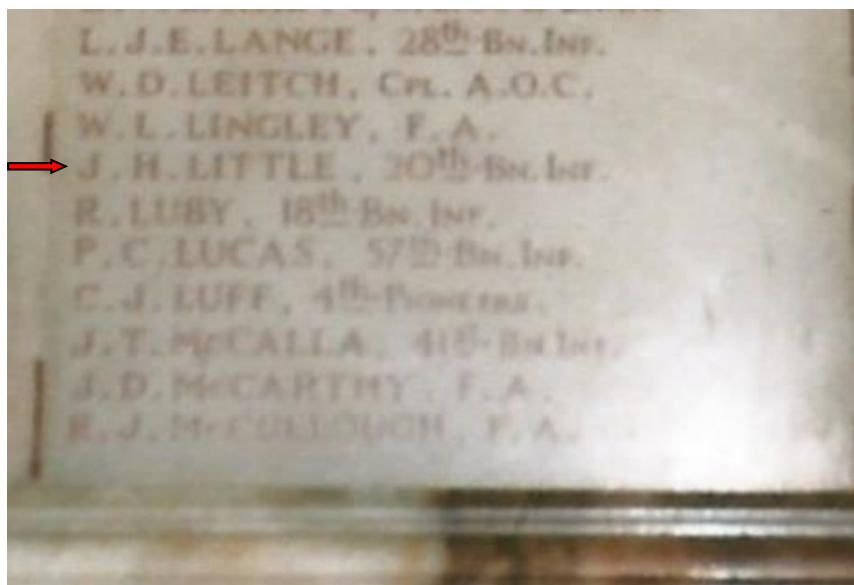


Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

J. H. Little is remembered on the Australian Soldiers' Memorial in St. Mary the Virgin Church, Church Hill, Harefield, Middlesex, England.



Australian Soldiers' Memorial, Harefield (Photo from War Memorials Online – B. Wood)



(57 pages of Private John Henry Little'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 John Henry Little (*Photo from Ancestry*)



Newspaper Notices

Australian Casualties

Lists Nos. 248 to 253

New South Wales

Wounded

Pte J. H. LITTLE (Colo Vale)

(*Australian Town and Country Journal*, Sydney, NSW – 20 December, 1916)

Australian Casualties

Lists Nos. 302 to 303

New South Wales

Dangerously Ill

Pte J. H. LITTLE (Colo Vale)

(Australian Town and Country Journal, Sydney, NSW – 30 May, 1917)

Heroes at the Front

Pte J. H. Little, of Colo Vale, after being wounded, has died of illness. A son of Mr J. H. Little, formerly stationmaster at Colo Vale, and the late Mrs Little, he was well-known and popular in that end of the district.

(Robertson Advocate, NSW – 19 June, 1917) & (The Southern Mail, Bowral, NSW – 19 June, 1917)

Our Front Heroes

Among the names appearing in the 315th list of Australian war casualties issued on Monday are the following :—
Gnr. Victor Gilchrist Nankiville, Mittagong, who is reported to have died of Wounds on the 5th of June, 1917. Pte. John Henry Little, Colo Vale, died of illness on 8th June, 1917 ; he was previously reported to have been dangerously ill.....

(The Scrutineer and Berrima District Press, NSW – 27 June, 1917)

315th LIST

NEW SOUTH WALES

Died of Illness

Pte J. H. Little, Colo Vale (previously reported dangerously ill)

(The Land, Sydney, NSW – 29 June, 1917)

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 20th July, 1921, to Mr C. Little, Colo Vale, NSW, advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of his son, the late No. 4727 Private J. H. Little, 20th 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 John Henry Little does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Erected By His Comrades

St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England

St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield contains 126 Commonwealth War Graves.

During the two world wars, the United Kingdom became an island fortress used for training troops and launching land, sea and air operations around the globe. There are more than 170,000 Commonwealth war graves in the United Kingdom, many being those of servicemen and women killed on active service, or who later succumbed to wounds. Others died in training accidents, or because of sickness or disease. The graves, many of them privately owned and marked by private memorials, will be found in more than 12,000 cemeteries and churchyards.

Harefield (St. Mary) Churchyard contains war graves from both world wars. There are 120 First World War graves, mostly those of Australians who died in No. 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Harefield Park. Uniquely, their graves are marked by scroll shaped headstones, chosen by the staff and patients at the hospital. In the centre of the Australian plot stands a memorial obelisk which was erected by Sir Francis Newdegate, late Governor of Tasmania and of Western Australia, and Mr. C.A.M. Billyard-Leake, of Harefield Park. The churchyard also contains six graves of the Second World War.

(Information & photos from CWGC)

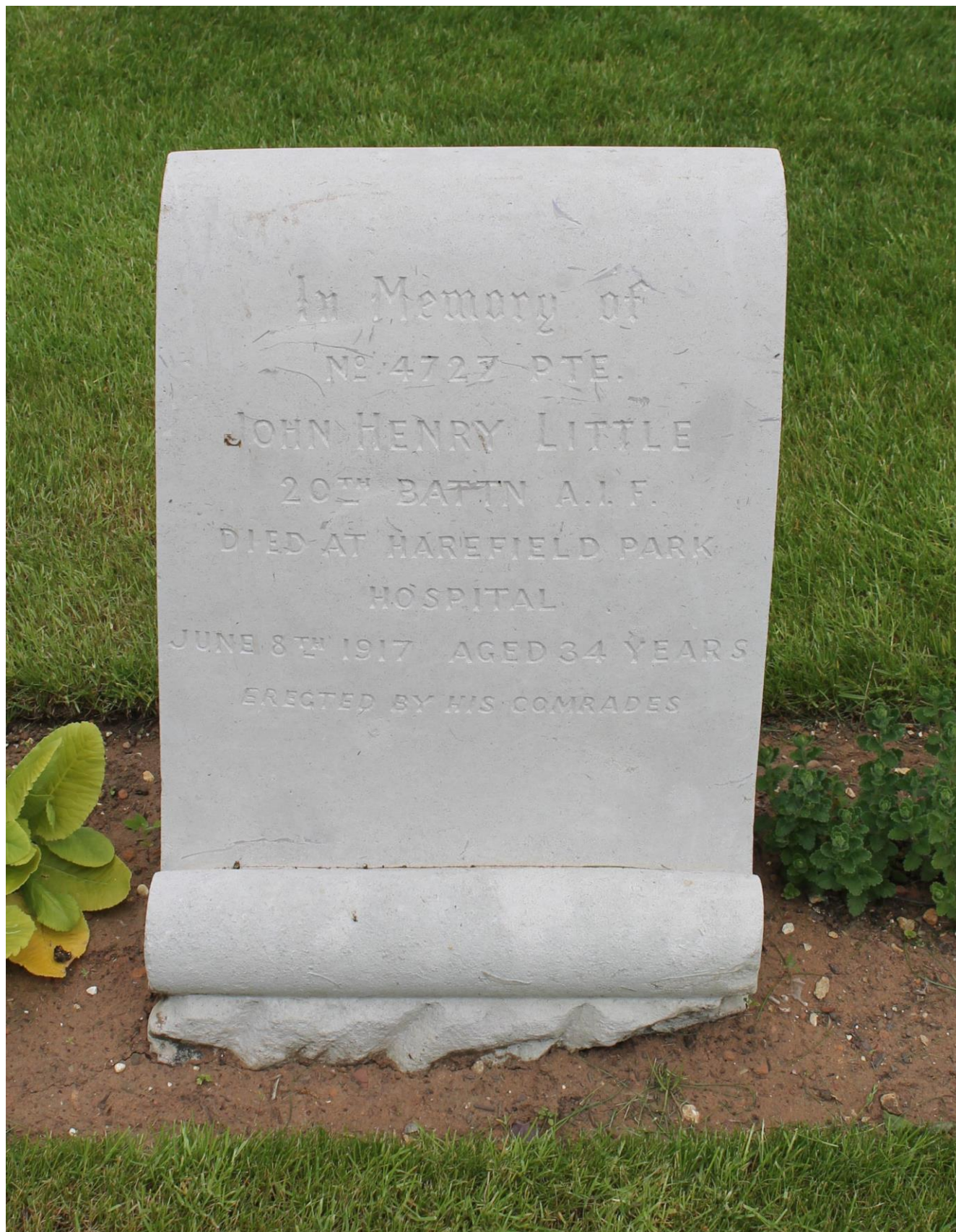




St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield



Photo of Private John Henry Little's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England.



(Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)



St Mary the Virgin Church, Harefield (Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)



St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield (Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)



St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield (Photos courtesy of Peter Bennett)



