

**Melcombe Regis Cemetery,
Weymouth, Dorset, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



3093A PRIVATE

A. S. McKEE

33RD BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

28TH NOVEMBER, 1918 Age 24

Dearly Loved Son

Of W. & C. McKee

At Rest

Arthur Stanley McKEE

Arthur Stanley McKee was born at Summer Hill, Sydney, New South Wales on 30th September, 1894 to parents William & Caroline McKee (nee Howlett). He was baptised on 13th October, 1895 at St. Andrew's Church, Summer Hill, Sydney, NSW. Details from the Baptism Register show that the family lived at St. Peter's, Cooks River & William Stanley was a Produce Merchant.

Arthur Stanley McKee attended school at Summer Hill & Dulwich Hill, New South Wales.

Arthur Stanley McKee was a 22 year old, single, Plumber from Dulwich Hill, NSW when he enlisted on 27th December, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his father – Mr William McKee, of 88 Beach Road, Dulwich Hill, NSW. Arthur Stanley McKee stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served with Militia – 34 Infantry for 2 years & had been discharged due to Hernia.

Private Arthur Stanley McKee was posted to Recruits at Sydney Show Ground Camp on 3rd January, 1917. He was transferred to "C" Company, Infantry Depot Battalion on 16th February, 1917 & then transferred on 26th March, 1917 to "G" Company, 1st Infantry Depot Battalion. Private McKee was transferred to 7th Reinforcements of 36th Battalion from 29th March, 1917.

Private Arthur Stanley McKee was admitted to Liverpool Field Hospital while in Camp in Australia on 23rd April, 1917 with Influenza. He was discharged on 28th April, 1917 & admitted to Group Hospital, ___ Command Depot on 28th April, 1917. Private McKee was discharged on 8th May, 1917.

Private Arthur Stanley McKee, Service number 3093, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Benalla* (A24) on 10th May, 1917 with the 36th Infantry Battalion, 7th Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 19th July, 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 Arthur Stanley McKee was marched in to 9th Training Battalion at Durrington, Wiltshire, England on 20th July, 1917 from Australia.

Private Arthur Stanley McKee reported sick to Fargo Hospital then was admitted to Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire on 23rd July, 1917 with Cerebro Spinal Fever. The Hospital Admissions form recorded he was admitted on 23rd July, 1917 with "*Influenza? No. 5*". "*To Lucknow Isolation Hospital Tidworth. Had severe attack of Influenza with temp 102 on admission. Was debilitated by same. On 3.8.17 developed signs of C.S.M. Headache Temp 101.6. Stiffness of neck & slight Kernig. Transferred to Tidworth Isolation Hosp 3.8.17.*" He was transferred to Tidworth Military Hospital, Wiltshire on 3rd August, 1917. The Hospital Admissions form recorded Malaria. "*To convalescent Home 24.8.17*" Private McKee was discharged to 9th Training Battalion, Durrington on 22nd September, 1917 & was marched in to 9th Training Battalion on the same day.

Private Arthur Stanley McKee reported sick to Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 11th December, 1917. He was admitted to Group Hospital at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 11th December, 1917 with Tonsillitis. Private McKee was marched in to 9th Training Battalion on 26th December, 1917 from Hospital.

Private Arthur Stanley McKee reported sick to Group Hospital at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 22nd January, 1918 & was admitted the same day with Tonsillitis. He developed German Measles on 25th January, 1918 & was marched in to 9th Training Battalion on 14th February, 1918.

Private Arthur Stanley McKee proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 4th March, 1918 from No. 13 Camp at Fovant, Wiltshire. He was marched in to A.I.B.D. (Australian Infantry Base Depot) at Rouelles, France on 5th March, 1918. Private McKee was marched out from A.I.B.D. on 6th March, 1918 & was taken on strength of 36th Battalion in Belgium on 8th March, 1918.

36th Battalion

The 36th Battalion was raised at Broadmeadow Camp, in Newcastle, New South Wales in February 1916. The bulk of the battalion's recruits had been enlisted as a result of a recruiting drive conducted amongst the rifle clubs of New

South Wales by the Minister for Public Information in the New South Wales government, Ambrose Carmichael. Thus, the battalion became known as "Carmichael's Thousand". Carmichael led by example and enlisted as well, serving in the battalion as a captain.

The 36th Battalion became part of the 9th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division. It left Sydney, bound for the United Kingdom on 13 May 1916. Arriving there in early July, the battalion spent the next four months in training. It crossed to France in late November, and moved into the trenches of the Western Front for the first time on 4 December, just in time for the onset of the terrible winter of 1916-17....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Arthur Stanley McKee was transferred to 33rd Battalion on 30th April, 1918 from 36th Battalion. He was taken on strength of 33rd Battalion in France on 30th April, 1918.

Private Arthur Stanley McKee was re-allotted a regimental number – 3093A. (The letter "A" was added to his original number. This occurred due to duplication of regimental numbers.)

Private Arthur Stanley McKee reported sick on 24th July, 1918. He was admitted to 10th Australian Field Ambulance on 24th July, 1918 with P.U.O. (Pyrexia (fever) of unknown origin). Private McKee was transferred & admitted to 47th Casualty Clearing Station on 25th July, 1918. He was transferred to 5th General; Hospital at Rouen on 6th August, 1918 with Trench Fever. He embarked for England on Hospital Ship *Essequibo* on 13th August, 1918.

33rd Battalion

.....When the German Army launched its last great offensive in the spring of 1918, the Battalion was part of the force deployed to defend the approaches to Amiens around Villers-Bretonneux. It took part in a counter-attack at Hangard Wood on 30 March, and helped to defeat a major drive on Villers-Bretonneux on 4 April.

Later in 1918, the 33rd also played a role in the Allies' own offensive. It fought at the battle of Amiens on 8 August, during the rapid advance that followed, and in the operation that breached the Hindenburg Line at the end of September, thus sealing Germany's defeat. The 33rd Battalion disbanded in May 1919.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Arthur Stanley McKee was admitted to Alexandra Hospital, Cosham, England on 15th August, 1918 with Trench Fever – slight. He was transferred to 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford on 8th October, 1918.

A Medical Report was completed on 17th October, 1918 on Private Arthur Stanley McKee while he was a patient in 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford, Kent. His disability was listed as Chronic Bronchitis & Asthma which had first originated in Australia around 1912. *"He states that every winter for about 6 years he had an attack of bronchitis. He came to England on transport via Sierra Leone and when he got to England it was found that he had malaria for which he was laid up from July 26th to September 1917. He went to France at the beginning of March, 1918 but was troubled frequently with asthmatic attacks and bronchitis. On 23.7.18 he was admitted to F.A. and he has been in hospitals since."* The cause of the disability was *"aggravated by service during the present war, active service, strain and exposure."* The Officer in charge of the case recommended that Private McKee be discharged to Australia as permanently unfit. The Medical Board agreed on 21st October, 1918 that Private Arthur Stanley McKee was C3 – permanently unfit for General & Home Service.

Private Arthur Stanley McKee was discharged to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, Dorset on 23rd October, 1918. He was marched to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth on the same day.

Private Arthur Stanley McKee reported sick on 21st November, 1918 at Weymouth. He was admitted to Monte Video Camp Hospital on 26th November, 1918 with Influenza – dangerously ill.

Private Arthur Stanley McKee died at 1.30 am on 28th November, 1918 at Monte Video Camp Hospital, Dorset, England from Influenza, Pneumonia.

A death for Arthur S. McKee, aged 24, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Weymouth, Dorset, England.

Private Arthur Stanley McKee was buried on 30th November, 1918 in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England – Plot number II. C. 3129 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

From the burial report of Private McKee - *Coffin was good Polished Elm. Brass Mounts. Deceased was buried with full Military honors. The funeral was preceded by a Firing Party and Band from No 2 Australian Command Depot. Six of deceased's late comrades supported the pall. Headquarters, A.I.F. Depots in United Kingdom were represented at the funeral.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Arthur Stanley McKee contains a letter from C. E. Green, Sister in Charge, Monte Video Hospital, No. 2 Command Depot, Weymouth which reads: "... he was admitted to this Hospital from Westham Camp on 21.11.18. On 26.11.18 he was reported seriously ill suffering from influenza & died 1.30 am 28.11.18. Letter with all particulars of his illness have been written to his friends in Australia..."

Private Arthur Stanley McKee requested in his Will dated 10th May, 1917 that "*In the event of my death I give the whole of my property & effects including all military money due to me to my Mother Caroline McKee Erina 88 Beach Rd, Dulwich Hill, Sydney, NSW, Australia.*"

Private Arthur Stanley McKee was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private McKee's father - Mr W. McKee, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent December, 1922 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Arthur Stanley McKee – service number 3093A, aged 24, of 33rd Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of William & Caroline McKee, of 88 Beach Rd, Dulwich Hill, Sydney, New South Wales.

Private A. S. McKee is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 122.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

A. S. McKee is remembered on the Marrickville War Memorial, located outside Marrickville Town Hall, corner Marrickville & Petersham Roads, Marrickville, Sydney, New South Wales.

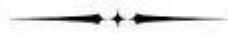


Marrickville War Memorial (Photos from AWM Places of Pride – Peter F. Williams)



(61 pages of Private Arthur Stanley McKee'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

N.S.W. WAR CASUALTIES

Lists Nos. 451 and 451A

Ill in Hospital

Pte McKEE, A. S. (Dulwich Hill), second

(Australian Town and Country Journal, Sydney, NSW – 18 December, 1918)

RETURN THANKS

Mr & Mrs McKEE and FAMILY, 88 Beach-road, Dulwich Hill, desire to return THANKS to relations and friends for kind sympathy in their sad bereavement in the loss of their son, Private A. S. McKee.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 28 December, 1918)

N.S.W. WAR CASUALTIES

Lists No. 453

Other Deaths

Pte McKEE, A. S. (Dulwich Hill), illness

(Australian Town and Country Journal, Sydney, NSW – 1 January, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

McKEE – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Arthur McKee, died Weymouth, November 28, 1918, broncho-pneumonia.

Do not ask us if we miss him,
Words would fail our love to tell;
But in heaven we hope to meet him,
Jesus doeth all things well.

Inserted by sorrowing parents, brothers and sisters, Dulwich Hill.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 29 November, 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 A. S. McKee does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Dearly Loved Son of W. & C. McKee

At Rest

Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England

Weymouth became a depot for Australian forces in 1916 and 83 of the 147 First World War burials in Melcombe Regis Cemetery are of Australian servicemen; most of these graves are scattered in the old part. The 36 Second World War burials are in the extension. The cemetery also contains seven war graves of other nationalities and one non-war burial.

(Information from CWGC)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00332

Some of the Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919

Identified, left to right: Captain Francis Arthur Deravin, Australian Army Medical Corps, died 8 July 1917 aged 41 years (large headstone); 138 Private Louis Nelson Matthews, 27th Battalion, 4 July 1917; 5082 Private Victor George Smith, 21st Battalion, died 13 November 1918.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00333

Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919

Identified, front row, left to right: unidentified; Butler; 5917 Private Edgar Allan Thornell, 22nd Battalion (Bn), died 9 August 1918; 1207 Corporal Jesse Adams Davis, 12th Bn, died 15 November 1918.

Back row: 5329 Private Frederick Albert Archer, Anzac Provost Company, died 6 November 1918; 5990 Private Albert Robert Blackmore, 12th Bn, died 2 November 1918; 11099 Driver Matthew Charles Percival Nettle, 6th Australian Field Artillery Brigade, died 22 October 1918; 3942 Private Walter Alick Weckman, 51st Bn, died 9 November 1918.



(Photo courtesy of Steve Stewart)



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)





(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

Australians in Weymouth

What was life like for the Australians?

The Camp

Within the camp, there were educational facilities as well as medical rooms which helped to recover and re-educate the soldiers. There was help provided for soldiers suffering with physical or emotional impairments, such as massage rooms, psychotherapy training rooms and a remedial gymnasium. This strengthened the men to help them recover from their injuries. The educational aspects were diverse, allowing soldiers to pick a completely different profession for when they went back home. This included architecture, motor engineering, electrical and carpentry classes. Another option allowed the soldiers to be retrained in their previous professions which may have become more difficult, due to loss of limbs or new techniques that may have been created whilst they were at war.

The Town

Weymouth benefited hugely from the influx of Australian and New Zealand soldiers. One shop that still exists today is the Acutt's clothing store, which used to sell everything a soldier could possibly need for his uniform, from the whole jacket to just the buttons and epaulettes. As well as Acutt's, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia also opened up their own branch in Weymouth, for the soldiers to use during their time over here, which highlighted the permanence of their stay. There was also a monthly newsletter that circulated amongst the men, which was produced by local company Sherrens, which still operates on the Granby Industrial estate.

Special Events

The Australian recovery camps took special occasions very seriously, such as Christmas and Easter, to try and reduce the ache of home sickness and being away from their family and friends. Most camps tried to make their soldiers feel at home, with large celebrations with Christmas dinners and special guest performances at Easter. However, there were also other special events that gained press attention, such as the opening of the YMCA building, which used to be on Abbotshay Road. This provided help and welfare to the Australian soldiers, such as free food and blankets. There were fundraising days for the prisoner-of-war soldiers that had been captured during the fall of the Kut, who were mainly Dorset soldiers. From these fundraising days in Weymouth, Dorchester and Bridport, the towns managed to raise £5,600 to help comfort the prisoners.

Entertainment

Entertainment was a highly important aspect of the soldiers' lives whilst they were in Weymouth. It kept the soldiers motivated and in high spirits whilst they were ill or injured, in hopes of helping to speed up their recovery. Throughout the camps in Weymouth, there was always something to watch or listen to, whether it was singing and acting companies who toured round the camps or at the Pavilion Theatre on the Esplanade. Sometimes, the soldiers even made their own entertainment, with marching bands and choirs being set up by the YMCA building in Weymouth. There were also balls and dances at the camps themselves and even a small trip to the Alexandra Garden along the Esplanade. Dating also became a significant part of the soldiers' lives, with many Weymouth women losing husbands and boyfriends at war, finding comfort with the new soldiers at the camp. This led to many marriages between the two groups, and some migrating back to Australia with their new families, or staying here and leaving their families.

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#weyforward

The National Lottery

Images courtesy of Australian War Memorial, Newsletter originals published by Sherrens, Ltd. Weymouth



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

Australians in Weymouth

From Weymouth to Auswey - A Soldier's Récovery



During the First World War between 1914 and 1918, many injured soldiers who were mostly from Australia and New Zealand, were brought to Weymouth. They were known as ANZACS (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps). They were placed in Repatriation and Recuperation camps in Westham, Littleton, Chickerell and Portland. This was in the hope of sending them back to the line of action in France or back home to Australia due to lack of fitness. Weymouth was picked as the place to set up camp, as it was seen as a relaxing seaside location. This would help to heal the sick and injured Australians who had been fighting in major battles of the war or on the Western Front between France and Belgium.



Although thousands of ANZACS passed through Weymouth during the First World War, there are some soldiers who unfortunately did not make it home. These soldiers are proudly buried in the Melcombe Regis cemetery. This is only 100 metres away from one of the major camps in Westham, with 142 soldiers buried in the cemetery, 83 from Australia and 59 from New Zealand. These graves are similar to some of the war memorials and graves placed around Europe, much like the Somme in France. Unfortunately, there are too many grave names to be displayed on this board, but they can be found on the website link at the bottom of this board.



Past and Present Westham

As you can see on the map of the Westham camp, many of the street names have an Australian connection, highlighting the history of the area. Residents of the housing estates, which are now built where the camp once stood, are still digging up remains of the camp, such as bullets or cooking equipment.



Modern Day Street Names	Westham Camp - December 1916
Cheset Close	Soldiers Huts
Sussex Road	Company Officers
Queensland Road	Regimental Institute
Kitchener Road	Minutemen Rifle Range
Corporation Road	Officers' Mess
Shorn Road	Shower Block
Longcroft Road	Vehicle Shed, Mob Store
Wessex Road	Home Shelter
Parth Street	Cool Yard
Melcombe Street	Cook House
Adelaide Crescent	YMCA
Abbotsbury Road	Dung Pit
Sydney Street	Fire Hydrant
Shirecroft Road	





www.westhamcommunitygroup.co.uk

Images courtesy of Australian War Memorial

Photo of Private A. S. McKee's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England.



(Photo courtesy of Allan Wood)