

**Colchester Cemetery,
Colchester, Essex
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2413 DRIVER

C. S. McKELLAR

AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS

18TH JUNE, 1918 Age 25

*The Dearly Loved Son
Of Mr & Mrs McKellar
Of Sydney. Late Glasgow*

Colin Smith McKELLAR

Colin Smith McKellar was born in Perth, Perthshire, Scotland on 24th July, 1892 to parents Alexander & Flora Ann McKellar (nee McDonald).

The 1901 Scotland Census recorded Colin S. McKellar as an 8 year old Scholar, living with his family at 101 Woodside Terrace Lane, Glasgow Park, Lanarkshire, Scotland. His parents were listed as Alexander McKellar (Domestic Coachman, aged 26) & Flora A. McKellar (aged 37). Colin was one of four children listed on this Census – Alexander McKellar (Scholar, aged 10) then Colin, Agnes S. McKellar (Scholar, aged 7) & Mary S. McKellar (aged 3). Also listed was a Boarder - Alexander M. Gillespie (Coachman, aged 39).

Colin Smith McKellar attended Woodside High School, Glasgow, Scotland.

Colin Smith McKellar had been apprenticed to J. Miller, Glasgow, Scotland for 7 years.

According to information provided by his father for the Roll of Honour – Colin arrived in Australia when he was 22 years old. His father also stated the Colin had received a silver medal for Honorary Assistant Instructor to Boys Brigade Gymnasium in Glasgow. Colin had also been the youngest bugler in Scottish Territorials, being only 15 years of age.

The McKellar family were passengers on the *Berrima* which departed from the port of London, England on 11th June, 1914. The family consisted of Alexander McKellar (Coachman, aged 49), Colin McKellar (Brassmoulder, aged 21), Mrs Flora McKellar (wife, aged 49), Agnes McKellar (aged 20), Mary McKellar (aged 16) & Flora McKellar (aged 11).

Colin Smith McKellar was a 23 year old, single, Brassmoulder from Allum Street, Bankstown, NSW when he enlisted on 14th September, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2413 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr A. McKellar, Allum Street, Bankstown, NSW. Colin McKellar stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served with 6th H.L.I. (Highland Light Infantry) at Glasgow for 4 years.

Driver Colin Smith McKellar was posted to 12th Reinforcements, 1st Field Company Engineers for recruit training.

Driver Colin Smith McKellar embarked from Sydney, NSW on RMS *Mooltan* on 11th December, 1915 with the 1st Field Company Engineers, 12th Reinforcements.

Driver Colin Smith McKellar proceeded to Serapeum from Zeitoun on 23rd March, 1916.

Driver Colin Smith McKellar was taken on strength of 1st Field Company, Australian Engineers on 13th April, 1916.

Australian Engineers in the First World War

Engineers, also known as sappers, were essential to the running of the war. Without them, other branches of the Allied Forces would have found it difficult to cross the muddy and shell-ravaged ground of the Western Front. Their responsibilities included constructing the lines of defence, temporary bridges, tunnels and trenches, observation posts, roads, railways, communication lines, buildings of all kinds, showers and bathing facilities, and other material and mechanical solutions to the problems associated with fighting in all theatres.

(Description of Engineers Information from The Australian War Memorial)

Driver Colin Smith McKellar was sent to Hospital sick on 10th December, 1916. He was admitted to Anzac M.D.S. (Main Dressing Station) on 11th December, 1916 then transferred the same day to 36th Casualty Clearing Station with Influenza. Driver McKellar was transferred & admitted to 10th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 13th December, 1916 with Influenza. He was transferred to 2nd Convalescent Depot at Rouen on 17th December, 1916. Driver McKellar was discharged to Base Details at Etaples, France on 19th December, 1916. He rejoined 1st Field Company in France on 26th December, 1916 from Hospital.

Driver Colin Smith McKellar was on 10 days furlough from 27th July, 1917 & returned from furlough on 10th August, 1917.

Driver Colin Smith McKellar was sent to Hospital sick on 4th October, 1917. He was admitted to 3rd Field Ambulance in France on 4th October, 1917 with Ptomaine Poisoning (food poisoning). Driver McKellar was transferred & admitted to 2nd Australian General Hospital on 9th October, 1917. He embarked for England on Hospital Ship *St. Denis* on 11th October, 1917.

Driver Colin Smith McKellar was admitted to Kitchener's Military Hospital at Brighton, England on 11th October, 1917 with Ptomaine poisoning. He was transferred to 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford on 12th November, 1917. Driver McKellar was transferred to Depot at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 14th November, 1917.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training & convalescing was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire & also the county of Dorset.

Driver Colin Smith McKellar was marched in to No. 3 Command Depot at Hurdcott, Wiltshire, England on 14th November, 1917. He was medically classified as B1 B (Observation) on 16th November, 1917. On 26th November, 1917 & 11th December, 1917 Driver McKellar was medically classified as B1 A1 (fit for light duty only – 4 weeks). He was medically classified on 13th December, 1917 as B1 A2 (fit for overseas training camp in three to four weeks).

Driver Colin Smith McKellar was taken on strength of Permanent Cadre of No. 3 Command Depot at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 1st January, 1918.

Driver Colin Smith McKellar was absent from 8.30 am Parade on 7th April, 1918 & was awarded 3 days Confined to Camp by Major A. G. Simpson.

Driver Colin Smith McKellar was marched in to Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deveril, Wiltshire on 18th April, 1918 from No. 3 Command Depot at Hurdcott.

Driver Colin Smith McKellar was marched in to Engineers Training Depot at Brightlingsea on 3rd May, 1918 from Overseas Training Brigade.

Driver Colin Smith McKellar was sent sick to Colchester Hospital on 16th June, 1918 with Influenza. He was reported as seriously ill with Pneumonia & Influenza on 16th June, 1918.

Driver Colin Smith McKellar died at 3.35 pm on 18th June, 1918 at General Military Hospital, Colchester, Essex, England from Broncho Pneumonia.

A death for Colin S. McKellar, aged 26, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Colchester, Essex, England.

Driver Colin Smith McKellar was buried at 2 pm on 21st June, 1918 in Colchester Cemetery, Colchester, Essex, England – Plot number 67, Section O. From the burial report of Driver Colin Smith McKellar - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a full Military Funeral. Gun Carriage, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers were in attendance. A band preceded the Firing Party. The coffin was draped with the Australian Flag and surmounted by many beautiful wreaths. About 70 Australians (patients in Hospital) were present. A cross will be erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Base Records contacted Mr A. McKellar, Dellwood Street, Bankstown, NSW, father of the late Driver Colin Smith McKellar in April, 1920 to advise that information had been received that the remains of his son had "*been exhumed from the former site & re-interred in Grave No.2 Section T. 6, Colchester Cemetery. This work is carried out with every measure of care and reverence in the presence of a Chaplain.*"

Driver Colin Smith McKellar has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Driver Colin Smith McKellar contains a letter from The Matron, General Military Hospital, Colchester which reads: "*Re 2413 Pte C. S. McKellar, 1st F.C. Engrs. I beg to inform you that this*

patient was admitted into the Hpl. on 16-6-18 suffering from Broncho-Pneumonia. He was extremely ill on admission from Brightlingsea, both lungs being extensively affected. He became rapidly worse and died at 3.30 pm on 18-6-18, having been unconscious from the time of admission. He was buried from the Hpl., the funeral taking place at 11.30 am on 21-6-18 – full Military honours.”

Driver Colin Smith McKellar was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Driver McKellar's father – Mr A. McKellar, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent October, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Driver Colin Smith McKellar – service number 2413, aged 25, of 1st Coy., Australian Engineers. He was the son of Alexander and Flora Ann McKellar, of Delwood St., Bankstown, Sydney, New South Wales.

Driver C. S. McKellar is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 24.



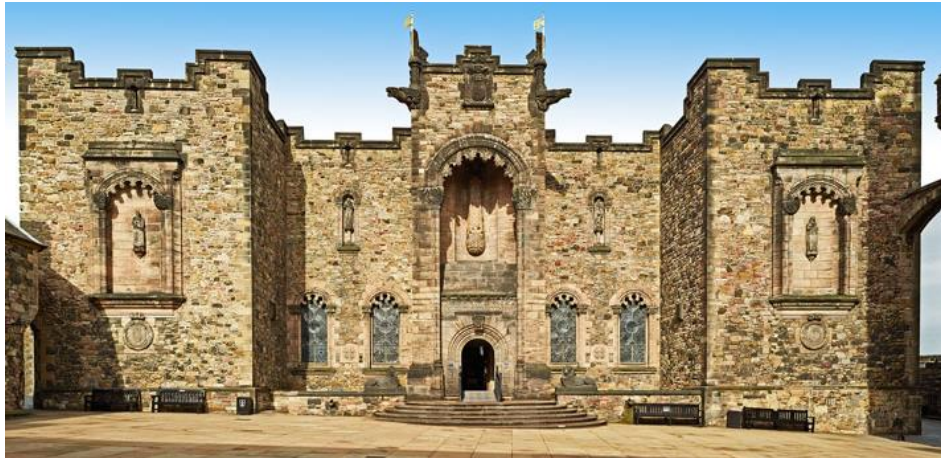
Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

C. S. McKellar is remembered on the Bankstown RSL Club World War 1 Honor Roll located at 32 Kitchener Pde, Bankstown, NSW.



Bankstown RSL Club World War 1 Honor Roll (Photo from War Memorial Register of NSW)

Colin Smith McKellar is remembered in the Roll of Honour books held in the Hall of Honour inside The Scottish National War Memorial. The north side of the Hall of Honour is divided by columns into bays, each dedicated to a different regiment and enhanced with battle honours and consecrated colours. On the broad shelf in front of each of the bays, the names of the dead are listed in leather-bound books.



The Scottish National War Memorial & the Hall of Honour & the Roll of Honour books.

(Photos from The Scottish National War Memorial)



(68 pages of Driver Colin Smith McKellar'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

WAR CASUALTIES

ILL

Dvr COLIN SMITH McKELLAR, Bankstown

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 1 January, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

McKELLAR – In loving memory of our dear son, Driver Colin S. McKellar, aged 25 years, who died of illness, June 18, 1918.

Could I, his mother, have clasped his hand,
The son I loved so dear,
Or kissed his brow when death was near,
And whispered Jesus is here.
I seem to see his dear, sweet face
Through a mist of anxious tears,
But a mother's part is a broken heart
And a burden of lonely years.

Inserted by his sorrowing mother and father.

McKELLAR – In loving memory of our darling brother, Driver Colin S. McKellar, 1st Div. Engineers, who died of illness, June 18, 1918.

Dear boy, we miss your smiling face,
Your tender voice, and fond embrace.
Dear one, we miss your manly grace,
Your helping hand in every place.
Dear heart, we miss your sweet solace,
Your noble love none can replace.

Inserted by his loving sisters, Mary and Flora.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 18 June, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

McKELLAR – A tribute to the sacred memory of Dr. C. S. McKellae, 1st Engrs, died Colchester, England, June 18, 1918. He gained the highest step on the ladder of life. Soldier, rest. Inserted by his loving parents and sisters.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 19 June, 1920)

MEMORIAL SERVICE AT COLCHESTER

GRAVES CAREFULLY TENDED

Prominent Englishmen and women were quick to spring to the defence of Australian soldiers when they were libelled recently in one of the flood of belated war books on the market. The abiding sense of gratitude felt by the English people towards the men from overseas who rallied to the defence of the Empire, is typified in the action of the members of the women's section of the British Legion at Colchester. Mrs. Florence T. Towsey, chairman of the Colchester section, has sent a message to the Australian relatives of the men of the A.I.F. who were laid to rest in the cemetery at Colchester, the quaint old Essex town, which was established in the time of the Saxons, and was once a stronghold of the Danes in the days when they ravaged the coasts of England. It was strongly fortified by the Romans, and the great Roman walls remain almost entire to this day. The countryside must have seen much fighting, and the frowning Norman keep is one of the largest in England, and there is something singularly touching in the fact that the soldiers of the younger countries rest here, amid the brotherhood of warriors of long ago.

Impressive Ceremony

Mrs. Towsey says on Anzac Day, 1929, the members of the British Legion (Women's Section), Colchester Branch, assembled at the cemetery to pay a tribute to the memory of the men of the overseas Dominions, who came to fight for the British Empire in the Great War, and who lie buried there. A simple but impressive little service was held, and then flowers were placed on each grave. It is proposed to hold this service annually. The graves are carefully tended. The following are the names of the Australians who rest in Colchester Cemetery, and the simple inscriptions on their graves: —

38 651. Gunner C. C. Willcock, Field Artillery. Dec. 25, 1918. Age 38. 'Happy in my lot.'

2 182. Corporal J. P. Byrne, 58th B.N., Australian T.N.F. Jan. 5, 1918. Age 29.

3370. Private H. M. C. D. McIntosh, 3rd B.N., Australian I.N.F. July 12, 1916. Age 18. 'My son, your memory we will cherish, until we follow you.'

1100. Driver R. C. Hendry, Australian Field Artillery. August 9, 1918. Age 25. 'Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away.'

6035. Private J. Hought, 6th Bn., Australian Infantry. Nov. 17, 1917. Age 31. 'Thy purpose, Lord, we cannot see; He gave his life that we might live.'

1384. Private W. I. Mackenzie, 51st Bn., Australian Infantry, Aug. 5, 1916. Age 27. 'Gone, but not forgotten.'

10973. Driver W. R. Bennett. Australian Engineers, Nov. 23, 1918.

1906. Private S. E. Barclay, 45th Bn., Australian Inf. April 11, 1918. Age 24.

493. Private F. R. Rankin, 21st Bn. Australian Inf., Sept. 10, 1916. Age 21 'God has saved from weary strife, In its dawn this young, fresh life.'

2413. Driver C. S. McKellar, Australian Engineers, June 18, 1918. Age 25. The dearly-loved son of Mr. and Mrs. McKellar, of Sydney, late of Glasgow.

19477. Sapper H. F. Smith, Australian Engineers, Nov. 5, 1918. Age 31.

Getting in Touch with Relatives

Mrs. Towsey asked Mrs. Florence Muriel Paxman, a member of the Colchester branch, who is visiting Sydney on a holiday trip, to try and get in touch with the Australian relatives of any of these men. In a letter to 'The Chronicle,' Mrs. Paxman says— 'I visited all the graves the day before I left England, and I shall be most happy to give any relatives any further information, or to get them photographs of any particular grave if they will write to me at my address, Winton, New South Head-road, Rose Bay, Sydney.'

Mrs. Towsey's address is Tollgate House, Shrub End, Colchester, and many Australians will remember with gratitude the hospitality that was extended to them there during the war.

(*Chronicle*, Adelaide, South Australia – 13 March, 1930)

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)

Driver C. S. McKellar does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

The Dearly Loved Son Of Mr & Mrs McKellar Of Sydney. Late Glasgow.

Colchester Cemetery, Colchester, Essex, England

Colchester Cemetery was opened in 1856 and now belongs to the Corporation. It originally covered about 30 acres, but was enlarged in 1940 to 67 acres. The newer part is on the western side of the original burial ground, and behind it is the site of a Roman Way. There are 267 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war, 1 being unidentified, of which 50 are in the War Plot, while 11 Australian graves are together in a group nearby, the remainder being scattered. After the war a Cross of Sacrifice was erected on a site overlooking both the plot and the group of war graves, in honour of all the servicemen buried here. There are also 114 Commonwealth burials of the 1939-1945 war here, 1 of which is unidentified. In the early months of the 1939-1945 War, shortly after the enlargement of the cemetery, land was set aside in the newer part for service war burials. This is now the War Graves Plot. Among these casualties are men who were killed at sea after being evacuated from Dunkirk. The non-war graves are those of a man of the Merchant Navy and two ex-servicemen who were buried in the War Graves Plot although their deaths were not due to war service. There are also 7 Foreign National burials. The plot is enclosed by a hedge of cotoneaster frigida and a Cross of Sacrifice stands on the western side. The graves are set in level mown turf, with continuous flower borders along the rows of headstones in which are polyantha roses and other seasonal flowers.

(Information from CWGC)



Colchester Cemetery Entrance *(Photo by Iain MacFarlane – Find a Grave)*



Cross of Sacrifice, Colchester Cemetery (Photo from CWGC)



Australian Plot of World War 1 War Graves, Colchester Cemetery (Photo from CWGC)

Driver C. S. McKellar's CWGC Headstone (marked with red arrow)

Photo of Driver C. S. McKellar's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Colchester Cemetery, Colchester, Essex, England



(Photo by Andrea Charlesworth)



(Photo by Andrea Charlesworth – Find a Grave)