

**Hollybrook Memorial,
Southampton, Hampshire, England
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



3422 PRIVATE

H. T. PEARCE

4TH AUSTRALIAN PIONEERS

2ND DECEMBER, 1916

Herbert Thomas PEARCE

Herbert Thomas Pearce was born on 8th August, 1894* to father Frederick Pearce.

(*Information as per Attestation Papers. A search was conducted on Queensland Births, Deaths & Marriages for "*Herbert Thomas*" (no surname) on "*8/8/1894*" 1894 with no results. A search was conducted for a birth for "Herbert Thomas Pearce" with no results.)

(According to information provided by his father for the Roll of Honour Fred Edward Pearce stated Herbert Thomas Pearce was born at Gympie, Queensland, however Herbert Thomas Pearce stated on his Attestation Papers that he was born near the town of Childers, Bundaberg, Queensland.)

[Note: A search was completed on Australian Electoral Rolls to locate a wife for Frederick Pearce. Results were found for 1915, 1916 & 1917 in the division of Brisbane, subdivision of Brisbane North & on those three years on Frederick Pearce, Labourer, was listed at 45 Quay Street.]

Herbert Thomas Pearce attended school at "Gympie One Mile" (as listed on information provided by his father for the Roll of Honour). Bertie Thomas Pearce is listed as a student of The One Mile State School (Gympie), Queensland in 1901.

Herbert Thomas Pearce was a 22 year old, single, Motor Driver (listed as a Mechanic by his father for the Roll of Honour) from Richmond, Queensland when he enlisted on 26th October, 1916 at Townsville, Queensland with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his father – Frederick Pearce, 45 Key Street (street name as per Embarkation Roll, however the street name is listed as "*45 Quay St*" on Attestation Papers), Brisbane, Queensland. Herbert Pearce stated on his Attestation Papers that he had been a member of the Richmond Downs Rifle Club. He stated he had previously been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service due to his Teeth.

Private Herbert Thomas Pearce was posted to 11th Depot Battalion on 31st October, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 8th Reinforcements of 4th Pioneers on 6th November, 1916.

Private Herbert Thomas Pearce, Service number 3422, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Beltana* (A72) on 25th November, 1916 with the 4th Pioneer Battalion, 8th Reinforcements.

4th Pioneer Battalion

The 4th Pioneer Battalion was an Australian infantry and light engineer unit raised for service during the First World War as part of the all volunteer Australian Imperial Force (AIF). Formed in Egypt in March 1916, the battalion subsequently served on the Western Front in France and Belgium, after being transferred to the European battlefields shortly after its establishment. Assigned to the 4th Division, the 4th Pioneer Battalion fought in most of the major battles that the AIF participated in between mid-1916 and the end of the war in November 1918. It was subsequently disbanded in early 1919.

The 4th Pioneers were established on 16 March 1916, at Tel-el-Kebir in Egypt, and were subsequently assigned to the 4th Division. The battalion was formed in the aftermath of the failed Gallipoli campaign when the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) was expanded as part of plans to transfer it from the Middle East to Europe for service in the trenches along the Western Front. This expansion saw several new infantry divisions raised in Egypt and Australia, as well as specialist support units such as machine gun companies, engineer companies, artillery batteries and pioneer battalions, which were needed to meet the conditions prevalent on the Western Front.

Trained as infantrymen, they were also tasked with some engineer functions, with a large number of personnel possessing trade qualifications from civilian life. As such, they were designated as pioneer units. The pioneer concept had existed within the British Indian Army before the war, but had not initially been adopted in other British Empire forces. In early 1916, the Australian Army was reorganised ahead of its transfer to the Western Front in Europe. A total of five pioneer battalions were raised by the AIF at this time, with one being assigned to each of the five infantry divisions that the Australians deployed to the battlefield in France and Belgium. Tasked with digging trenches, labouring, constructing strong points and light railways, and undertaking battlefield clearance, the troops assigned to the pioneers required construction and engineering experience in addition to basic soldiering skills.

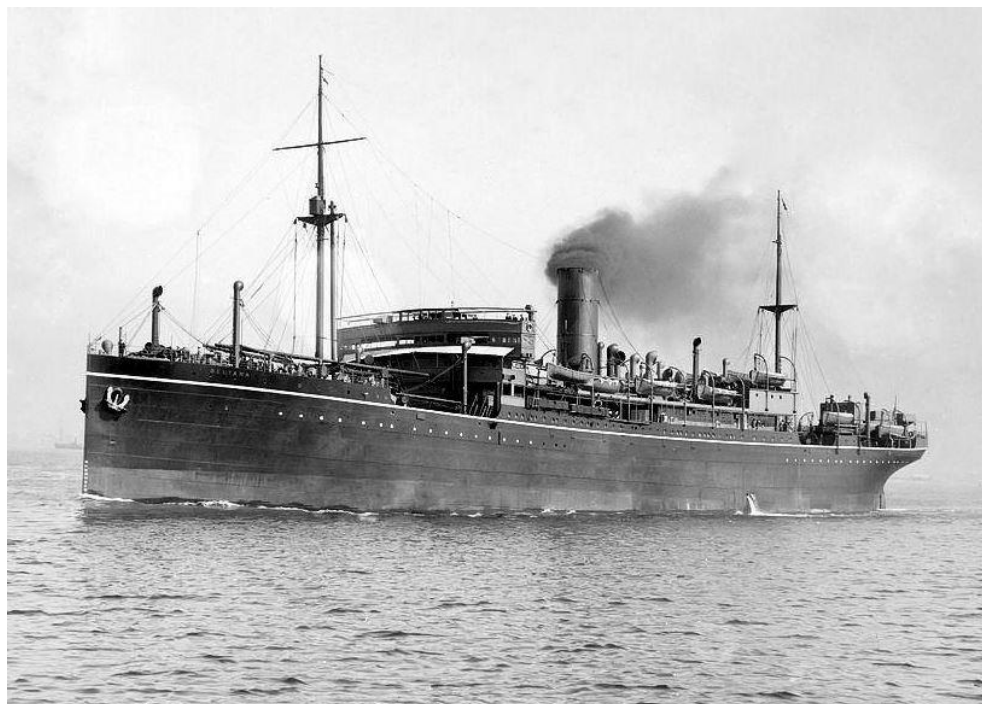
Consisting largely of volunteers drawn from Queensland, the battalion consisted of four companies, under a headquarters company. The battalion's first commanding officer was Lieutenant Colonel James Corlette. For a

period in 1917, the 26-year-old Vernon Sturdee, who later rose to be Chief of the General Staff, served as commanding officer. The battalion subsequently served on the Western Front from mid-1916 until the end of the war. To identify the battalion's personnel, they were issued with a purple and white unit colour patch. The colours were in common with other Australian pioneer battalions, while the circle shape denoted that the unit was part of the 4th Division.....

(Extract of Pioneer Battalion information from Wikipedia)

Private Herbert Thomas Pearce was admitted to Ship's Hospital on 28th November, 1916 with C.S.M. (Cerebro Spinal Meningitis)

Private Herbert Thomas Pearce died at 2.45 pm on 2nd December, 1916 at Sea on board HMAT *Beltana* (A72) from Meningitis.



HMAT *Beltana* (A72)

The Register of Deceased Passengers recorded Herbert Thomas Pearce died at 2.45 pm on 2nd December, 1916 from Cerebro Spinal Meningitis at co-ordinates 34.47S, 115.33 E. He was one of seven Australian Soldiers to die on board HMAT *Beltana* (A72) between 26th November, 1916 & 14th January, 1917.



Location of HMAT *Beltana* (A72) at the time of Private Herbert Thomas Pearce's death.

Private Herbert Thomas Pearce was buried at Sea on 2nd December, 1916 from HMAT *Beltana* (A72). He is commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England as he has no grave. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Private Herbert Thomas Pearce was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Pearce's father – Mr F. Pearce, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent March, 1920 & Plaque sent August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Herbert Thomas Pearce – service number 3422, of 4th Australian Pioneers. No family details are listed.

Private H. T. Pearce is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 174.

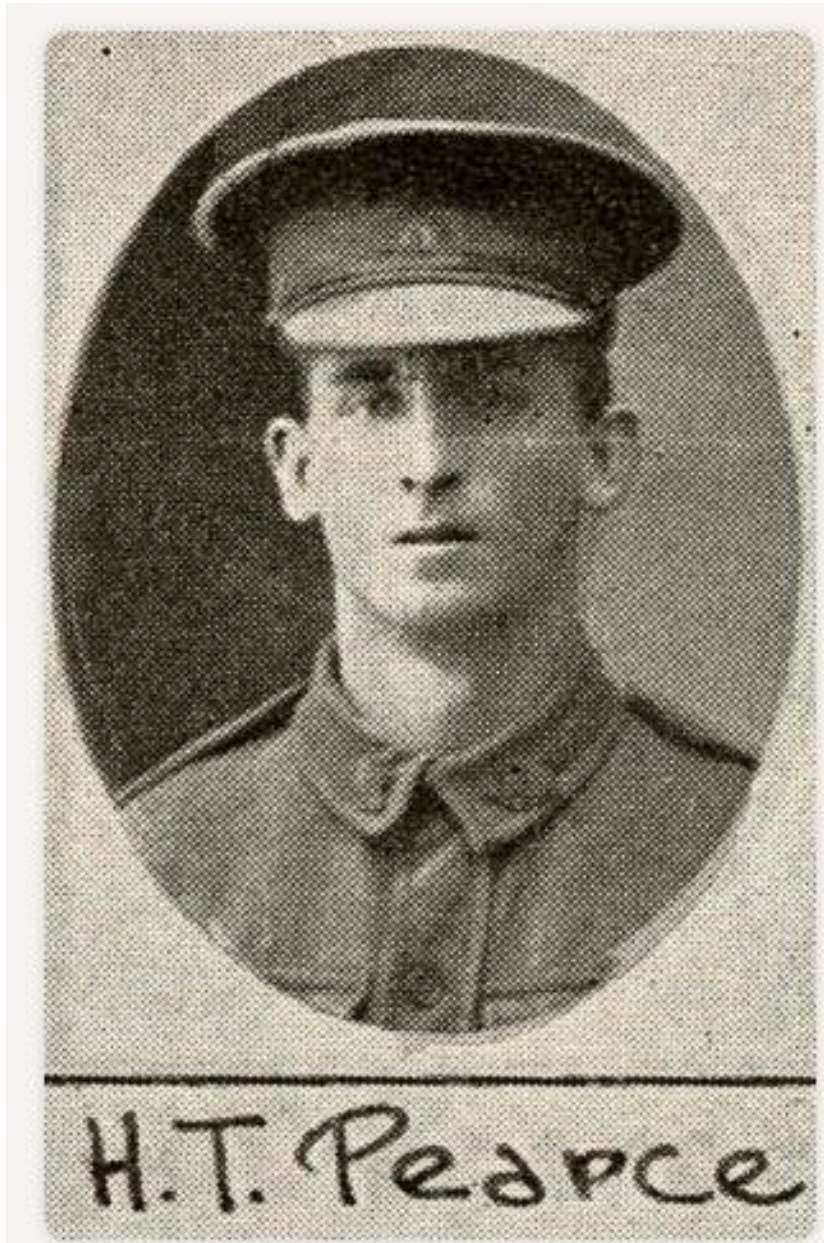


Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(38 pages of Private Herbert Thomas Pearce'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



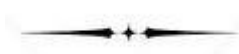


(The Queenslander Pictorial – 18 August, 1917)

(Note: I was undecided if this photo was of Private Herbert Thomas Pearce, 3422 as he died on 2nd December, 1916 yet this photo was published in August, 1917. According to the State Library of Queensland "One Search" this is a photo of :

*Full name & Service Number (from National Archives of Australia): Herbert Thomas Pearce, Service Number - 3422
NAA person ID: 274051*

Photograph appears on page 23 of The Queenslander Pictorial, supplement to the Queenslander, 18 August 1917)



Newspaper Notices

ROLL OF HONOR

The 266th and 267th casualty lists were issued to-day....

QUEENSLAND CASUALTIES

DIED OF CAUSES NOT STATED

Private H. T. Pearce, Brisbane

(Townsville Daily Bulletin, Queensland – 23 January, 1917)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for cemeteries and memorials in 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. In all 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth forces from WWI and WWII have been honoured and commemorated in perpetuity.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of its mandate, is responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead individually and equally. To this end, the war dead are commemorated by name on a headstone, at an identified site of a burial, or on a memorial. War dead are commemorated uniformly and equally, irrespective of military or civil rank, race or creed.

Not all service personnel have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. In some instances the relative chose to have their own memorial/headstone placed on the deceased's grave. These private headstones are not maintained by the CWGC as they have no jurisdiction to maintain them.

Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England

The Hollybrook Memorial is situated in Southampton (Hollybrook) Cemetery behind the plot of First World War graves near the main entrance.

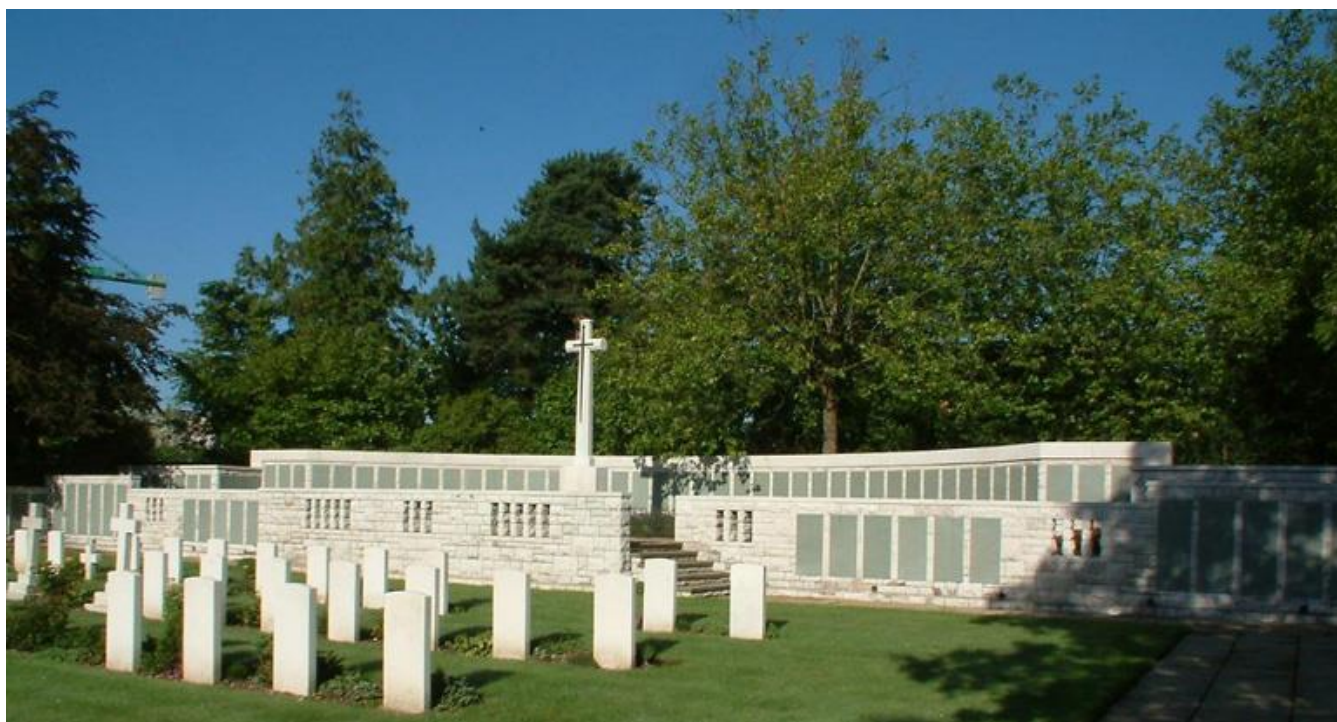
The Hollybrook Memorial commemorates by name almost 1,900 servicemen and women of the Commonwealth land and air forces* whose graves are not known, many of whom were lost in transports or other vessels torpedoed or mined in home waters (*Officers and men of the Commonwealth's navies who have no grave but the sea are commemorated on memorials elsewhere). The memorial also bears the names of those who were lost or buried at sea, or who died at home but whose bodies could not be recovered for burial. Almost one third of the names on the memorial are those of officers and men of the South African Native Labour Corps, who died when the troop transport Mendi sank in the Channel following a collision on 21 February 1917. Other vessels sunk with significant loss of life were: HS Anglia, a hospital ship sunk by mine off Dover on 17 November 1915. SS Citta Di Palermo, an Italian transport carrying Commonwealth troops, sunk by mine off Brindisi on 8 January 1916. In rescuing survivors, two Royal Naval Otranto drifters were themselves mined and blown up. HMTs Donegal and Warilda, ambulance transports torpedoed and sunk between Le Havre and Southampton on 17 April 1917 and 3 August 1918. HS Glenart Castle, a hospital ship torpedoed and sunk off Lundy on 26 February 1918. SS Galway Castle, torpedoed

and sunk in the Atlantic on 12 September 1918. RMS Leinster, the Irish mail boat, torpedoed and sunk in the Irish Sea on 10 October 1918. Among those commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial is Field Marshall Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, who died when the battle cruiser HMS Hampshire was mined and sunk off Scapa Flow on 5 June 1916.

The memorial was designed by T. Newham and unveiled by Sir William Robertson on 10 December 1930.

There are approximately 162 Australian World War 1 Service Personnel commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England.

(Information & photos from CWGC)





Cross of Sacrifice

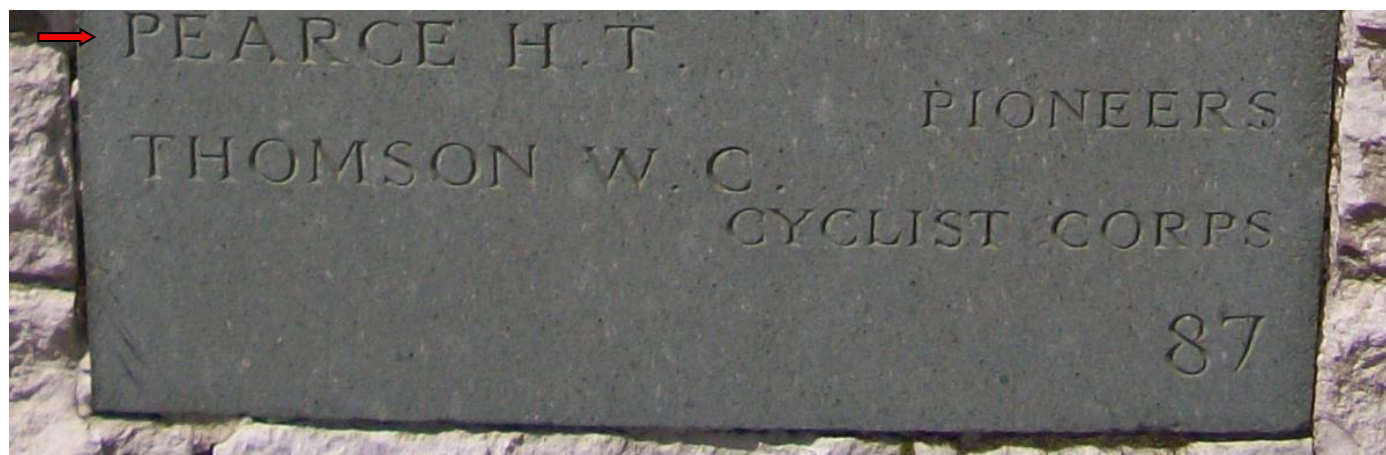


Name Panels behind Cross of Sacrifice *(Photo from CWGC)*

Photo of Private H. T. Pearce's name on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England.



(Photo by Retired QA - Find a Grave)





CWGC Graves in Hollybrook Cemetery with Cross of Sacrifice & Hollybrook Memorial *(Photo from CWGC)*