

**St. Neots Cemetery,
Cambridgeshire, England**

War Grave



Lest We Forget

World War 1



3372 SERGEANT

R. A. RANKIN

37TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

21ST OCTOBER, 1918 Age 21

Ronald Alister RANKIN

Ronald Alister Rankin was born at Sandhurst, Bendigo, Victoria in 1897 to parents Ronald Alexander Rankin & Jessie Blackwood Greenshields Rankin (nee Sibley).

Ronald Alister Rankin attended Bendigo High School where he was a Lieutenant in Senior Cadets then went on to become a Law Student.

According to information provided by his father for the Roll of Honour – Ronald Alister Rankin was on Home Service – Instructional Staff, Victoria & was Acting Sergeant Major before being accepted in the A.I.F.

Ronald Alister Rankin was a 19 year old, single, Solicitor's Clerk (as listed on Attestation Papers but listed as a Soldier on the Embarkation Roll) from Bendigo, Victoria when he enlisted on 16th February, 1917 in Melbourne, Victoria with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 3372 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his father -Mr R. A. Rankin, Harkness Street, Bendigo, Victoria. Ronald Rankin stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service due to "Insufficient Development."

Ronald Alister Rankin was posted to Recruits Battalion at Royal Park on 16th February, 1917 as Permanent Sergeant. He was transferred to 1st Depot Battalion, A.I.F. at Royal Park on 15th March, 1917 then transferred to Recruit Depot at Broadmeadows on 27th June, 1917. Sergeant Rankin was transferred to 1st Depot Battalion, A.I.F., Broadmeadows on 18th September, 1917. He was transferred to 3rd District Guard at Domain Camp from 16th November, 1917 then transferred to 2nd Depot Battalion at Broadmeadows & 8th Reinforcements of 37th Battalion on 27th November, 1917.

Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Ulysses (A38)* on 22nd December, 1917 with the 37th Infantry Battalion, 8th Reinforcements. He disembarked at Suez on 16th January, 1918 & was posted to A.I.F. Camp at Suez from 16th January, 1918 to 24th January, 1918.

Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin embarked from Port Said on HMT *Leasowe Castle* on 24th January, 1918 & disembarked at Taranto on 2nd February, 1918. He later disembarked at Southampton, England on 14th February, 1918.

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.

Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin was marched in to 10th Training Battalion at Sutton Mandeville, Wiltshire, England from Australia on 14th February, 1918.

A note was made of Sergeant Rankin's Casualty Form – Active Service: "*Enlisted with substantive rank of Sergeant – previously acting Staff Sergeant Major, Instruction Staff (Australia).*"

Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin was marched in to 10th Training Battalion at Sutton Mandeville on 16th March, 1918 from Drill School at Jellalabad, Tidworth, Wiltshire.

Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone from Fovant, Wiltshire on 15th April, 1918. He was marched in to N.Z.B.D. (New Zealand Base Depot) at Rouelles, France on 17th April, 1918 then marched out the same day to the Front. Sergeant Rankin was taken on strength of 37th Battalion in the Field on 18th April, 1918.

Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin was wounded in action on 25th August, 1918. He was admitted to 55th Field Ambulance on 25th August, 1918 with shrapnel wounds to legs then transferred & admitted the same day to 37th Casualty Clearing Station. Sergeant Rankin was transferred & admitted to 5th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 26th August, 1918 with "GSW 1 x (1) R + L." He embarked for England on Hospital Ship Gloucester Castle on 28th August, 1918.

37th Battalion

The 37th Battalion was formed, as part of the 10th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division, in February 1916 at Seymour in Victoria. Its recruits were drawn from Melbourne, north-east Victoria and Gippsland.....

Belgium remained the focus of the 37th Battalion's activities for the next five months, until it was rushed south to France in late March 1918 to meet the German Army's Spring Offensive.

The Allies launched their own offensive on 8 August 1918, but the 37th Battalion was in reserve on this day and was not ordered into action. It was involved, however, in an ill-conceived attack that failed to capture the village of Proyart on 10 August. The battalion nevertheless continued to play an active role throughout August and early September in the 3rd Division's advance along the Somme Valley.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 37th Battalion

25th August, 1918:

The Battalion carried out the operation detailed in Brigade Operation Order No. 135 24/8/18. Battalion Order No. 108 attached.

During the day the Battalion remained in the newly consolidated positions.

Enemy shell BRAY during the morning.

C.O. held a conference of Company Commanders and explained stunt to take place the following day.

The men had a little rest.

Weather was fine during the day but commenced to rain heavily in the night.

Operation Report – Night of 24/25th August, 1918

.... Zero hour was 2.30 am on the 25th Aug, 1918.....When the barrage opened at 2.30 am the troops went forward and captured the objective according to programme. They met with practically no resistance whatever. During the advance the battalion captured 10 machine guns and approximately 100 prisoners. At 6 am Battn. H.Q. was established about 800 yards behind the objective and the R.A.P. moved forward and took up a position close of the line of eight trees in L.8.d. During this operation, the casualties for the battalion were approx. 1 killed and 20 wounded; the majority of these casualties occurred in "D" Coy. On the approach march. The other Coys. Moved forward to their positions without casualties.

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin was admitted to Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, England on 30th August, 1918 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) legs – right & left. He was discharged to furlo from 11th October, 1918 to 25th October, 1918 & was then to report to No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.

Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin died on 21st October, 1918 at the residence of Mr Harding, King's Road, St. Neots, Cambridgeshire, England from Pneumonia.

A death for Ronald A. Rankin, aged 21, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of St. Neots, Huntingdonshire, England.

Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin was buried on 24th October, 1918 in St. Neots Cemetery, Cambridgeshire, England – Plot number K. 1288 and has a Private Headstone. His death is still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. From the burial report of Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The*

deceased soldier was accorded a Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and conveyed to the graveside where the "Last Post" was sounded, and the Ven Archdeacon Hodgson officiated. The Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.

Names and relatives & friends present at the Funeral – Friends – Sergeant A. B. Harding, 37th Battalion, A.I.F., Mr F. B. Harding and Corporal R. Littlejohn, A.I.F.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin contains a letter from Mr Harding to Mrs Louche, Waverley Avenue, Netley which reads: *"With reference to your telegram addressed to Registrar Kings Road Hospital St Neots, this has been delivered to my private house. There is no hospital in King's Road.*

In reply to your enquiry – 3372 Sergt. Ronald Allister A. Rankin of the 37th Battn Australian Imperial Force was discharged from Netley Red Cross Hospital on Friday 11th October. He came to us on Saturday 12th October. On the 14th October (Monday) not feeling well he kept in bed and on that day we called the Doctor who stated he was suffering from Influenza. Pneumonia followed and he died on the 21st October. He was buried in St. Neots Cemetery with military honours on the 25th October.

If you require further particulars perhaps you will kindly write us giving details of particulars required."

Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin requested in his Will, dated 14th December, 1917, that in the event of his death the whole of his property and effects be given to his father – Ronald Alexander Rankin, of Harkness Street, Bendigo, Victoria.

Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Sergeant Rankin's father – Mr R. A. Rankin, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

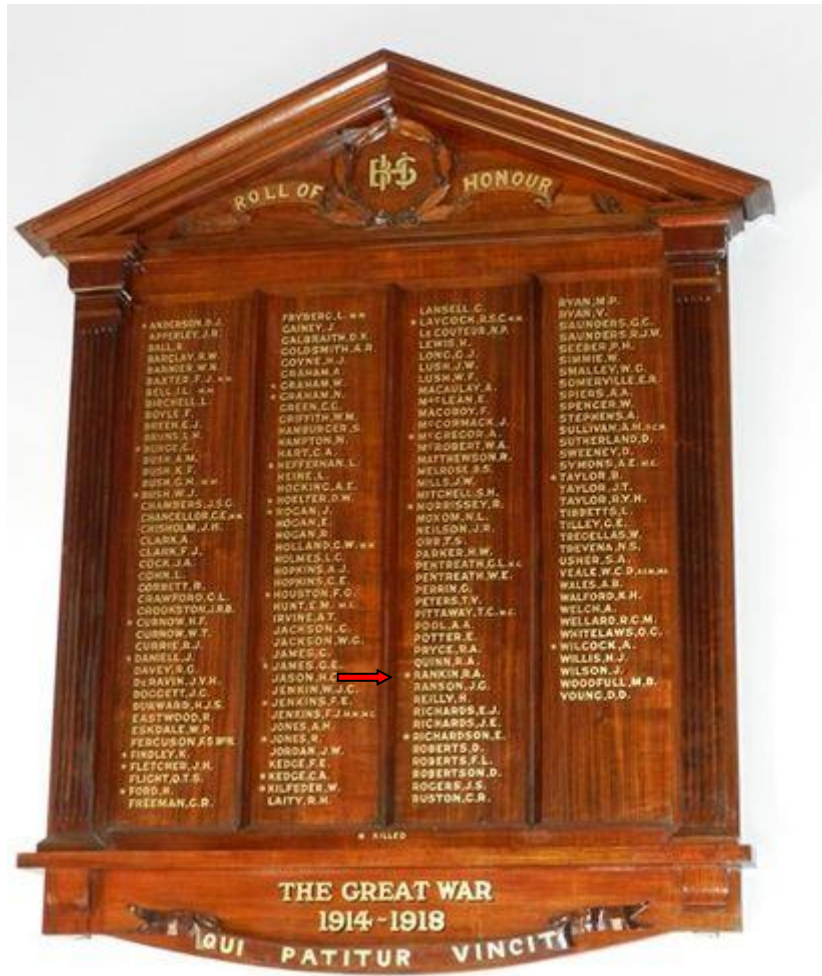
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin – service number 3372, aged 21, of 37th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Ronald Alexander Rankin.

Sergeant R. A. Rankin is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 128.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

R. A. Rankin is remembered on the Bendigo High School Roll of Honour, located in Bendigo Senior Secondary College, 40 Gaol Rd, Bendigo, Victoria.



Bendigo High School Roll of Honour (Photo from Monument Australia – Tim Fitzgerald)

R. A. Rankin is remembered on the Roll of Honour located at the Soldiers' Memorial Institute, Pall Mall, Bendigo, Victoria.





Soldiers' Memorial Institute, Bendigo (Photos from Bendigo Soldiers Memorial Institute Military Museum)



(Photo from VHD)

R. A. Rankin is remembered on the St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Roll of Honour, located in St. Andrew's Uniting Church, 26 Myers Street, Bendigo, Victoria.



St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Roll of Honour (Photo from Monument Australia – Sandra Brown)

R. A. Rankin is remembered on the St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Roll of Honour, (those who died in service or were killed in action in World War 1) located in St. Andrew's Uniting Church, 26 Myers Street, Bendigo, Victoria.



St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Roll of Honour – Those who Died
(Photo from Monument Australia – Sandra Brown)

(37 pages of Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin'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



No. 13 Squad of Australian soldiers at Jellalabad Barracks, Tidworth, England - March 1918

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------|------------------|------|
| J. T. HUMPHREYS | 7499 | 8 th | 6443 |
| F. G. MORRELL | | 32 nd | -54 |
| R. H. COURT | 7684 | 15 th | -4 |
| E. G. SPENCER | 7579 | 8 th | -4 |
| L. L. GLUTH | 7500 | 8 th | -4 |
| R. A. RANKIN | 3372 | 37 th | -4 |
| R. E. BARRING | 3323 | 37 th | -4 |
| W. O'BRIEN | 3085 | 37 th | -4 |
| C. E. HUNT | 6817 | 21 st | -4 |
| P. NESLIN | 2252 | 28 th | -4 |
| W. J. HOGAN | 3401 | 37 th | -4 |
| E. B. ROBINSON | 3330 | 37 th | -4 |
| J. NATHAN | | 37 th | -4 |
| H. B. HICK | 3251 | 37 th | -4 |
| J. F. SALTHOUSE | 3383 | 37 th | -4 |
| J. R. MICHHELL | SGT. INST. | | |
| C. N. M'KENZIE | 7685 | 15 th | -4 |
| R. E. BARRY | 7447 | 8 th | -4 |
| R. CURWEN | 7060 | 8 th | -4 |

No. 13 Squad Jellalabad Bks
Tidworth, Hants
2 March 1918
Had each man from left to right

Back row: James Thomas Humphreys #7499 8th battalion Vic.; Francis Gordon Morrell #4976 32nd battalion S.A.; Renfrew Heathcote Court #7684 15th battalion Qld.; Edward George Spencer #7579 8th battalion Vic.; Leonard Leslie Gluth #7500 8th battalion Vic.; **Ronald Alister Rankin #3372 37th battalion Vic.**

Middle row: Arthur Benjamin Harding #3323 37th battalion Vic; William Patrick O'Brien #5085 29th battalion Vic.; Colin Edward Hunt #6817 21st battalion Vic.; Peter Heslin #3252 38th battalion Vic.; William James Hogan #3401 38th battalion Vic.; Edmund William Burriss Robinson #3380 37th battalion Vic.

Front row: Percy John Henry Nathan #3345 37th battalion Vic.; Horace Barnett Hick #3251 38th battalion Vic.; John Frederick Salthouse #3383 37th battalion Vic.; J.R. Mighell Sgt. Inst. Hants, England (Sergeant Instructor?); Charles Neil McKenzie #7685 15th battalion Qld.; Richard Edward Barry #7447 8th battalion Vic.; Robert Curwen #7460 8th battalion Vic.



Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin



Newspaper Notices

DIED OF ILLNESS

SERGEANT R. A. RANKIN

A private message was received yesterday by Mr. R. A.. Rankin, of the firm of Messrs. McColl, Rankin and Stanistreet, legal managers, Commercial House, and of Harkness Street, Quarry Hill, that his son, Sergeant Ronald A. Rankin, had died of illness in England. The deceased soldier, who was 21 years of age, was wounded in France in September, and transferred to a hospital in England. When convalescent he visited friends in Huntingshire, where he succumbed to an attack of pneumonia. Sergeant Rankin volunteered early in the war, and was placed on service as a staff- sergeant-major in the Geelong and Broadmeadows camps. He was subsequently accepted for service abroad and left Australia on December 21 of last year with the 37th Battalion Reinforcements. Prior to enlistment he was a lieutenant in the Senior Cadets, and was a student of law, having served the first year with Messrs. Tatchell, Dunlop, Smalley and Balmer.

(The Bendigo Independent, Victoria – 23 October, 1918)

DEATHS

RANKIN – Ronald Alister, Sergeant, 37th Battalion, at St. Neots, England, on Monday, 21st inst., from pneumonia (previously wounded), dearly loved son of Jessie and Ronald Rankin, of Quarry Hill. Aged 21 years.

(Bendigo Advertiser, Victoria – 23 October, 1918) & (The Bendigo Independent, Victoria – 23 October, 1918)

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCES

Official Casualty Lists

BENDIGO AND NORTHERN DISTRICT MEN

WOUNDED

Sgt. R. A. Rankin, Bendigo

(Bendigonian, Victoria – 24 October, 1918)

THE LATE SERGEANT R. A. RANKIN

The evening service at St. Andrew's Church last night the Rev. J. Crookston made feeling reference to the death of Sergeant R. A. Rankin, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Rankin, of this city. He said that the country had suffered great losses during the war. Many men with promising careers had heard the call of duty and nobly responded. Many of them had given all, and their bodies lie among the brave of France, on the Gallipoli Peninsula, and in Palestine. Of these men there was no purer soul than that of Sergeant Rankin. He was wounded in one of the big battles in France, was taken in due course to one of the English military hospitals, and had almost recovered. He was looking forward to camp life in Salisbury Plains, and then once more to go to the front. It was not to be. Pneumonia developed and he died on the 19th of the present month. He too had now joined the great Legion of Honor above. We had all hoped to welcome him home, he had received a welcome home, however, from One Who has suffered to make the world better. His was a sweet, pure, manly soul, with a high sense of duty. He had died in the discharge of duty. Could anyone die more nobly? Mr. Crookston felt that the whole congregation would like to offer through him their loving sympathy with the parents of the brave lad, and to Mrs Sibley, his grandmother. These were sad days, and yet glad days too, for was not the young volunteer manhood of the land offering all for a fuller and emancipated future. The example they had given would surely deepen our own lives.

(Bendigo Advertiser, Victoria – 28 October, 1918)

THE 447th CASUALTY LIST

VICTORIAN NAMES

DIED OF OTHER CAUSES

Sergeant R. A. Rankin, Bendigo

(The Mildura Cultivator, Victoria – 30 November, 1918)

WAR TAKES TOLL

CASUALTY LIST 463 ISSUED

DIED OTHER CAUSES

Sgt. R. A. RANKIN, Bendigo (illness, 21/10/18, P.R. died, cause not stated)

(The Herald, Melbourne, Victoria – 16 April, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

RANKIN – A tribute to the memory of Sergeant R. A. Rankin, died of illness on 21st October, 1918.

“We never miss the sunshine until the shadows fall.:

-(Inserted by E. Coutts, Ascotvale)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 22 October, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

RANKIN – A tribute to the memory of Sergeant R. A. Rankin, died of illness, 21st October, 1918.

(E. Coutts, Ascotvale).

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 21 October, 1921)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

RANKIN – To the memory of Sergeant R. A. Rankin, died of illness 21st October, 1918. (E. Coutts, Ascotvale).

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 21 October, 1921)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

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.

Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin has a Private Headstone.

St. Neots Cemetery, Cambridgeshire, England

This cemetery is on the South side of the town, it was laid out in 1879.

During the 1939-45 War this cemetery was used for burials from No.6 Polish General Hospital, which was stationed at Diddington, just to the north of St. Neots. As a result, in addition to the 9 Commonwealth 1914-18 War and 20 1939-45 War burials, there are 11 Polish burials.

(Information from CWGC)



St. Neots Cemetery (Photos from Find a Grave – Darealjolo)



Photo of Sergeant Ronald Alister Rankin's Private Headstone in St. Neots Cemetery, Cambridgeshire, England.



(Photo from Find a Grave – Tim Cooper)



(Photo from Find a Grave – Tim Cooper)



(Photo from Great War Forum - hughfw)

Our Beloved Son
Sergt RONALD ALISTER RANKIN
37TH Battn. A.I.F.
Died Oct. 21ST 1918
Aged 21 Years

Their Name Liveth For Evermore