

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

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



185 PRIVATE

GEORGE ABNER KELLY

2ND BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

17TH APRIL, 1916 Age 31

Not Dead But Gone Before

George Abner KELLY

George Abner Kelly was born at Boweya, near Lake Rowan, Victoria on 8th October, 1883 to parents William Beaty Kelly & Lucinda Jane Kelly (nee Crawford).

George Abner Kelly attended Boweya State School, Victoria.

The 1905 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Moira, subdivision of Boweya, Victoria listed George Abner Kelly, Farmer from Boweya. His parents William Kelly, Farmer & Lucinda Kelly, Home Duties were also listed at Boweya.

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George Abner Kelly was a 31 year old, single, Farmer from Boweya, via Glenrowan, Victoria when he enlisted at Randwick, Sydney, New South Wales on 20th August, 1914 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Protestant & his next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs L. Kelly, from Boweya, via Glenrowan, Victoria. George Kelly stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously served for 4 years with 8th Light Horse but had resigned.

Private George Abner Kelly was posted to 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Brigade. A.I.F. on 20th August, 1914 for recruit training. He was admonished on 22nd (?) September, 1914 for breaking Camp & forfeited 3 days pay.

Private George Abner Kelly, Service number 185, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Suffolk (A23)* on 18th October, 1914 with the 2nd Infantry Battalion "B" Company & disembarked at Egypt on 8th December, 1914.

Private George Abner Kelly embarked from Alexandria on 5th April, 1915 on *Derfflinger* to join M.E.F. (Mediterranean Expeditionary Force) – Gallipoli campaign.

Private George Abner Kelly was reported wounded at Gallipoli Peninsula on 8th August, 1915 with a bomb wound to hand. He was admitted to 1st Australian Casualty Clearing Station at Gallipoli Peninsula on 8th August, 1915 & was transferred to Base. Private Kelly was admitted to Hospital Carrier *Ionian* at Lemnos on 17th August, 1915 then transferred to Hospital Ship *Dongola* at Malta on 22nd August, 1915.

2nd Battalion

The 2nd Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. Like the 1st, 3rd and 4th Battalions it was recruited from New South Wales and, together with these battalions, formed the 1st Brigade.

The battalion was raised within a fortnight of the declaration of war in August 1914 and embarked just two months later. After a brief stop in Albany, Western Australia, the battalion proceeded to Egypt, arriving on 2 December. The battalion took part in the ANZAC landing on 25 April 1915 as part of the second and third waves, and was led by Lieutenant Colonel G. F. Braund, who was killed in action nine days later. On 6 August, the 1st Brigade led the charge at Lone Pine. Among the dead was the commander of the 2nd Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel R. Scobie, killed during a Turkish counter-attack. The battalion served at ANZAC until the evacuation in December 1915.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the battalion returned to Egypt.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 2nd Battalion

8th August, 1915:

0200 – *Fighting still continues*

0512 – *Party of about sixty or eighty of enemy seen approaching our right flank south side of LONE PINE through communication trench from SURPRISE GULLY. Fire opened on this party, which retired after losing some men.*

0800 – *A start made to clear the trenches of dead, which in some trenches are lying three deep. Some being Australians, & some being Turks.*

0805 – *Bombing has eased off, but enemy still keeping up a brisk rifle fire.*

0920 – *Word received that it is 2nd Bns turn to be relieved to-day.*

1000 – *Message received that approval has been received for the following promotions*

1430 – *7th Bn relieving 2nd Bn. All men belonging to other units returning to their own lines.*

1600 – *Relief complete & our men all back in our lines at the Pimple.*

2/Lieut H. Taylor returned from wounded reported for duty.

First tally of Casualties shows:-

Killed 6 Officers 44 Others. Wounded 14 Officers 207 Others. Missing 1 Officer 178 Others total 450.

A great many of our dead are still lying between the lines, and nearly all the men show as missing will prove to be killed.

[List of Officers Killed, Wounded & Missing listed]

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

The Secretary of Defence advised Mrs L. Kelly, Bowega, via Glen Rowan, Victoria on 3rd September, 1915 that her son Private G. A. Kelly had been wounded between 7th and 14th August “*not reported seriously no other particulars available will immediately advise anything further received.*”

Private George Abner Kelly was admitted to Military Hospital at Bethnal Green, London, England on 29th August, 1915. The Hospital Admissions form recorded that Private Kelly was admitted to Bethnal Green Military Hospital, Cambridge Heath, N.E., on 29th August, 1915 with G.S.W. to Right Hand. He was discharged on 3rd January, 1916 & admitted to Woodcote Park Convalescent Hospital, Epsom. Private Kelly was sent on Furlough from 20th February, 1916.

Base Records advised Mrs L. Kelly, Bowega, via Glen Rowan, Victoria on 15th September, 1915 that her son Private G. A. Kelly had been wounded & was in Hospital in London, England. Mrs Kelly was advised on 26th November, 1915 that her son Private G. A. Kelly, 2nd Battalion, had been admitted to Military Hospital, Bethnal Green, London, on 29th August, 1915 suffering from Gunshot wound to right Hand.

Private George Abner Kelly died on 17th April, 1916 at 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield Park, Harefield, Middlesex, England from an Abscess on Liver. [Listed on the “*Report of Death of a Soldier*” Army form B. 2090 “*Primary– Amoebic Dysentery with Liver Abscess. Secondary- Rupture of Abscess into Lung & Pneumothorax*”.]

Base Records advised Mrs L. Kelly, Bowega, via Glen Rowan, Victoria on 19th April, 1916 that her son Private George A. Kelly was dangerously ill with an internal Abscess on 17th April at Harefield, England.

A death for George A. Kelly, aged 32, was registered in the June quarter, 1916 in the district of Uxbridge, Middlesex, England.

Private George Abner Kelly was buried in St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England – Plot number: Aust. 3 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Mrs L. Kelly was advised the following details “*The deceased was interred at Harefield Churchyard, Harefield, Grave No. 2 Australian Section. The Reverend A. A. Harland, Vicar of Harefield officiating at the burial, which was carried out with full Military Honors.*”

George Abner Kelly, Private, No. 185 A. Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Brigade, 1st Australian Division, Turkey, requested in his Will that *"In the event of my death I give £10 to my mother Mrs Wm. Kelly, Boweya, Via Glenrowan, Victoria, Via Australia, and I give the remaining part of my property to R. H. Kelly, of Moombooldool, Via Temora, New South Wales."*

The Public Trust Office, Sydney, NSW wrote to Base Records on 25th October, 1917 requesting a certificate of death in duplicate for George A. Kelly, No. 185 A Coy. 2nd Battalion.

Base Records replied to The Public Trustee, Sydney, NSW on 1st November, 1917 enclosing as requested a certificate of report of death of the late No. 185 Private G. A. Kelly, 2nd Battalion.

Base Records contacted Mrs L. Kelly, Boweya, via Glenrowan, Victoria in May, 1920 stating that she was registered on the records of the late No. 185 Private G. A. Kelly, 2nd Battalion as the next-of-kin but were enquiring if there were any nearer blood relatives than herself & specifically asked if his father was still alive. (The "Deceased Soldiers Estates Act 1918" stated that the War Medals & Mementoes of a deceased soldier were to be handed in the following order of relationship – Widow, eldest surviving son, eldest surviving daughter, father, mother, eldest surviving brother, eldest surviving sister etc.)

Mrs L. Kelly replied to Base Records on 7th May, 1920 advising *".....yes his father is still living here at the above address, but is ill in bed at present with a clot of blood in a vein in his leg & the Dr has ordered him to keep quietly in bed till the clot absorbes or dries up when he will recover & if it does not absorbe but go to the heart or brain it may prove fatal. My husbands name is William Kelly & his address is Boweya, via Glenrowan."*

Private George Abner Kelly was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Kelly's father - Mr W. Kelly, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent June, 1921 & Plaque sent October, 1921).

Norman Alexander Kelly, 60 Sanderson St, Yarraville, Victoria applied for the Gallipoli Medallion on 11th November, 1967 in respect of the Service of No. 185 George Abner Kelly, 2nd Battalion. Norman Kelly stated he was a brother of George Abner Kelly.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private George Abner Kelly – service number 185, aged 32, of 2nd Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of William & Lucinda Kelly, of Boweya, Victoria, Australia.

Private G. A. Kelly is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 33.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

G. A. Kelly & his two brothers are remembered on the Boweya State School Roll of Honour, located in Boweya Hall, St. James Road & Glenrowan-Boweya Road, Boweya, Victoria.



Boweya State School Roll of Honour (Photo from Monument Australia – Michael Dodd)

G. A. Kelly is remembered on the Thoona War Memorial, located in Progress Park, Sargeant & Johnston Streets, Thoona, Victoria.



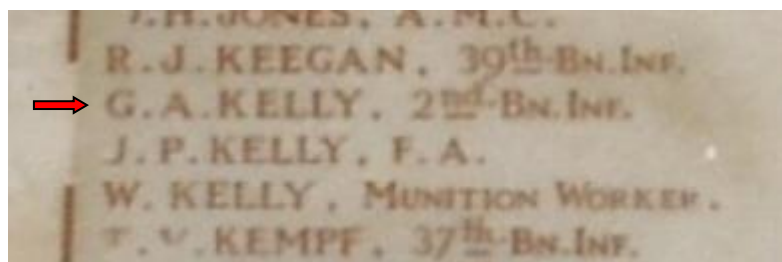
Thoona War Memorial (Photos from AWM Places of Pride – Western Front Association – Central Victoria Branch)



G. A. Kelly 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)



(67 pages of Private George Abner Kelly'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

Connected to Private George Abner Kelly:

Younger brother – Thomas Arthur Kelly – Enlisted on 20th March, 1916 as a 23 year old Farmer from Boweya, Victoria. Embarked on 3rd July, 1916 from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Ayrshire* (A33) as Private 5041, 22nd Infantry Battalion. He was killed in action on 4th October, 1917 in Belgium. Remembered on Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Flanders, Belgium.

Younger brother - Charles Samuel Kelly – Enlisted on 6th September, 1916 as a 26 year old Farmer from Balldale P.O., NSW. Embarked as Private 506, 2nd Machine Gun Company from Melbourne, Victoria on 23rd November, 1916 on HMAT *Hororata* (A20).

Private Charles Samuel Kelly of 1st Machine Gun Battalion returned to Australia on 5th April, 1918.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H06145

PORTRAIT OF 185 PRIVATE GEORGE ABNER KELLY, 2ND BATTALION, DIED 1916-04-17.

Newspaper Notices

Australians at Dardanelles

THE ROLL OF HONOR

SEVENTY-SIXTH CASUALTY LIST

WOUNDED

VICTORIA

Private G A Kelly, Bowega

(The Mildura Cultivator, Victoria – 15 September, 1915)

ROLL OF HONOR

IN HOSPITAL

LONDON

Pte Kelly, G. A., Bowega, Vic

(The Weekly Times, Melbourne, Victoria – 2 October, 1915)

DIED ON SERVICE

KELLY – On the 17th April, at Harefield, England, from abscess on the liver, Private G. A. Kelly, third son of Mr and Mrs Wm. Kelly, Boweya, Victoria, aged 32 years. Volunteered September, 1914; took part in the landing at Gallipoli, August 25, 1915; wounded in the right hand, August 7, at Lone Pine.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 27 April, 1916)

ROLL OF HONOR

GEORGE A. KELLY

The name of another brave boy from the Thoona district has to be added to the roll of honor. Mr and Mrs. William Kelly, of Boweya, near Thoona, received a cablegram on Sunday last from Harefield Hospital, England, stating that their third son, George A. Kelly, had died there on the 17th inst. from abscess on the liver supervening on typhoid. He left Australia with the first A.I.F., took part in the landing at Gallipoli on the 25th April, 1915, was wounded in the right hand at Lone Pine on the 7th of August, 1915, and was subsequently transferred to England. His relatives had received a letter quite recently, stating he had almost recovered, and would soon be back in Australia before proceeding again to the front. He had been for some years one of the most active members of the Thoona troop of the 16th L.H. Much sympathy is felt for the family, who are old and greatly respected residents of the district. Another member of the family (Arthur) is now in camp.

(Benalla Standard, Victoria – 28 April, 1916)

AUSTRALIANS IN WAR

166TH CASUALTY LIST

DIED OF ILLNESS

Pte G. A. KELLY, Bowega

(Hamilton Spectator, Victoria – 29 April, 1916)

THE LATE PRIVATE KELLY

FUNERAL IN ENGLAND

It will be remembered that some little time ago the death was reported in England of Private W. Kelly, son of Mrs W. Kelly, of Boweya. Mrs Kelly has just received from Miss Theodora Roscoe, of Horn Hills Court, Bucks, a letter and a clipping from "The Times," giving an account of the funeral. The article is headed "For an Ideal : The Village Funeral of a Fallen Anzac," and is a striking example of the good opinion held of our boys in England :—

Two long lines of blue figures moved with slow tread behind the hearse, showing that free-swinging movement peculiar to the Australian troops. But some were on crutches, and some moved with a cruel limp, yet marching bravely, nevertheless — a relic of the first splendid fighting force who had gone from Australia and landed a year ago on that rocky peninsula.

Behind the row of wounded came the staff of the hospital in khaki, and bringing up the rear hurried the village of Harefield — shaky perambulators being whisked along, cyclists, old women bobbing as they went, mill girls in gay hats, and last of all some lumbering farm carts. To which, if either stopped to think, must this spectacle have seemed the more strange — to the villagers, or those tall heroes of Australia, seemingly at home in their typical English village ? Or to these men, this funeral in English surroundings amidst English village people ? But the war has brought stranger things to pass than this spectacle. Nothing seems impossible now, and even an Australian soldier's death in a quiet English village is accepted as natural.

Through the village the cortege moved, headed by a military band ; past the Elizabethian almshouses, looking out so cosily to the western sun. It passed on down to the old church, which lies in a hollow between green meadows and tall elm trees now touched with a film of grayish green. Such a glorious April afternoon as it was ! The fruit blossom in a neighboring field smiled in the sunshine after the last heavy shower. There was a feeling of spring warmth — spring loveliness over everything.

As the procession moved on through the green meadow up to the old church it looked like some cleverly- arranged pageant — some historical drama re-acted. The priest, his white surplice blown in the wind, coming forward to receive the coffin, borne on the shoulders of four stalwart Australians — his return to the church at the head of the procession ; the blending of the khaki figures against the khaki shade of plaster on the church tower ; the blue of the wounded men, and the red and grey of the sisters — all seemed unreal.

Then the quiet words inside the church, and the moment of anxiety when the coffin was again lifted a little waveringly out of the dim interior into the laughing sunshine without. Even when the coffin was lain in the earth, and the rifles rang out once — twice — thrice — it was difficult to realise what it all meant. Then the bugle sounded the Last Post. The notes rose clear, hopeful, on the still air. They struck a chord between the scene here in this English churchyard and the country over the seas. One felt that these notes, dying away on the spring air, would re-echo far off, over there in Australia. They answered the question why these men standing round with bare heads were here, in this English churchyard, and not in distant Australia. They explained why this young soldier was being laid to rest in the brown soil miles away from the land which had given him birth. These men were here because of an ideal ; and for it they had given up their homes, their health, their lives.

For these men had heard that England, the country few of them had seen, yet for which all had an instinctive love, was in danger. And so they had come from the other end of the world, and this man was being laid to rest on this fair April afternoon in a quiet English churchyard, in the very soil, and among the very things for which he had died.

(Tungamah and Lake Rowan Express and St. James Gazette, Victoria – 20 July, 1916)

In Memoriam

KELLY - In loving memory of our dear brother and brother-in-law, Private George Abner Kelly, who departed this life at Harefield Military Hospital, England, on April 19th, 1916.

He freely offered life and all,

In answer to his country's call.

He fought for honor and for right,

He helped to show Australia's might.

Inserted by his loving brother and sister-in-law, David and Hilda Kelly, Rannock.

(Coolamon Farmers' Review, NSW – 20 April, 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)

Private G. A. Kelly does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Not Dead But Gone Before

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





Headstone for Private George Abner Kelly marked with arrow – middle name is incorrect – shows “Arthur”

Photo of Private George Abner Kelly’s Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone.

[****Note: The middle name engraved on the headstone is incorrect – should be “Abner” not “Arthur”.
CWGC have amended the headstone sometime prior to November 2018 – see next page.]



(Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)

Photo of Private George Abner Kelly's amended Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England.



(Photo from Find a Grave – Richie Nov, 2018)



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)

