

# Durrington War Graves

## World War 1



*Lest We Forget*



**6799 PRIVATE**

**G. COWEN**

**12TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**26TH DECEMBER, 1916 Age 25**

*The Lord Gave  
& The Lord Hath Taken Away*

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for G. Cowen is located in Grave Plot # 137  
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

## George COWEN

George Cowen was born on 18<sup>th</sup> November, 1890 at Port Cygnet, near Gardeners Bay, Tasmania to parents Henry and Annie Cowen (nee Coy).

George Cowen married Jane Higgins on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1913 in Hobart, Tasmania.

George Cowen stated he was a married, Labourer from Hobart, Tasmania & aged 23 years & 11 months (making his date of birth in August, 1892) when he enlisted on 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1916 with the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, 22<sup>nd</sup> Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 6799 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Jane Cowen 151 Argyle Street, Hobart, Tasmania.

Pte George Cowen embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Palermo* (A56) on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1916 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1916.

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.

Pte George Cowen was marched in to 3<sup>rd</sup> Training Battalion at Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 1916.

Pte George Cowen was admitted to Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 1916.

Pte George Cowen died of Broncho pneumonia at 7.45 p.m. on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1916 at Fargo Military Hospital. He had originally been reported as having died of Bronchitis.

A death for George Cowan, aged 25, was registered in the December quarter, 1916 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing File for Pte George Cowen contains a letter from the Assistant Matron of Fargo Military Hospital –  
*“Pte Cowen was admitted to hospital on Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1916 suffering from Broncho pneumonia. We thought for the first few days they he would get better but his heart was not strong enough to bear the strain put on it – his breathing was very difficult. He was a very good patient and made a hard fight for recovery, everything possible was done for him, but he died at Dec. 26<sup>th</sup> and was buried on Dec. 29<sup>th</sup> at Durrington, Salisbury Plain. Grave No. 137 on right hand side of cemetery path.”*

Pte George Cowen was buried at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire – plot number 137 on 29<sup>th</sup> December, 1916.

A War Pension was granted to Jane Cowen, widow of late Pte George Cowen in the sum of 40/- per fortnight from 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1917.

Pte George Cowen was entitled to British War Medal only. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Cowen's wife – Mrs J. Cowen (September, 1921 & March, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private George Cowen – service number 6799 as being 25 years old & served with 12th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Henry and Annie Cowen; husband of Jane Cowen of 224 Harrington St. Hobart, Tasmania.

Private G. Cowen is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 65.



*(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)*



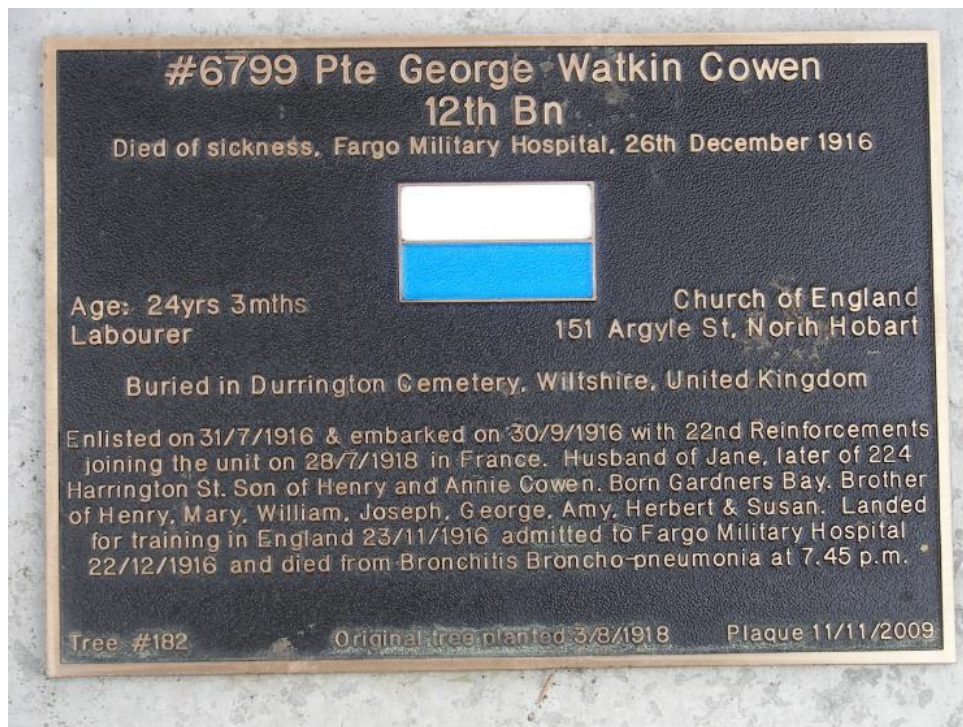
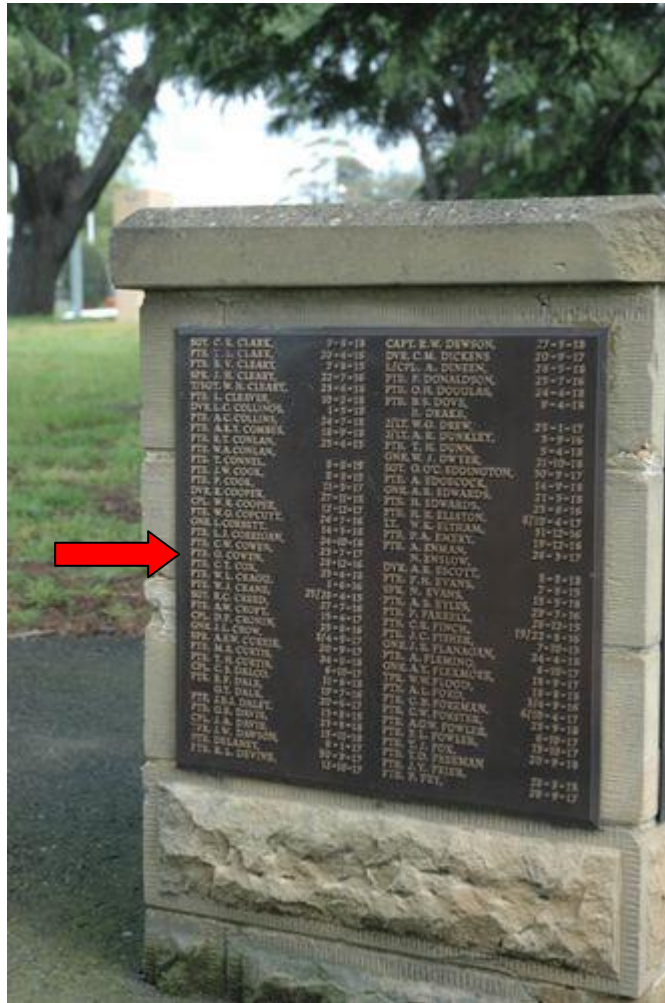
*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

Pte George Watkin Cowen is also remembered on the Hobart Soldier's Memorial Avenue – Tree # 182.

The Soldiers Memorial Avenue forms part of the Queens Domain in Hobart Tasmania. It is a memorial avenue comprising 520 trees planted in 1918 and 1919 to commemorate soldiers, mainly from Hobart, who died in the Great War 1914-1918. The trees are predominantly Himalayan Cedar though Atlantic Cedars, Blue Atlas and Italian Cypress are also present (the latter planted as replacements in the 1960s). In 2001 only 330 original trees remained. Friends of Soldiers Walk Inc. was formed in 2002 to ensure the restoration of the Avenue.



**Soldiers Walk, Hobart** *(Photos from Monument Australia – John Huth & Arthur Garland)*



(Photo by A Howard – [The Soldiers Memorial Avenue](#) with permission)

(Note – “joining the unit on 28/7/1918 in France” is incorrect. Pte Cowen had died in 1916 & never made it to France)

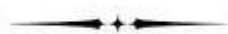
G. Cowen is also remembered on the Hobart Roll of Honour located in foyer of Hobart Town Hall, Macquarie Street, Hobart.



**Hobart Roll of Honour** (Photo from *War Memorials in Australia*)

(40 pages of Pte George Cowen's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

*Information obtained from the Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives*



## **Newspaper Reports**

### **ROLL OF HONOUR**

#### **TASMANIAN NAMES**

6799 - Private G. Cowen, Hobart 26/12/16

*(Zeehan and Dundas Herald, Tasmania Saturday 13 January, 1917)*

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### **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 at Durrington War Graves Cemetery. 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)*

Pte G. Cowen does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*The Lord Gave & The Lord Hath Taken Away*

Photo of Pte G. Cowen's Headstone at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire.



*(Photo © Ian King - with permission)*



**Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire** *(Photo by Dave Healing 2013)*