

Baverstock War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



4518 PRIVATE

A. J. COWIE

30TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

3rd MARCH, 1917 Age 31

The Supreme Sacrifice

Alfred James COWIE

Alfred James Cowie was born at Singleton, New South Wales in 1885, to parents James and Jane Cowie (nee Cameron). His birth was registered as James A. Cowie.

Alfred James Cowie was a 31 year old, single, Labourer from Grangla, Singleton, NSW when he enlisted on 12th September, 1916 with the 8th Infantry Brigade, 30th Infantry Battalion, 12th Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 4518 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his Aunt – Sarah Amos, Grangla, Singleton, NSW. (On his Attestation Papers, Alfred had stated that he had previously served 5 months with 4 Regt. D. Coy but had been discharged for being Absent without Leave.)

Pte Alfred James Cowie embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Beltana* (A72) on 25th November, 1916 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 29th January, 1917.

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.

Private Alfred James Cowie was admitted sick to Military Hospital at Fovant, Wiltshire from 8th Training Battalion at Hurdcott on 17th February, 1917.

Private Alfred James Cowie died at 4.30 p.m. on 3rd March, 1917 at Military Hospital, Fovant, Wiltshire from Bronchitis.

A death for Alfred J. Cowie, aged 31, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Wilton, Wiltshire.

Private Alfred James Cowie was buried on 6th March, 1917, in the churchyard of St. Edith's at Baverstock, Wiltshire and has a Commonwealth War Graves Headstone.

Private A. J. Cowie is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 116.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Pte A.J. Cowie is also remembered on the Singleton War Memorial located in Burdekin Park, George Street, Singleton, NSW.



Singleton War Memorial (Photos from *Register of War memorials in NSW*)

Pte Alfred James Cowie was entitled to British War Medal only. (The Victory Medal was awarded to those that had entered a theatre of war on duty between 5 August 1914 and 11 November, 1918). A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Cowie's mother – Phoebe Jane Moss (September, 1922 & August, 1922) (Pte Cowie's mother had remarried in 1903 – to Conrad Moss).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Alfred James Cowie – service number 4518 as being 31 years old & served with 30th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of James and Phoebe Jane Cowie, of Pitt St., Singleton, New South Wales.

A War Pension was granted to Phoebe Jane Moss, of York St, Singleton, Widowed Mother of the late Pte Alfred James Cowie, in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 4/3/17.

(52 pages of Pte Alfred James Cowie'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) & National Archives



Newspaper Reports

WAR CASUALTIES

DIED OF ILLNESS

PRIVATE J. A. COWIE

Private James Alfred Cowie, son of Mrs Conrad Moss, Singleton, succumbed to illness on March 3.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – Tuesday 13 March, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM

COWIE – In loving memory of Private A. J. Cowie, No. 4518 34th Batt., who died while on active service, March 3rd, 1917.

No loving mother's gentle hand
 To wipe the death-dew from his brow;
No token of love in that far off land
 To mark the spot where he sleepeth now.

Inserted by his loving Mother, Sister and Brother.

(Singleton Argus, NSW – Saturday 1 March, 1919)

ROLL OF HONOUR

COWIE - In memory of my beloved Son, Pte Alfred James Cowie, 30th Battn. Killed in action in France, 4th March, 1917.

Rest in the Saviour, sweetly rest;
They miss you most who love you best.

Inserted by his loving mother, Mrs C. Moss, Pitt-street.

(Singleton Argus, NSW – Tuesday 3 March, 1925)

** NOTE – Pt Cowie died at Fovant, Wiltshire England, He did not go to France. Date of death was 3rd not 4th March, 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 at St. Edith's Churchyard, Baverstock. 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)

A letter from Base Records, dated 28th July, 1921, to Mrs P. J. Moss of Pitt Street, Singleton advises that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of the late Pte A. J. Cowie exceeded the limit imposed by the War Graves Commission & the request for the Star of David was pointed out to be the emblem of the Jewish faith . A reply was sent from Athol G. Coughlan, late Graves Services A.I.F., dated 4th August, 1921, on behalf of Mrs P. J. Moss advising that "this old lady can neither read or write. She has asked me to communicate with you.....As regards the inscription the following will do in place of the one selected previously "The Supreme Sacrifice".....With reference to the request for the Star of David can be deleted and the cross inscribed in lieu there of..."

Pte A. J. Cowie does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

The Supreme Sacrifice



St. Edith's Churchyard, Baverstock, Wiltshire.

(Photo from CWGC)

Photo of Pte A. J. Cowie's CWGC Headstone at St. Edith's Churchyard, Baverstock, Wiltshire.



(Photo courtesy of Andrew Stacey 2012)