

# Durrington War Graves



*Lest we Forget*

## World War I



**3563 PRIVATE**

**H. ANDREASSEN**

**25TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**18TH SEPTEMBER, 1917 Age 24**

*He Rose Responsive*

*To His Country's Call*

*And Gave His Life. His All*

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte H. Andreassen is located in Grave Plot # 255  
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

## Harold ANDREASSEN

Harold Andreassen was born on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 1893 in Port Douglas, North Queensland to parents Severin Berner & Mary Jane Andreassen (nee Brennan). He was a 23 year old, single, Farmer from Mowbray River, Port Douglas, Queensland when he enlisted at Townsville on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 1916 with the 4<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Battalion, 9<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 3563 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Severin Berner Andreassen of Mowbray River, Port Douglas, Queensland. Harold had previously been rejected as unfit for Fever.

Pte Harold Andreassen embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Ayrshire* (A33) on 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1917 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 12<sup>th</sup> April, 1917. During the journey from Australia to England Pte Harold Andreassen was admitted to Ship's Hospital for 6 days with Influenza – from 11<sup>th</sup> March to 17<sup>th</sup> March, 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.

Pte Andreassen was marched in to Training Battalion at Fovant, Wiltshire on 12<sup>th</sup> April, 1917. He was transferred to 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 1917.

Pte Andreassen was Absent without Leave from Rolleston Camp from 6 a.m. on 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 1917 until midnight 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 1917. He was awarded a total forfeiture of 3 days pay.

Pte Harold Andreassen was admitted dead to Fargo Military Hospital on 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1917 as a result of a Machine Gun accident at Rolleston Camp, Salisbury Plain.

A Court of Inquiry was held at Camp 13 Rolleston on 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1917 – inquiring into the accident wound on right wrist, almost severing the hand from the arm & a wound beneath the right collar bone. The Court found that *“Pte Andreassen was injured through the discharge of a live cartridge fired from the Lewis Gun used for instruction & has since died as a result of the injury.....I am of the opinion that this accident was caused by a live round becoming mixed up with the nickel dummies, which were being used for demonstration purposes & that sufficient care was not taken by the Lewis Gun Officer Lieut. William Harrison & Cpl Howard Phillips to ensure that no live rounds were among the said dummies. (Sgd) F. Forbes Lt. Col.”*

A Statement included in Pte Andreassen's Service Record file by Capt. J. Gray R.M.C. 7<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion states *“Shortly after 10 a.m. 18.9.17, I was called from the Medical Hut to attend to a Private who was reported to have been wounded by a bullet from a Lewis Gun in one of the huts. On arrival at the hut I found a private, whom I since found to be No. 3563 a Pte Andreason H., lying on the floor. He was completely collapsed and bleeding freely from a wound about an inch in diameter in the right chest high up. He also had a wound in the right wrist, almost severing his hand from his arm. He died from 3 to 4 minutes after my arrival.”*

Pte Harold Andreassen's cause of death was from a Gunshot wound to Chest & Neck.

A death for Harold Andreasson, aged 24, was registered in the September quarter, 1917 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

Pte Harold Andreassen was buried at 9 a.m. on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 1917 in Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire – Plot number 255. He was given a Military Funeral.

Pte Harold Andreassen requested in his Will, dated 17<sup>th</sup> July, 1917, that he bequeathed all his real estate to his brother – Severin Berner Andreassen (1) Agricultural Farm Portion 22.130 acres & other.

Private H. Andreassen is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 103.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



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

Pte H. Andreassen is also remembered on the Port Douglas War Memorial



(Photos by Shirley & Trevor McIvor)

A War Pension was granted to the late Pte Harold Andreassen's father – Severin Berner Andreassen at the rate of £1/2/6 per fortnight from 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1917.

Pte Harold Andreassen was entitled to British War Medal only. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Andreassen's father – Mr S. B. Andreassen (January, 1923 & September, 1922)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Harold Andreassen – service number 3563 as the son of S. B. and Mary Jane Andreassen of Port Douglas, North Queensland.

(55 pages of Pte Harold Andreassen'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*

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## Newspaper Reports

### **ACCIDENTLY KILLED**

The sad news was received from the military Base Records by Mr E. G. Blackburn, Shire Clerk, that Private Harold Andreassen had been killed in France as a result of a machine gun accident, which sad tidings were conveyed to his people by Mr Blackburn, says the Port Douglas "Record". Apart from stating that he had been conveyed to the Faro Hospital after the sad occurrence, no details were given. Harold was the eldest son of Cr. and Mrs A. B. Andreassen, of Mowbray, and left with reinforcements in the beginning of this year. He was a native of this district where he grew up from childhood and was a great favourite amongst his associates and all who knew him. Though of a retiring nature, always displayed great enthusiasm for athletic sports, particularly football, and his keenness and intelligence displayed in private life stood him in good stead on the field when playing for Port against Mossman. He was a good, clean, honest living lad, and the knowledge of so great a sacrifice in the service of his country is the one grand consolation to his parents in their grief, together with the knowledge that he enters an honourable grave possessed of all the honors of a soldier who has given his life for his country.

*(Cairns Post, Queensland, Saturday 29 September, 1917)*

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### **AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES**

#### **LIST No. 340**

Died as a Result of Accident

Privates H. Andreassen (Port Douglas) and T. Williams (Hughenden).

*(Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton, Queensland, Friday 5 October, 1917)*

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### **ROLL OF HONOUR**

Private H. Andreassen eldest son of Mr and Mrs S. B. Andreassen, Seven Mile, Port Douglas, died as the result of a machine-gun accident.

*(Townsville Daily Bulletin, Queensland, Thursday 25 October, 1917)*

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Private Harold Andreassen

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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 H. Andreassen does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*He Rose Responsive To His Country's Call And Gave His Life. His All.*

Photo of Pte H. Andreassen's Headstone at Durrington War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire.



(Photo © Ian King - with permission)