**Private Colin James Irwin, 53rd Battalion**

**Colin James Irwin**, born in 1891 to parents James Irwin and Ellen Maria Henshaw, enlisted at Graman NSW on 24/9/1915 at the age of 24. His occupation is listed as Bush Labourer, Religion Presbyterian. Private Colin Irwin served with the 53rd Battalion of the AIF, proceeding overseas to France in September 1916. He suffered with trench feet, transferred with the condition in December 1916 to the 1st Southern General Hospital in Birmingham, England, and then later the 2nd Australian Auxiliary Hospital (2AAH) at Southall, England. He rejoined his Unit in France in July 1917. He was wounded in action in France in September 1917, with gunshot wounds to the left buttock and below the right knee, and shrapnel wound to the left knee. Pte Irwin had his right leg amputated as a result of his wounds at the Norfolk War Hospital in England. He was transferred in 1918 back to the 2nd Australian Auxiliary Hospital (2AAH) which specialised in the fitting of artificial limbs. Pte Irwin embarked on 16/3/1919 back to Australia aboard the Czaritza (see article from the West Australian, Perth WA Monday 7th April 1919).

**The 53rd battalion’s** first major battle was at Fromelles on the Western Front in July 1916. The 53rd battalion spent the winter of 1916-17 in the Somme Valley where they got the nickname "the Whale Oil Guards" after their CO, Lieutenant Colonel Oswald Croshaw, ordered them troops to polish their helmets with whale oil for a parade. The Whale Oil was issued to rub into feet to help prevent trench foot.

Coin James Irwin is the 1st cousin of John and Bill Irwin’s Great Grandfather John Irwin, and brother to Kelvin Cox’s Grandmother Bessie Cox.



