

**St. James Churchyard Cemetery,
Dover, Kent
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



597 PRIVATE

P. H. N. DICKEN

AUST. MACHINE GUN CORPS

2ND DECEMBER, 1917 Age 23

His Country Called

He Answered

Now In God's Hands He Rests

Percy Henry Norman DICKEN

Percy Henry Norman Dicken was born in Buln Buln, near Gippsland, Victoria to parents Henry and Rhoda Dicken (nee Dobbin).

Percy Henry Norman Dicken attended Buln Buln School, Victoria.

Percy Henry Norman Dicken was a 22 year old, single, Labourer from Maynard Street, off Logan Road, Woolloongabba, Queensland when he enlisted in Brisbane, Queensland on 8th September, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 597 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Rhoda Dicken, of Maynard Street, off Logan Road, Woolloongabba, Queensland. Percy Dicken stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously been rejected as unfit from His Majesty's Service due to being medically unfit.

Private Percy Henry Norman Dicken was posted to 11th Depot Battalion on 19th September, 1916. He was transferred to 22nd Reinforcements of 15th Battalion on 16th October, 1916 then transferred to 23rd Reinforcements of 15th Battalion on 27th October, 1916. Pte Dicken was transferred again to 22nd November, 1916 to 18th Reinforcements of 26th Battalion. Pte Dicken was transferred to Machine Gun Reinforcements on 29th November, 1916 then transferred to Machine Gun Depot at Seymour on 6th December, 1916. Pte Dicken was transferred to 10th Reinforcements of 13th Machine Gun Company.

Private Percy Henry Norman Dicken embarked from Melbourne on RMS *Osterley* on 14th February, 1917 with the 10th Reinforcements of 13th Machine Gun Company & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 11th April, 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 Percy Henry Norman Dicken was marched in from Australia to Machine Gun Training Depot at Grantham, Lincolnshire, England on 12th April, 1917.

Private Percy Henry Norman Dicken was sent sick to Military Hospital, Belton Park, Grantham on 12th May, 1917 suffering from Laryngitis. He was discharged on 23rd May, 1917.

Private Percy Henry Norman Dicken proceeded overseas to France from Parkhouse via Southampton from Machine Gun Training Depot at Grantham on 7th September, 1917. Private Percy Henry Norman Dicken was transferred & taken on strength with 25th Machine Gun Company on 7th September, 1917 from 13th Machine Gun Company. He disembarked at Havre, France on 7th September, 1917.

Private Percy Henry Norman Dicken was wounded in action on 26th October, 1917. He was admitted to 3rd Australian Field Ambulance on 27th October, 1917 with a fractured left tibia then transferred the same day to 2nd Canadian Casualty Clearing Station. Pte Dicken was transferred to Ambulance Train 15 & admitted to 24th General Hospital at Etaples, France on 28th October, 1917. Pte Dicken was invalided to England on Hospital Ship *Newhaven* on 1st November, 1917 with gunshot wounds to left tibia.

War Diary - 25th Machine Gun Company

Friday 26th October – 12 Guns still holding the Front Line as per Appendix 4. Remainder of Unit at M.G. Camp. Intelligence Summary Appendix 5 attached. Company relieved by the 7th Aust. M. G. Coy. Relief was complete by 7.30 pm & without incident, 1 Gun & Team blown up by enemy shell fire 8 am. Casualties – No. 7348 Pte Downing W., killed, No. 476 LCpl. Robinson G. C., No. 597 Pte Dicken P. H. N. Wounded and evacuated. Company on relief returned to Machine Gun Camp.

(Information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Percy Henry Norman Dicken was admitted to Dover Military Hospital, Kent, England on 1st November, 1917 with gunshot wound to left knee – seriously ill.

Private Percy Henry Norman Dicken died at 8.45 am on 2nd December, 1917 at Dover Military Hospital, Kent, England from wounds received in action – gunshot wounds with a compound fracture of left tibia. The Hospital Admissions form recorded that Pte Dicken died from Septic Pneumonia.

A death for Percy H. N. Dicken, aged 23, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Dover, Kent, England.

Private Percy Henry Norman Dicken was buried at 4 pm on 5th December, 1917 in St. James Churchyard Cemetery, Dover, Kent, England – Plot number L. G. 27 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Pte Dicken - *Coffin was good, polished Elm with brass fittings. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military Funeral. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack Flag. Gun carriage, Firing Party, Buglers and Pallbearers were supplied by the Buffs Regiment stationed at Dover. An oak cross will be erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Percy Henry Norman Dicken contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of the relatives in Australia to obtain the fullest details possible of the wounds, death & burial of Pte Percy Henry Norman Dicken. A letter from The Matron, Military Hospital, Dover dated 17th March, 1918 reads: *“Re Pte P. H. N. Dicken. The sister of the ward wrote to Pte Dicken’s people direct at the time of his death, the boy was a great favourite with everyone, he was always so bright and cheerful making the best of everything and he was as happy as he could be under the circumstances. Only a few days before he died he was doing up Christmas cards for his friends. He had a Military funeral of course and buried in the Military Cemetery here. I am glad to say that he did not seem to suffer much pain and I hope his cards have arrived in Australia, I posted them myself, so as to be sure they went.”*

The Red Cross apparently overlooked the above letter & another letter was written by The Matron, Military Hospital, Dover in September, 1918 which reads: *“Re Pte P. H. N. Dicken who passed away on the 2-12-17. Pte Dicken was buried in the Military Cemetery here with full Military Honours. He was always so bright and cheerful and was a great favourite with all. Only a day or two before he passed away, he sent off a number of Christmas cards to his friends – some in England and to his own people, taking a great interest in them. I am glad to say that he did not suffer much at the last and at the end just slept away, He was wounded in the leg and the O.i/c of the case thought it better not to amputate as poor Dicken might not have been able to bear the shock. If there is any other information you may require I will be glad to send it if I know. The name of the Hut that Pte Dicken was in was N.W.H. one of the pre-war wards of the Hospital and quite comfortable. I need hardly say that everything possible was done for the boy we all liked so much.”*

A War Pension was granted to Rhoda Norman Chadwick Dicken, mother of the late Pte Percy Henry Norman Dicken, in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 5th February, 1918. A claim for the War Pension was also made by Myrtle Irene Vivian Dicken, sister of the late Pte Percy Henry Norman Dicken. The claim was rejected on the grounds that the claimant was not dependent upon her deceased brother during the period of 12 month’s prior to his enlistment. A claim for the War Pension was also made by Doris Mary G. Dicken, sister of the late Pte Percy Henry Norman Dicken. The claim was rejected on the grounds that the claimant was not dependent upon her deceased brother during the period of 12 month’s prior to his enlistment. A claim for the War Pension was also made by Queenie V. R. H. Dicken, sister of the late Pte Percy Henry Norman Dicken. The claim was rejected on the grounds that the claimant was not dependent upon her deceased brother during the period of 12 month’s prior to his enlistment.

Base Records contacted Mrs R. Dicken, Highgate Hill, South Brisbane, mother of the late Pte Percy Henry Norman Dicken, on 23rd May, 1921 enquiring if there were any nearer blood relatives than herself due to the “Deceased Soldiers Estates Act 1918” which 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 R. Dicken replied on 1st June, 1921 stating that she did not know the present address of her husband & that she had not live with him for four years. She stated *“he is a great drunk and never supported me so I had to leave him though his cruelty to me.”* Mrs Dicken also stated that her *“late son never acknowledged his father for some years prior to his death.”*

Pte Percy Henry Norman Dicken was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Dicken's mother – Mrs Rhoda Dicken, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent October, 1922).

Communications to Mrs R. Dicken at Hampstead Road, Highgate Hill, Brisbane regarding the Victory Medal had been returned unclaimed in 1923.

Mrs Rhoda Dicken wrote to Base Records on 29th January, 1929 requesting the "bronze" medal as she already had the "silver" medal. She stated she had made enquires at the Barracks several times but had been told to write to Melbourne for the medal. Mrs Rhoda Dicken signed for the Victory Medal on 8th February, 1929.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Percy Henry Norman Dicken – service number 597, aged 23, of 25th Coy., Australian Machine Gun Corps. He was the son of Henry and Rhoda Dicken, of Hampstead Rd., Highgate Hill, South Brisbane, Queensland. Native of Victoria, Australia.

Private P. H. N. Dicken is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 177.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(57 pages of Pte Percy Henry Norman Dicken'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, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



Newspaper Notices

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

CASUALTY LIST NO. 376

THE LIST OF QUEENSLANDERS

DIED OF WOUNDS

Percy Henry Norman Dicken, Woolloongabba, 2/12/17

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 28 December, 1917)

ROLL OF HONOUR

DICKEN – In proud and loving memory of my dear son and brother, Private Percy H. N. Dicken, who died of wounds, at Dover Military Hospital, England, on 2nd December, 1917.

His country called, he answered.

Now in God's hands he rests.

Inserted by his sorrowing mother, sister and brother.

(The Telegraph, Brisbane, Queensland – 7 December, 1918)

ROLL OF HONOUR

DICKEN – In sad and loving memory of Private P. H. N. Dicken, 25th M.G. Co., died of wounds, 2nd December, 1917 in Military Hospital, Dover, England.

His country called, he answered.

Now in God's hands he rests.

Inserted by his sorrowing and loving mother, sister and brother.

(The Week, Brisbane, Queensland – 12 December, 1919)

ROLL OF HONOUR

DICKEN – In sad and loving memory of Private P. H. N. Dicken, 25th M.G. Co., died of wounds, 2nd December, 1917 in Military Hospital, Dover, England.

His country called, he answered.

Now in God's hands he rests.

Inserted by his sorrowing and loving mother, sister and brother.

(The Telegraph, Brisbane, Queensland – 4 December, 1920)

ROLL OF HONOUR

DICKEN – In sad and loving memory of No. 597, Private P. H. N. Dicken, 25th Machine Gun Company, died from wounds 2nd of December, 1917 at Military Hospital, Dover, England.

His country called, he answered.

Now in God's hands he rests.

Inserted by his sorrowing mother, brother and sister.

DICKEN – In loving memory of our darling brother, No. 597, Private P. H. N. Dicken, 25th Machine Gun Co., died from wounds, 2nd of December, 1917 at Military Hospital, England.

A loving brother, true and kind,

A beautiful memory left behind;

Forget him, no, we never will,

He lives in our memory still.

Inserted by his loving sisters, Queenie and Doris.

(The Telegraph, Brisbane, Queensland – 2 December, 1921)

ROLL OF HONOUR

DICKEN – In sad and loving memory of our darling son and brother, No. 597, P. H. N. Dicken, 25th Machine Gun Co., died of wounds, Military Hospital, Dover, England, 2nd December, 1917.

His country called;

He answered.

In God's hands he rests.

Inserted by his sorrowing mother, sister and brother.

(The Telegraph, Brisbane, Queensland – 2 December, 1922)

ROLL OF HONOUR

DICKEN – In sad and loving memory of my dear son and brother, Private Percy H. N. Dicken, who died of wounds, at Dover Military Hospital, England, on December 2, 1917.

His country called, he answered.

Now in God's hands he rests.

Inserted by his sorrowing mother, brother and sister.

(The Telegraph, Brisbane, Queensland – 8 December, 1923)

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)

Pte P. H. N. Dicken does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

His Country Called, He Answered. Now In God's Hands He Rests

St. James Churchyard Cemetery, Dover, Kent, England

St. James Churchyard Cemetery, Dover contains 719 identified casualties. There are 8 Australian servicemen from World War 1 buried here – 7 Australian Imperial Force soldiers & 1 Royal Flying Corps.

During the First World War, Dover was a port of embarkation for troops bound for the Western Front and between August 1914 and August 1919 some 1,300,000 Commonwealth sick and wounded were landed there. The port was bombed in 1915 and again in August 1916.

There are 373 identified burials of the 1914-1918 war here. In addition there are 19 unidentified burials, 9 of whom can be named as victims of the Zeebrugge Raid, and these 9 are inscribed on a Special Memorial on the Cross of Sacrifice in the Zeebrugge Plot.

In 1940, Dover was the headquarters for the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk and nearly 200,000 of the 366,000 British and Allied troops brought back during the operation were landed there. Throughout the war Dover was a particular target for the long range guns on the French coast and between September 1939 and May 1945 there were no less than 742 attacks by air raid and shelling.

Most of the 356 Second World War burials are contained in a special war graves plot at the far end of the cemetery. The plot, known as the Dunkirk plot, contains many graves from the Dunkirk operation. 22 of these burials are unidentified. There are also 8 Foreign National war burials and 3 non war service burials in the cemetery.

(Information & photos from CWGC)



Photo of Pte P. H. N. Dicken's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. James' Churchyard Cemetery, Dover, Kent, England.



(Photo courtesy of Kyle Tallett)



St. James Churchyard Cemetery, Dover