



Club member who made the supreme sacrifice 1914-1919

The Story Behind the Name



Sergeant David Emmett COYNE AM

14 March 1896 - 15 May 1918



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PRE-ENLISTMENT:

- David was born 14 March 1896 in Ballinrush near Marian, Mackay, North Qld
- He was the 8th child of David & Annie Hughes Coyne of Marian
- Educated at Marian State School
- He was a farmer with his father at Marian, Qld

SERVICE:

- Service Number: 3347
- David Coyne enlisted in Rockhampton on 25 January 1916 with 31st Battalion, 7th RFTS as a Private, aged 19 years 9 months
- He went to training at Fraser's Hill Camp, Brisbane
- According to Biography by Evan Evans, whilst in camp, Coyne was involved in an incident which perhaps indicated his capability of selfless acts which resulted in his death 2 years later. After horses of an express wagon bolted, endangering several soldiers' lives, Coyne leapt on to the back of one of the horses and managed to bring the wagon to a halt.
- On 4 May 1916 he embarked with his Unit on HMAT Seang Choon, from Brisbane
- 17 December 1916 he was promoted Sergeant
- 24/12/16: he was 'Taken on Strength' with the 31st Battalion to France
- The winter of 1916-17 was spent on the Somme engaged in raiding and patrol work.
- In March 1917 advanced on Bapaume.
- On April 21 1917, he was promoted Lance Corporal and for the next 6 months was absent from his Unit qualifying as a bombing instructor and serving temporarily with 67th Battalion.
- From November 1917 to March 1918 the Battalion served in Flanders in the Messines-Wytschaete sector, then returned to the Somme where Coyne and his platoon guarded an important section of trench attracting much attention from a German Machine Section.
- On the night of 15 May, while in the line at Vaire-sous-Corbie, Somme, Coyne was testing some Mills grenades which he believed had been affected by damp.
- Coyne planned to move out that night to bomb the German position. In preparation for the assault he was testing a recently arrived consignment of Mills Bombs to assess the consignments reliability. Experience from the Gallipoli Campaign suggested bombs or grenades, particularly those made in the trenches were problematic in that some fuses were instantaneous. In order to carry out the test he planned to throw a bomb over the trench parapet into no-mans-land where it was expected to explode harmlessly.





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THE SUPREME SACRIFICE:

- In reality what happened is the Mills Bomb hit the parapet top and fell back into the trench among Coyne's platoon. Coyne yelled to his platoon "run for your lives boys" and then proceeded to try and find the bomb in the dark trench. Initially the search was unsuccessful and by the time he had located the bomb its time fuse had all but expired leaving no time to throw the menacing bomb over the parapet.
- Coyne took the decision to throw himself onto the bomb knowing full well what the likely outcome was.
- Sergeant Coyne received fatal injuries as the result of the explosion on 15 May 1918, but saved his platoon by his action at Vaire-sous-Corbie, Vignacourt, Somme Front, France, aged 22 years.
- Sergeant David Emmett Coyne was awarded the Albert Medal in Gold for this selfless act of what has been described as cold blooded courage.

CEMETERY &/OR MEMORIAL:

- Vignacourt British Cemetery, France
- Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour
- Mackay Cenotaph
- Mackay Old Town Hall Honour Roll
- Marian Roll of Honour



MILITARY HONOURS & AWARDS:

- Albert Medal in Gold,
- British War Medal
- Victory Medal

RIFLE SHOOTING:

- David Emmett Coyne was an active member of the Marian Rifle Club

ARMISTICE CENTENARY WAR MEMORIAL Commemoration Service

- ANZAC Day 2019 Keynote Address Bruce Scott



KILLED IN ACTION - 15TH MAY 1918

PERSONAL NOTES

- <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/173914267> - Coyne: Daily Mercury (Mackay, Qld.), Thu 6 Jun 1918 , Page 2, Family Notices

He answered the call of his Country, He fought for the liberty and freedom of its people. He gave his young life and manhood to his country — no man could give more, He gave his all. R.I.P.

REFERENCES:

- <https://awm.gov.au/collection/P11039235>
- <https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/370174>
- <https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/showPerson?pid=65562>
- <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/DetailsReports/ItemDetail.aspx?Barcode=3437880&isAv=N>
- ACWM Keynote Address: ANZAC Day 2019: Bruce Scott <https://qldrifle.com/anzac-day-address-2019/>
- <https://nraa.com.au/history/remembrance-day-2021/>

