



**+ Private Harold Rodger FARR  
2686 – 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Infantry Battalion,  
1 to 8 Reinforcements.**

**Born:** 1891, Molong, NSW.

**Parents:** Rodger & Caroline Farr

**Occupation:** Labourer

**District Connection:** Cumnock

**Enlistment Date:** 8 Jun 1915

**Enlistment Age:** 24 yrs

**Embarkation:** 9 Aug 1915, Sydney, HMAT *Runic* A54

**Served:** Gallipoli, Egypt & France

**Fate:** KIA 22 Jul 1916, France  
Buried Gordon Dump Cemetery, Picardie.

**Honour Boards:** WW1 Cumnock Public School Honour Board; National War Museum, Canberra; the Wellington NSW War Memorial; and the Honour Roll at the Holy Trinity Church, Merriwa, NSW.

**Biography:**

Harold Rodger Farr was born in Molong in 1891, the son of Rodger and Caroline Farr. Rodger Farr married Caroline Johnson in Molong in 1880. They had eight daughters and Harold was the eldest of four sons.

Rodger Farr was a miner and the family lived in a tent near Meranburn (located on the Manildra Creek near Manildra), in 1891. During the period of 1896-1900 Rodger Farr leased various small blocks of land at Manildra, and lived for a time at a residence at Delayney's Dyke, along the Gumble Road.

The *Molong Express & Western District Advertiser* – 17 Jan 1903, p7, reports Rodger Farr succeeded in finding gold at Delaney's Dyke in 1903, cutting a lode two feet wide and carrying fair prospects at a depth of 30 feet.

In 1905, Rodger Farr rented 70 acres of land in the parish of Burrabung. Both Rodger and Caroline Farr are recorded as living in Cumnock in the 1906 ERs. Rodger Farr was reported in the local newspapers during 1906 as being a member of the Cumnock Progress Association and having sold over 25,000 rabbit pelts in three months.

Caroline's parents were Henry and Mary Jane Johnson and they lived in the Yullundry district for around twenty five years. Mary Johnson died in January 1908 and her husband, Henry Johnson, died at Cumnock in December 1908. They were buried in the Anglican portion of the Cumnock Cemetery.

Harold Rodger Farr (known as Rodger) attended school at Cumnock and would have worked as a labourer around the district after he left school. The Farr family moved to the Merriwa area to farm prior to 1913 when Harold, Caroline and Rodger are listed on the 1913 Upper Hunter/Merriwa Electoral Rolls. Harold was living at Merriwa and working as a labourer.

Harold enlisted in the AIF on 8 Jun 1915, aged 24yrs. His medical form states that he was 5 feet 9¾ inches tall, of medium complexion, with blue eyes and brown hair, and was of the Church of England religious denomination.

The *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative* – 9 Sep 1915, p36, reported that:

*"Harold Farr (who has been in training for some considerable time) was amongst Merriwa recruits".* He embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Runic* A54 on 9 Aug 1915. The *Runic* arrived in Egypt in early September, and soon after the 1<sup>st</sup> Btn reinforcements were sent to Gallipoli. Six Australian battalions suffered nearly 2,300 killed and wounded during the Battle of Lone Pine from 6-9 August 1915. The 1<sup>st</sup> Btn was still working in the Lone Pine area when Pte Farr would have arrived at Gallipoli.

Following the evacuation of the peninsular in December, Harold was relocated to Tel-el-Kebir, Egypt, on 6 Jan 1916. In a letter written from Egypt on 24 Jan 1916 and published in the *Scone Advocate* – 14 Mar 1916, p3, the Rev. BC Wilson:

*“I am with an excellent lot of men and I love the life... The men are hard at it. They are all away to-day on field manoeuvres, which will last eight hours... A couple of the Merriwa boys are alongside of me, in the same Infantry Brigade, Farr, Clare, Wicks and Pottinger, we expect others along soon...”*

The 1<sup>st</sup> Btn embarked at Alexandria on 22 Mar 1916 as part of the Expeditionary Force and disembarked at Marseilles on 28 March. In April 1916 the 1<sup>st</sup> Btn were located near Outtersteene in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region of France and came under gas attacks and artillery fire. During May 1916 the 1<sup>st</sup> Btn were operating in the line at Fleurbaix, just south of Armentières.

In early July 1916 the Australian 1<sup>st</sup> Division made their way to the rear area of Albert in preparation for action at Pozières. The 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battalion's diary entry for 16 July reads in part:

*“Orders received to move to Walroy and Vadenourt. At 1300 the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn arrived in Walroy and went into billets... The marching of the Bde is steadily improving. 1<sup>st</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Bns are particularly good. 10 miles in three hours in heavy marching order carrying in addition steel helmets, blankets and WP Sheets. No men fell out from either Bn.”*

On the 20 July the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigades were set to attack trenches near Pozières and came under gas attack for the next two nights. During the attack on Pozières between 22- 25 July, the 1<sup>st</sup> Btn had 9 officers and 92 other ranks killed and 384 wounded, with a total of 2165 casualties for all battalions of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division taking part in the battle. The Pozières area was the only place in which any ground had been gained on a 2.5 km front of General Haig's attack on the German IV Corps.

Private Harold Rodger Farr was one of those killed, aged 25 years, during the battle for Pozières from 22-25 July 1916. He was buried at the Gordon Dump Cemetery, Ovillers la Boisselle, Picardie.

**(Grave photo right)**

His father, Rodger Farr, received his 1914/15 Star, British War and Victory medals. He is honoured on the Roll of Honour, Australian War Museum, Canberra; the Wellington War Memorial; the Cumnock Public School Honour Board; and the Honour Roll at the Holy Trinity Church, Merriwa.

*The Molong Express & Western District Advertiser* – 9 Sep 1916, p13, reported:

*“Pte HAROLD R. FARR, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. Farr, once of the Molong district, and now of Wyong, who has been killed in action in France. Pte. Farr enlisted at Merriwa, in June 1915, and embarked on active service in August. He arrived in Egypt in September, and after serving several months fight against the Turks he was transferred to France. Here he took part in severe fighting, and between the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of July last he was killed in action during the attack on Pozières.”*



*The Molong Argus* – Fri 30 Aug 1918, P4, Cumnock:

*“On Friday last, before a large number of parents, Mr E, Campling (School Inspector) unveiled the Public School Roll of Honor board. The board is a beautiful one of Queensland maple and contains the following names in gold lettering ...”* R Farr is one of the names listed.

*The Scone Advocate* – 3 Aug 1920, p2, also reported that an Honor Roll to the memory of Merriwa soldiers had been unveiled at the Merriwa Holy Trinity Church of England on 22 July 1920. R Farr is amongst those who are listed.

Rodger & Caroline Farr left Merriwa to live at Cudgegong, near Mudgee in October 1918, but by August 1919 were living at Mudgee. They later moved to Wellington. Caroline Farr died at Wellington in July 1924. Rodger Farr became a prominent member of the Salvation Army in Wellington and remarried in 1927 to Ethel Morel. He died at Wellington on 10 June 1928, aged 73 years.



**Above left: Photo of Pte Harold Rodger Farr courtesy of Trevor Munro from the book, 'Wellington's Finest', by Trevor Munro & Graeme Hosken, 2005.**

**Above right: Wellington Cenotaph – a bronze sculpture with three figures surmounts the memorial. Seated at centre is 'Winged Victory' with sword. A partly armoured figure bearing a palm branch is alongside and symbolises the spirit in which Australia entered the First World War. The third figure represents History recording in a book the deeds of those who saw service. The Memorial is situated in Cameron Park, Wellington, NSW.**

**Left: Cumnock Public School Roll of Honour Board. Available to see at the Cumnock Crossroads Building, Obley Street, Cumnock.**

