

**Pte William Albert COADY**  
**5659 - 13th Battalion, 18 Reinforcements**

**Born:** 1895 Obley, registered Molong NSW.

**Next of Kin:** Parents Mary & Thomas Coady

**Occupation:** Bush Rider, Labourer

**District Connection:** Obley, Yeoval

**Enlistment Date:** 16 Feb 1916, Bathurst

**Enlistment Age:** 21 years 3 months

**Embarkation:** 3 May 1916 Sydney HMAT A46  
*Clan Macgillivray*

**Served:** Western Front

**Fate:** RTA 2 Jan 1919

**Honour Boards:** Obley War Memorial & Cumnock War  
Memorial Gates

**Biography:**

William Albert Coady (known as Bert) was born in Obley in 1895, a son of Mary and Thomas Coady, senior.

Thomas Coady senior was born in Bathurst in 1847. An Obituary report in *The Wellington Times* - 19 Nov 1917, p2, reported on his life:

*"On Friday last there died, at his residence, Washpen, Peak Hill Road, Obley, and old resident of the west in the person of Mr Thomas Coady. The late Mr Coady, who had attained the age of 70 years, was a native of Bathurst, but settled in the Yeoval district when about 17 [c1864]. He found employment with Mr JA Gilmore, who had teams running on the road from Sydney to Parkes, carting wool and other produce to the metropolis and returning with general merchandise. He left Mr Gilmore after some years to follow it on his own account, and when the railway came to Wellington [June 1880] he had his teams working between Wellington and Yeoval and between Geurie and Yeoval. His sight failed him about seven years ago and he eventually became totally blind..."*

Thomas Coady senior married Mary Vaughan at Wellington in 1883. Mary was born in County Cork, Ireland, and immigrated to Australia in 1865 with her parents, Margaret and Michael Vaughan, when she was seven years old. Michael worked at "Wandoo Wandong" before taking up a block of land at Washpen Creek where he and Margaret raised their family, acquiring more land as it became available. Thomas and Mary Coady had six children: Margaret born 1884; John born 1885; Florence born 1887; Thomas born 1889; William born 1895; and Harold born 1901. (The Coady name was also variously spelt as Cody or Codey in various NSW registry indexes).

The Coady children all attended the Obley Public School. Cricket and tennis was a sport played by both Thomas and Bert and there are many local newspaper reports up until 1914 naming them in cricket teams playing for Obley.

Thomas Coady, Bert's brother, enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) on 26 Oct 1915. Pte Thomas Coady - 1638, 54th Btn, served at the western front and was wounded three times. He returned to Australia on 5 Mar 1919. He died aged 39 years old, at Dubbo on 10 Oct 1929.

Bert Coady enlisted in the AIF at Bathurst on 16 Feb 1916. His enlistment record states that he was 21 years and 3 months old, single, occupation as a bush rider, was 5 feet 7½ inches tall, had a florid complexion, blue eyes, fair hair and was of the Roman Catholic religious denomination.

*The Wellington Times* - 13 Apr 1916, p6, reported:

*"A very enjoyable time was spent in the Obley hall on last Wednesday night, the occasion being a send-off to two local lads (Bert Coady and Dave Gow) who were home on final leave, and expect to sail for the seat of war in the course of a few days. About 50 couples assembled, and dancing commenced at 8 o'clock, and continued without intermission till midnight, when a halt was made for refreshments. Mr J Whittaker, who made the presentation of a wristlet watch to each, spoke very highly of the many good qualities of both lads..."*



Pte Bert Coady initially served with the 53rd Battalion (Bn) from 29 Mar 1916. *The Wellington Times* - 13 Apr 1916, p6, reported:

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Pte Bert Coady embarked at Sydney on the HMAT *Clan Macgillivray* on 3 May 1916 and arrived in Egypt some weeks later. While at the 4th Training Battalion, Tel el Kebir, Bert was charged with being absent from parade on 4 Jul 1916 and again with being absent from parade and insolence to his Superior Officers on 25 July and duly punished.

He embarked on H.T. *Megantic* at Alexandria on 6 Aug 1916 for England. While at an Australian training camp he was admitted to hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, with mumps on 8 Nov 1916. Whilst there, he was charged on 16 November with the "Crime at Sutton Veny of breaking out of hospital whilst suffering from an infectious disease." He was given 24 hours detention. He was discharged on 27 Nov 1916 to the 4th Training Bn.

Pte Coady embarked at Folkestone for France on 4 Dec 1916. On 15 Dec 1916 he was admitted to the 26 General Hospital at Étapes with Influenza. He joined up with the 13th Bn on 7 Jan 1917 near Marmetz, in Northern France. On 24 Jan the 13th Bn relieved the 45th Bn in the Gap and Switch trenches on the front line.



On the night of 4th/5th Feb, the 13th Bn were ordered to attack a position at Stormy Trench, near Gueudecourt. The 13th Bn Unit diary records of the night:

*"At 9.57 pm the Artillery fired a few rounds to warm the guns and at 10 pm the barrage commenced. Our assaulting wave immediately 'hopped over the top' and moved across 'No-man's land' in an unbroken line, which approached as close as 5 or 6 yards to the barrage, so excellent was the shooting. On the way over an enemy Maxim gun in 'No-man's land' was captured, and the crew killed or wounded. At 10.2 pm, the barraged lifted and our men rushed in on top of the trench. Most of the Germans were in their dugouts and on the left they surrendered freely, but on the right they showed more fight, and hand to hand conflicts took place, although this did not last long."*

Captain Henry William Murray earned the Victoria Cross for his actions during the 13th Bn's attack on the German position of Stormy Trench. The company captured the German position and repulsed three fierce counterattacks. Murray led repeated bayonet and bombing attacks himself. He became Australia's most decorated soldier of WW1 and finished the war as a Lieutenant Colonel.

Casualties for the attack for the 13th Bn from 4th - 7th Feb, were Officers - 2 killed and 5 wounded, and Other Ranks - 41 killed, 167 wounded and 18 missing. Pte Bert Coady was one of those wounded in action on 4th Feb, receiving a gun shot wound to the fingers of his right hand. The wounds appeared to be minor as he rejoined his unit on 6 February.

The 13th Bn moved to Melbourne Camp at Marmetz on 9 Feb for rest and training, before moving on to Ribemont on the 22nd. At the end of February, the 13th Bn was made up of 28 Officers and 783 Other Ranks.

By the end of March the battalion had moved back to the front line and on 9 Apr 1917, were told they were to take part of an attack on the Hindenburg Line between Bullecourt and Queant.

**Photo: A distribution of gifts of the Australian Comforts Fund to the 13th Bn at Ribemont, France. March 1917. AWM E00401**



The 13th Btn took part in the attack of part of the Hindenburg Line on 11 Apr 1917 as part of the 4th Australian Division and 4th Australian Brigade. The 13th Btn Unit diaries record of the attack:

*“At 4.45 am “A” and “B” companies moved out followed later by “C” and “D” companies at distances of 200 yds. As soon as they left the shelter of the cutting, losses from shell fire commenced. When about 600 yds from the 1st objective the battalion came under heavy machine gun fire, which became more intense at the first wire and officers and men fell fast...”*

Despite two attack objectives being obtained, the Australian battalions were overwhelmed by German counter attacks and bombing. Tank support failed to assist the attack as only 3 arrived and these were taken out quickly by enemy anti-tank guns and were unsupported by inadequate artillery fire. The troops were ordered to withdraw and the Unit Diaries state:

*“Except were parties were cut off the men tried to get back over the open under a fearful machine gun and rifle fire; the losses being very heavy. Shortly after noon the position was entirely evacuated.”*



During this attack which lasted 10 hours, the 13th Btn casualties were: Killed - 6 Officers & 19 Other Ranks; Wounded - 6 officers and 112 ORs; Missing - 9 Officers & 358 ORs. The 4th Brigade took 3000 men into battle and sustained casualties of 2,339.

Pte Bert Coady was wounded in action, receiving gun shot wounds to the face and back and was transferred to England on 23 Apr 1917 for treatment in various military hospitals. The *Wellington Times* - 24 May 1917, p5, reported:

*“Mrs Coady has received word from the Defence Department that her son, Private Bert Coady, has been wounded a second time. Later reports state that he is in London suffering from wounds in the face and back.”*

Pte Coady was transferred to Mile End Military Hospital, London, on 15 May 1917. On 30 May Pte Coady was charged with the offence of being AWL from the hospital on 28 May. He forfeited one day's pay. From 5 - 20 June he spent months moving between Weymouth and Hurdcott. He was again charged with an offence at Hurdcott of being "Absent from parade" on 3 Oct 1917 and again forfeited a day's pay.

Pte Coady's father, Thomas, died at his residence at Washpen, Peak Hill on 16 Nov 1917, aged 70 years. He was buried at the Washpen Cemetery.

Further AWL offences occurred from 16 -18 November (forfeited 6 days pay) and 3-7 Dec (forfeited 21 days pay). Pte Coady's next AWL resulted in Court Martial, charged with "At Longbridge Deverell, on 15 Dec 1917, he absented himself without leave from the Overseas Training Brigade, until apprehended by the Military Police in the Old Market, Bristol, at 6.15 pm on 12 Dec 1917. Pte Coady's defence was that "He was anxious to return to his unit in France but he was not allowed due to his physical classification, and that he couldn't stick the work in the parade ground." His sentence on 21 Jan 1918 was to forfeit 40 days pay.

A second Court Martial occurred on 22 Jun 1918, at Longbridge, Deverell, for "being AWL from the Overseas Training Brigade from 7 Mar 1918 until apprehended by the Military Police in Hamilton Road, Salisbury City on 14 Jun 1918. His defence was that "He was in camp a month and about to be charged for a kit [military] which had not been lost through any fault of his. I considered it an injustice and went absent." On 25 Jun, Pte Coady was sentenced to 120 days detention and forfeited 230 days pay.

Pte Coady was discharged from Lewes Detention Barracks on 29 Jul 1918. He was transferred to France and rejoined the 13 Btn on 10 Aug 1918. However, on 11 Aug he presented to hospital and was admitted to the 2nd Canadian General Hospital with Gonorrhoea. He was discharged from hospital after 106 days on 24 Nov 1918. Once again, Pte Coady was charged with being AWL at Rouelles, France, from 2130 26 Nov to 2200 27 Nov 1918. His sentence was 14 days Field Punishment No 2 and forfeit of 16 days pay. Field Punishment No 2 consisted of heavy labouring duties, possibly being restrained in handcuffs or fetters.

On 6 Dec 1918, Pte Coady was transferred back to England to No 4 Com Depot. On 28 Dec, Pte Coady was charged with AWL from 26 Dec to 27 Dec. He was admonished by Lt FN Johnson and forfeited 2 days pay. He left England on HT *Berrima* on 2 Jan 1919 and disembarked in Australia on 22 Feb 1919 and was discharged from the AIF on 3 Apr 1919. He was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal.

William Albert Coady has been reported in an ancestry tree as having married Kathleen Pearl Austin about 1920, but no marriage record has been found. Their children included: Enid Born 1920 & Died 1934; Reginald Born 1922 & Died 1922, aged 6 mths; Kathleen Pearl Born 1928; and Margaret Rosemary Born 1931. Kathleen married Lionel Price and Margaret married Maxwell Kennedy, on the same day of 8 Sep 1948, at St Patrick's Church, Wellington.

A Returned Soldiers Settlement Loan was granted to William Albert Coady, of "Yarrowonga" Obley Road from 17 Mar 1923 to 27 Mar 1928. Bert & Kathleen are listed in the Australia Electoral Rolls (ER) at "Yarrowonga" until 1943, with Bert's occupation as a grazier. Their address changed to Obley in 1949, and then to "Naroogal," Mumbil in 1968, when Bert's occupation was listed as a labourer.

William Albert Coady died, aged 78 years, on 28 Aug 1973 and was buried at the Yeoval Cemetery. Kathleen Pearl Coady died, aged 81 years, on 24 Jul 1976 and was buried at the Yeoval Cemetery.

**Albert is remembered in the book, "Obley on the Little River" by Colleen Medley, published 1993, and in "Wellington's Finest" by Trevor Munro & Grahame Hosken, published 2005.**

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Thomas & William Coady



Obley War Memorial



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