



# COLLINS

## Reuben Henry

Service No: 7461

### Family History

Charles Joseph Cooper Collins, born to Amelia Ridley, nee Collins, in 1825, arrived in the Swan River Colony in 1842 aboard the *Simon Taylor*. His mother, stepfather and siblings travelled with him, but he was indentured to Mr Cook, a free settler. Once free of his indenture, Charles applied for land in the Avon District, where he was listed as a labourer in the 1859 census.

Charles married Elizabeth Adderson at Toodyay and the couple went on to have a large family: Rosanna b.1852, Susannah 1855-1855, Charles circa 1856, Amelia b.1857, Annie Elizabeth b.1859, William b.1860, Margaret b.1861, Henry b.1862, Emily b.1867-1868, George Alfred 1869, Alice Jane b.1874, Amy Cecilia b.1877, Arthur Edward b.1878 and John b.1879.

Charles' son, William (born in 1860) farmed at Malebelling with his brother Henry in the 1880s until their partnership was dissolved in 1918. The brothers also owned commercial buildings in York which they leased to various businesses. Throughout their partnership they also bought and sold several farming properties in the York District, including the Hoops Brothers' farm at Mt Hardy, the Mount Bakewell property of the late Stephen Monger and "Vivida Farm."

He married Elda Ellen Reynolds in 1898 and the couple had five children: Reuben Henry b. 1899, Murray Charles b. 1901 Cecil Thomas b. 1903, Mark Cedric (1910-1919) and Roma Ethel (1917-1918).

By 1912, William had also purchased a residence in Grey Street. He was elected councillor for the South Ward of the York Municipal Council in 1913 but resigned due to ill health in 1916.

William exhibited horses and cattle at the York Agricultural Society shows for decades, initially as W. and H. Collins and, later, by himself. He was a member of the York Agricultural Society, the York branch of the Primary Producers' Association and was on the committee of the York District Fruit Growers' Association in 1924.

Both he and his wife, Elda, were active within the Methodist Church and other fundraising organisations, especially during World War One. Elda was also involved in the Red Cross Guild, which later became the Red Cross.

In 1924, William, in partnership with T.W. Boyle, bought "Hawkhurst" stud, a property of 3 500 acres, from Henry Wills and Co. At some point, in partnership with H.M. Edwards, he also purchased another property at Bencubbin.

William died on the 27<sup>th</sup> June 1934 at the York Hospital and was buried at the York Cemetery. His various properties, as well as a property owned by his wife, were offered up for auction in 1935.

Some of William's sons were farmers in the Bencubbin area, and Elda died there in 1950. Her body was laid to rest in the York Cemetery.

## BASIC INFORMATION

Name: Reuben Henry Collins

Service number: 7461

Date of enlistment: 5/2/1917

Age at Enlistment: 18 years 2 months

Civil Occupation: Law Clerk

Medals, Honours, Awards: British War Medal, Victory Medal

Height: 5 feet 4 ½ inches

Weight: 116 pounds

Chest measurement: 34 ½ inches

Complexion: Dark

Eye Colour: Brown

Hair Colour: Brown

Father: William Collins

Mother: Elda Ellen Reynolds

Siblings: Murray Charles, Cecil Thomas, Mark Cedric, Roma Ethel.

Married: Muriel Thielemann

## Life Story

Reuben Henry Collins was born in 1899. He attended York State School then went on to attend Guildford Grammar School. His education stood him in good stead as, by the time of his enlistment, he was working as a law clerk.

Reuben enlisted, with his father's permission, on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 1917. He left Fremantle aboard HMAT A30 *Borda* on the 29<sup>th</sup> June and was marched in with the 4<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion at Codford Depot, in the United Kingdom, on the 26<sup>th</sup> August 1917.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1918, Reuben was attached to the 4<sup>th</sup> Division Signallers' School. Conditions must have been crowded, as he was twice treated in hospital for scabies before embarking for France with the 16<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1918, Reuben was Taken on Strength with the 48<sup>th</sup> Battalion in the Field. He was briefly reported missing near Amiens but survived to re-join his unit.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1919, Reuben was promoted to temporary Corporal. He reverted to Private two months' later.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> July, Reuben returned to Australia on the *City of Exeter*. He disembarked at Fremantle on the 16<sup>th</sup> July and was finally discharged from the armed forces on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 1919.

In 1921, it was reported that Reuben and George Preacher were setting up in business together in Cottesloe as general produce and provision merchants.

By 1922, the pair were living in Fitzgerald Street, Perth, along with Charles Henry Thielemann, Elsie Thielemann and Jean Elizabeth Thielemann. It is likely that Mrs J. Thielemann was running a boarding house in Perth after leaving York in late 1921.

In 1923, Reuben married Muriel Thielemann in Perth. His business partner, George, married Muriel's sister, Elsie, that same year.

Reuben had purchased a business in Byford by this time and he became the proprietor of a general store. Reuben's partnership with George Preacher appears to have dissolved, and the couple remained in Byford until at least 1928. Two daughters were born during their time there.

Reuben's movements over the following years are uncertain. Family members state that the marriage had broken down and that he returned to live with his mother, but Reuben did not appear on the Electoral Roll for Bencubbin (where his mother was living) until 1943.

Muriel moved her daughters to Goomalling where she learned hairdressing.

In late 1933, she moved the family to Midland and sent her daughters to live with their Aunt Sophy McIntyre (nee Thielemann) while Muriel worked as a live-in maid for the Wittenoom family in West Perth.

In 1939, Muriel set up her own hairdressing salon in Rokeby Road, Subiaco, and the girls returned to live with their mother in the residence behind the salon. She later moved to Glendalough, where she remained until at least 1980. Muriel and Reuben never divorced.

Reuben died in Perth in 1953.



Betty and Edna Collins Midland  
1935

Courtesy Sue and Peter Conway

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