

## Stanley Colless DCM, MC



**Lieutenant Stanley Colless DCM, MC**  
**3rd and 55th Battalions, AIF**  
**Serial Number: 2808**

**Born:** 19 November 1892, Penrith NSW  
**Died:** 1 September 1918, Peronne France

Stanley Colless was born at Penrith on 19 November 1892, the son of Henry and Elizabeth Jane (nee Jordan) Colless of North Street Penrith. He received his schooling at the Penrith Superior Public School and afterwards was employed as a wool classer by A W Davis and Company at Liverpool. Colless was a keen sportsman who played cricket and football. He was also a member of a rifle club and won a number of prizes in shooting competitions.

Colless enlisted on 19 June 1915 and was assigned to the 9<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements, 3rd Battalion. Stan's brother George enlisted on 22 August 1915 with the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Colless left Sydney on 30 September 1915, aboard *HMAT Argyllshire* and after several months in Egypt was transferred to the 55<sup>th</sup> Battalion in February 1916. He quickly rose through the ranks from Corporal to Lance Corporal in February 1916. A month later he sailed for the Western Front.

On 31 May, Colless was promoted to Sergeant and during the Battle of Fromelles (19-20th July 1916), he was singled out for mention by Captain Gibbons who stated 'Sergeant Colless doing good work – my officers also of course. Would like you to say something to his man. He is doing splendid work'. On 23 August, Colless was promoted to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and on 29 August, he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) for his bravery during the Battle of Fromelles 'For conspicuous gallantry during operations. He kept the teams of two guns working in the enemy's second line, from which he was finally driven out by overwhelming bombing parties. By his fine example he kept the team steady, and covered the

retreat of a company, thus saving many casualties'. Colless spent time as an instructor at the Lewis Gun School in England during October 1916. In February 1917, he was promoted to Lieutenant and in March was again in training school, rejoining his unit in October 1917.

Colless was awarded the Military Cross after he led a raid, which resulted in the destruction of German pill boxes, and the capture of German machine guns. On 1 September 1918, while observing from a position just captured, Colless was killed by a machine gun shot through the head, near a sugar factory, to the right of Mont St Quentin during the Battle for Peronne. The next day, his body was carried to Herbecourt British Cemetery for burial.

**Memorial Details:**

- Memorial Panel, Herbecourt British Cemetery, France
- Honour Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honour Roll, Penrith Superior Public School
- Honour Roll, St Stephens Anglican Church, Penrith

**Sources:**

- [National Archives of Australia: B2455, COLLESS S](#)
- Australian War Memorial First World War Nominal Roll
- [Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour](#)
- Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- Penrith City Library biography files

**Trove:**

- [Nepean Times 16 September 1916, Pg 2, Col. 5](#)
- [Nepean Times 30 September 1916, Pg 3, Col. 5](#)
- [Nepean Times 27 January 1917, Pg 3, Col. 7](#)
- [Nepean Times 10 February 1917, Pg 3, Col. 1](#)
- [Nepean Times 16 March 1918, Pg 3, Col. 4](#)
- [Nepean Times 14 September 1918, Pg 3, Col. 7](#)
- [Nepean Times 21 September 1918, Pg 2 Col. 2](#)
- [Nepean Times 18 Jan 1919 Pg 4, Col. 2](#)