

Harry Mullis



Private Harry Mullis
54th Battalion, AIF
Service Number: 3680

Born: 16 February 1899, Penrith, NSW

Died: 31 August 1918, Barleux, France

Harry Mullis was born on 16 February 1899 to Richard Mullis and his second wife, Margaret Isabel (nee Rogers). Harry Mullis was baptised the following month in St Stephens Anglican Church at Penrith. His father, who had been born in Emu Plains, worked on the railway. By the early 1900s, the family were renting a cottage in Warwick Street Penrith. Young Mullis attended Penrith Superior Public School and received a bursary for Sydney High School. On 4 June 1915, he was appointed junior clerk in the Public Works Department. Mullis was also a keen footballer for the local Waratah Football Club. Before enlisting he had been in the cadets. By 1917, the family were living in Doonmore Street, Lemongrove.

Mullis enlisted on 10 August 1917 and allocated to the 10th Reinforcements, 54th Battalion. He left Sydney on the HMAT *Euripides* on 31 October and arrived in Devonport on 26 December 1917. He proceeded overseas to France in April 1918. In a letter home, published in the *Nepean Times* on 20 April 1918, Mullis was upbeat about his adventure so far. He also mentioned the numerous local men he had met, including Stan Colless, Laurie Stuckey, Cecil Fulton, Pat Haynes and Jack Shields.

By June, he was in hospital with trench fever. At the beginning of August, he was again sick and returned to his unit on 13 August. On 31 August, Mullis was killed at Barleux, about a mile from the River Somme. He was sitting reading a letter on top of a dugout with another soldier, O'Brien, when a shell landed close by and killed both. Concussion had killed Mullis. Both soldiers were buried in the field near where they fell. His unit then moved on with its attack on Peronne. His friend Fred Knight, who had arrived on the same ship, wrote that Mullis had resigned himself to the will of God.

In his will, dated 19 September 1917 he left his estate to his mother. By June 1919, the Mullis family had moved to Belmore Street Penrith where they named their home *Euripides*. In January 1920, the director of the Botanic Gardens in Sydney, Joseph Maiden, received a parcel of poppy seeds from France, sent to him by Ettie Rout, Secretary of the New Zealand Volunteer Sisters. The seeds had been gathered by the school children of Villers Bretonneux. Maiden sent a letter to the Sydney Morning Herald writing 'I shall be very pleased indeed to send a tiny packet to the relatives of New South Wales soldiers in accordance with this lady's wishes'. And so, Margaret Mullis responded and received a packet of poppy seeds.

Memorial Details:

- Assevillers New British Cemetery, France
- Honour Roll, Penrith Superior Public School
- Honour Roll, Memory Park, Penrith

Sources:

- [National Archives of Australia](#): MULLIS H
- [Australian War Memorial First World War Nominal Roll](#)
- [Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour](#)
- Penrith City Library biography files