

Richard Leslie Forrest

Private Richard Forrest

34th Battalion, AIF

Service Number: 3044

Born: 1893, Dubbo, NSW

Died: 12 October 1917, Passchendaele, Belgium

Richard Leslie Forrest was born at Dubbo in 1893, the son of Richard and Mary (Naughton) Forrest. The family moved to Penrith around 1900 and lived in Belmore Street. More children were born in Penrith and they completed their schooling at Penrith Public School. He had been before Penrith court a number of times for drunkenness and assault, the last being in May 1916. Forrest married Gladys May Hynes in 1914 in Sydney. In November 1915 Forrest enlisted at Sydney Town Hall, but was soon in trouble, being charged with disobedience and insolence.

On 7 January 1916, he was charged with desertion, being absent without leave from camp. At his wife's request Forrest was discharged on 15 April 1916. His general character was described as 'indifferent'. They had three children: John, Muriel (who died in June 1916), and Kenneth who was born in March 1917. Before his enlistment Forrest worked as a cook and machinist. Two other brothers, John and William also enlisted and returned to Australia. All three brothers received disciplinary action against them for several offences during their military service. Brother John was discharged and returned to Australia in March 1915 and was court martialled in December 1915.

Forrest enlisted a second time on 16 November 1916 at Dubbo and was allocated to the 7th Reinforcements, 34th Battalion. Although he had part of his index finger missing, he passed the medical. He embarked from Sydney on 24 January 1917 on the *HMAT Anchises* and disembarked at Devonport on 27 March. Throughout his time in England he was convicted of being AWOL, charged with refusing to obey orders and insolence. In August he was on his way to France and was taken on strength on 2 September.

On 12 October 1917, Forrest was found lying in a shell hole with bullet wounds. He was patched up but died on the stretcher while going back to an aid post. He was left on the stretcher. The Red Cross files reveal 'four men picked up Forrest to carry him back, but they did not get through'. Gladys Forrest moved away from Penrith to live in Newtown. She died in 1926 and her two surviving children were raised by their grandfather and his second wife Emma.

Memorial Details:

- Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium
- Honour Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honour Roll, Penrith Superior Public School

Sources:

- [National Archives of Australia](#): B2455, Forrest, R L
- [Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour](#)
- Australian War Memorial First World War Nominal Roll
- Penrith City Library Biography files