

## William Garner



**Private William Garner**  
**20th Battalion, AIF**  
**Service Number: 5944**

**Born:** 1891 St Marys, NSW

**Died:** 11 August 1918, Rainecourt, France

William (Willie) Garner was born at home at The Cedars, Great Western Road, Quarry Hill, St Marys in 1891, the 13<sup>th</sup> of 16 children born to William and Mary (nee Healey) Garner. Garner's father was elected the first mayor of St Marys in 1890 and was a well-known and respected local timber merchant. After attending Kingswood and St Marys Public Schools, Garner served an apprenticeship with James Bennett, the coachmaker at St Marys. He had been working as a coachbuilder for six years before enlisting. His send-off saw 200 local people from 'old St Marys families' gather to wish Garner 'God speed in true Australian fashion', according to the *Nepean Times*.

Garner enlisted on 26 June 1916 and was allocated to the 16th Reinforcements, 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion. He left Sydney aboard *HMAT Ceramic* on 7 October 1916 and disembarked at Plymouth, England on 21 November. When in England he met up with his brother Athol. Shortly afterwards, Garner embarked for the war front in France. By February 1917, he had joined his Battalion in the field. During 1917, the 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion was involved in advancing on German forces beyond the Hindenburg Line, and was one of four battalions to have success at Lagincourt. The Battalion took part in the second Battle of Bullecourt (3-4 May) and Menin Road (20-22 September) in Belgium. On 20 September 1917, Garner suffered shell wounds to his right thigh and was admitted to the 6th Australian Field Ambulance before being transferred to the 17th Casualty Clearing Station. The following day, he was transferred to the 2nd Canadian Field Hospital for treatment. After convalescing in Belgium he re-joined his unit on 22 November. On 21 January 1918, Garner went on a fortnight's leave to England before rejoining his unit in early February.

On 8 August 1918, the 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion took part in the Battle of Amiens. Garner was killed by machine gun fire during an advance by his company on 11 August 1918. He was buried near Rainecourt. After the war, the Imperial War Graves Commission were not successful in

locating his remains. Two brothers, Athol and Harold also enlisted. Athol was killed on 28 March 1918 and Harold returned to Australia in June 1919. By this time, the family were living in 'Athol', Third Avenue, Eastwood.

**Memorial Details:**

- Honour Roll, Villers-Bretonneux, France
- Honour Roll, St Mary Magdalene Anglican Church, St Marys
- Honour Roll, St Marys Public School
- Honour Roll, Victoria Park, St Marys

**Sources:**

- [National Archives Australia](#): B2455: GARNER W
- Australian War Memorial First World War Nominal Roll
- [Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour](#)
- Penrith City Library biography files

**Trove:**

- [Nepean Times 3 February 1917, Pg 4, Col 1](#)