

Thomas William Williams

Corporal Thomas Williams

20th Battalion, AIF

Service Number: 4305

Born: 1895, Penrith, NSW

Died: 20 September 1917, Polygon Wood, Belgium

Thomas William Williams was born in 1895 at Penrith, the third child and son of George and Julia (Cummins) Williams. The family lived on a 9-acre farm on the York Estate at Jamisontown and were members of the Methodist United Church at Jamisontown along with the Connell and Kerry families who also had sons killed on the Western front on the same day as Williams. Williams' mother Julia died in 1900 aged just 30 years old. Prior to his enlistment Williams had been a senior cadet and served for two years with the 41st Infantry at Lithgow. His father had also been a member of the local volunteer corps. In 1913, George Williams set up a shop in High Street as a plumber and galvanised iron worker and was licenced by Penrith Council to lay water pipes.

Williams enlisted on 23 October 1915 at Lithgow, was allocated to the 20th Battalion and embarked on 11 March 1916 aboard *HMAT Orsova*. After few months in Egypt, Williams proceeded to France, disembarking at Marseilles on 18 May. He joined his battalion on 6 August. Williams was appointed Lance Corporal on 13 January 1917 and then promoted to Corporal on 1 March. Two months later Williams was promoted to temporary Sergeant following the wounding of Sergeant Poole. On 13 May he was sent to the 1st Anzac Corps School in Aveluy in France for additional training.

Williams was on leave in England in August 1917 and returned on 1 September. He was killed in action on 20 September at Polygon Wood in Belgium. He was killed by a shell in the trench where he was waiting to go over the top. The same shell killed four other men.

At the time of his death Williams' father was working as a munitions worker for Australia at Cricklewood near London. He had enlisted under a joint Australian Commonwealth – Imperial Government scheme for providing skilled workers to British war industries. Under this scheme, volunteers would receive free passage to Britain, an allowance for travel time, a special allowance for the duration of service, and eventual repatriation to Australia. In Australia, Albert Williams received the news of his brother's death. Another brother Frederick joined up in November 1915 and served in France. He returned to Australia with his English bride in 1919.

Memorial Details:

- Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium
- Honour Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honour Roll, Penrith Superior Public School
- Honour Roll, Methodist Church, Penrith
- Honour Roll, Jamisontown United Church

Sources:

- [National Archives Australia](#): B2455 WILLIAMS T W
- [Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour](#)
- Penrith City Library Biography files