



OUR FALLEN



penrithcity.nsw.gov.au

"

His sacrifice is surely in the nature of an epic of honour and heroism which will be incorporated in his country's and districts annals

"

Nepean Times 27 October 1917, p. 3



1917 OUR FALLEN

These men have been remembered across our City in various memorials, on honor rolls in parks, churches, halls and schools. This is our tribute to their lives and sacrifice for their country.



66

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning,

We will remember them

"

For the Fallen, by Laurence Binyon

INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been compiled by Research Services staff at Penrith City Library. It is the third instalment of a project to document the fallen servicemen from the First World War that have been remembered on honor rolls and war memorials across the City of Penrith.

The men listed here fell in 1917 - either in battle or as a result of wounds or illness. Another booklet will be produced in 2018, and in 2019, a combined publication will bring the Our Fallen together, along with the stories of some of the men who returned and the local nurses who served.

The men are listed in order of the day they died.



ADAMS, PRIVATE HARRY

07 JANUARY 1917, AT SALISBURY HOSPITAL, WILTSHIRE, ENGLAND 13th Battalion, AIF Service number: 5972

Harry Adams was born on 20 April 1891 at St Marys, the son of Charles William and Elizabeth (nee Rope) Adams. The family lived in Gidley Street St Marys and Adams attended St Marys Public School. He was orphaned at the age of six and was raised by his father's sister, Selina Burgess. At the time of his enlistment on 6 March 1916, Adams was a labourer. He listed his sister, Nellie Dollin as next of kin.

Adams was allocated to A Company, 19th Reinforcements, 13th Battalion. On two occasions during training at Kiama, he was found guilty of being intoxicated and absent without leave (AWOL). On 22 August 1916, Adams embarked on *HMAT Wiltshire*, disembarking at Plymouth on 13 October 1916. He was posted to the 4th Training Battalion at Codford. Here he was again found guilty of being AWOL. On 21 December 1916, Adams was admitted to Codford General Hospital and transferred to the New Zealand Hospital with pneumonia and cerebrospinal meningitis. He was transferred to the Salisbury Isolation Hospital and died on 7 January 1917. Selina Burgess applied for a war pension and was initially refused because she had not been dependent on Adams at the time of his enlistment. This decision was later overturned and she received £1 per fortnight. She also received his war medals following the consent of his elder brother, George. Selina was living with her niece Nellie Dollin in Saddington Street St Marys when she died in 1923.

A touching memorial service was held for Adams on 28 January 1917 at St Mary Magdalene Church of England, St Marys. The *Nepean Times* published a letter from Adams in its 3 February 1917 issue: 'Dear Friends – your parcel. I thank you heartily for sending them to me. You know the boys heartily appreciate a letter or a parcel from home...The people here cannot make us chaps out, because we are so cheerful. Well, I would not mind being home for a few days at Christmas; but never mind, I can only hope to be back for the following one...It was quite a shock when I got the parcel this morning. I came in from outpost duty and one of my mates said to me "I say, Digger, there's a parcel up top for you!" We call everyone "Digger" here, as we have to dig ourselves in from being outed by Fritz."

Memorial Details:

- Strathford-Sub-Castle (St Lawrence) Churchyard, Wiltshire England
- Honor Roll, Victoria Park, St Marys
- Honor Roll, St Marys Mechanics Institute
- Honor Roll, St Marys Public School

Penrith City Library June 2017 | 2

CHEESMAN, PRIVATE REGINALD HUGH

21 JANUARY 1917, AT KITCHENER HOSPITAL, BRIGHTON, ENGLAND

45th Battalion, AIF Service number: 2147

Reginald Hugh Cheesman was born in 1888 in Brighton, Sussex, England, the son of John and Harriet Cheesman. After attending the Central School, Church Street Brighton, Cheesman moved to London for a time before arriving in Australia in 1912 working on a passenger ship as a general servant. He had also spent five years in the merchant navy service as a cadet steward. From 1913, Cheesman was employed as a cleaner at the Penrith locomotive depot.

Cheesman enlisted on 22 February 1916 and was allocated to the 45th Battalion. He undertook training at Bathurst and embarked aboard *HMAT Wiltshire* on 22 August 1916, arriving in Plymouth England on 13 October 1916. Cheesman was then sent to 3 Command Depot for additional training on 16 October. During a visit to see his parents in Brighton, Cheesman fell ill. On 21 January 1917, he was admitted to Kitchener's Military Hospital, Brighton with endocarditis and pericarditis. On admission, he stated that he had difficulty in breathing on exertion during the past two years. His condition had worsened in England and he had been unable to perform normal military duties. He died the same day. He had written a will in which he left his estate to his parents.

At the Nepean Picture Theatre, High Street, Penrith on 19 May 1917 a ceremony of unveiling photographs of five deceased soldiers – ex-railway employees – who enlisted for the war while in the employ of the Railway Department, was performed by the Railway Commissioners. The photographs unveiled are those of the late Corporal Le Sueur, Privates Syme, Cheesman, Paxton, and Collum. Cheesman's portrait bore the inscription – 'Hung as a token of esteem by the railway men of Penrith'. The photographs were afterwards hung in the School of Arts. In 1919 his name was also inscribed on the Honor Roll for the Loyal Alexander Lodge in the Masonic Hall, Penrith.

- Brighton (Lewes Road) Borough Cemetery, Sussex England
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Loyal Alexander (MU) Lodge, Penrith

COLLUM, PRIVATE JOHN STEEN CLARE

28 FEBRUARY 1917, AT MALT TRENCH, FRANCE 19th Battalion, AIF

Service number: 4680

John Steen Clare Collum was born on 23 May 1890 at Cooma, the eldest son of Robert and Eliza Collum. The family moved to the York Estate in about 1894. After leaving school, he was employed at the Penrith Locomotive Sheds. On 7 June 1910, Collum began employment as a cleaner at the sheds and on 25 July 1911 he was appointed a fuelman. Two of Collum's brothers also served in the war, Forbes (Wes) in France and Fletcher in Egypt. They had also experienced the Gallipoli campaign and returned to Australia in December 1918.

Having failed to obtain enlistment in the Light Horse on several occasions, Collum enlisted on 11 January 1916 and was allocated to the 19th Battalion. He left Australia on 14 April aboard *HMAT Ceramic* and arrived in Egypt on 19 May. On 7 June he had arrived in Plymouth. After training with the 5th Training Battalion in England, Collum arrived in France on 9 September and was taken on strength with the 19th Battalion on 26 September when the battalion was just completing operations in the Pozieres area. In October, Collum was suffering from syphilis and was admitted to the 39th Casualty Clearing Station. He rejoined his unit on 9 January 1917, but was again hospitalised from 17 to 27 January.

Collum was killed in action on 28 February 1917. According to Private Frost, Collum was alongside him on a light machine gun (B Company) when he saw Collum killed. Frost gave the location as Malt Trench (Warlencourt), which had just been taken in a bombing raid near Le Barque. He was buried near the trench, about 200 yards off the Bapaume Road. A cross was erected by the men of the 19th Battalion. Collum was described in the *Nepean Times* on 24 March 1917 as '... of fine stalwart physique, a typical Australian, and reliable to the last cartridge and after'. On 19 May 1917 at the Nepean Picture Theatre, High Street, Penrith photographs of five fallen soldiers were unveiled: Corporal Le Sueur, Privates J W Syme, Reg Cheesman, Robert Paxton, and John Collum. The Penrith District Band played 'an appropriate musical programme'. The photographs afterwards were hung in the School of Arts in Penrith.

Two of Collum's brothers also served in the war, Forbes (Wes) in France and Fletcher in Egypt. They had also experienced the Gallipoli campaign and returned to Australia in December 1918.

Memorial Details:

- Honor Roll, Villers-Bretonneux, France
- Honor Roll, Jamisontown United Church
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Penrith Superior Public School
- Honor Roll, Methodist Church, Penrith

Penrith City Library June 2017 | 4



PURDON, PRIVATE LESLIE FREDERICK

18 MARCH 1917, AT WARLENCOURT, FRANCE 20th Battalion, AIF Service number: 5393

Leslie Frederick Purdon was born at O'Connell near Bathurst on 7 November 1878 to Henry and Mary Ann Purdon. The family, who originated from Ireland, had lived on their property 'Hillford' since the 1860s. Purdon married widow Annie Christina Neal (formerly Mackie) in 1911 in Granville. By 1913, they were living in Penrith in Riley Street where Purdon recorded his occupation as a farmer. By the time of his enlistment in 1916, Purdon and his wife and her children were living in Carlton Terrace, High Street Penrith.

Purdon enlisted at Bathurst on 8 March 1916 listing his occupation as a fettler on the railways. He was 39 years old and had been deemed fit for service by Dr Higgins at Penrith on 22 February 1916. Purdon was allocated to 14th Reinforcements, 20th Battalion. He left Sydney on the *HMAT Wiltshire* arriving in Plymouth on 13 October 1916. By December he was in France.

On 18 March 1917 Purdon was accidently wounded in the abdomen with a rifle grenade. A grenade prematurely exploded killing two men and wounding seven others. He was taken to the 6th Australian Field Ambulance but died of his wounds. His father died a few days later in O'Connell, never knowing of his son's death. Two other brothers were also fighting on the Western Front.

In 1922 the Australian Graves Services could find no trace of his grave site. By 1923 Annie had moved to Burwood and later Kogarah. She died in 1947.

- Honor Roll, Villers-Bretonneaux, France
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Presbyterian Church, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Penrith Superior Public School

BENNETT, PRIVATE LIONEL WILLIAM (AKA WILLIAM EDWARD JOHN SARGENT)

02 APRIL 1917, AT BULLECOURT, FRANCE

3rd and 55th Battalion, AIF Service number: 3006A

William Edward John Sargent was born about 1893 at Whiteside near North Pine, Queensland, the son of John and Esther Sargent. After completing his schooling, Sargent worked as a clerk with the Queensland Railways for three years. When he moved to the Mulgoa area around the beginning of 1914 he was employed by Mrs Hinks. He was a member of the Mulgoa Men's Club. They organised a send-off in his honor presenting him with a wristlet watch. At the same time, gifts were made to him from the local branch of the Red Cross Society.

Sargent enlisted on 17 August 1915 under the name Lionel William Bennett. On his enlistment form, he noted his next of kin was his mother, Esther. Sargent was allocated to the 10th Reinforcements, 3rd Battalion and sailed for Egypt aboard *HMAT Warilda* on 8 October 1915. He remained in Egypt undergoing training until February 1916 when he was transferred to the 55th Battalion as part of the restructure of the AIF.

On 29 June 1916, Sargent embarked for Marseilles. His battalion entered the frontline trenches for the first time on 12 July and fought its first major battle at Fromelles a week later. Although in reserve, the 55th was quickly committed to the attack and eventually played a crucial role, forming the rearguard for the 14th Brigade's withdrawal. In early 1917 the 55th Battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line. Sargent was killed in action on 2 April 1917 and was buried under the name of Bennett.

At the end of the war, Sargent's mother attempted to have his medals issued in his real name. Her request was denied as Army policy stated that medals were issued in the name under which the soldier served, unless changed by Statutory Declaration before discharge or death. However, the Army amended his service record to read 'Stated to be William Edward John Sargent'.

- Lebucquiere Communal Cemetery Extension, France
- Honor Roll, St Thomas Anglican Church, Mulgoa



GARDINER, PRIVATE ALBERT GEORGE

10 APRIL 1917, AT ROUEN, FRANCE 53rd Battalion, AIF Service number: 2531

Albert George Gardiner was born on 26 October 1896, the fourth child of John and Martha Hannah (nee Turner) Gardiner. He was educated at the State Public School, Baulkham Hills. Albert served in the Senior Cadets. At the outbreak of the war, Albert was living with his father on a farm at Dora Creek near Lake Macquarie. On enlistment he stated he was working as a fisherman. Albert's brother, John William Gardiner, also served during the war and was killed on 22 August 1916 in France.

Albert enlisted in February 1916 and was allocated to the 53rd Battalion. He sailed for the war zone aboard *HMAT Mashobra* on 14 September 1916 and arrived in Plymouth on 2 November. After a period of training in England he was sent to France, joining his battalion in the Somme Valley. In March 1917, the 53rd Battalion participated in the Allied advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line. On 14 March 1917, Gardiner was admitted to hospital with severe gunshot wounds to the back. After an initial period where his condition improved, he worsened and died on 10 April 1917 at St Sever.

Gardiner was described in the Nepean Times as a robust and vigorous type of young Australian. The Nepean Times reported on 28 April 1917 'It has been the painful experience of some families in Penrith to mourn the loss of several members through the sombre agency of the world war; and we regret to say that the Gardiner family, living in Union Lane, Penrith, are amongst those so cruelly chastened and bereaved. The sad news of the death of Private Albert George Gardiner, who succumbed from wounds received about three weeks ago, we understand, was conveyed to his relatives on 23rd April (Monday last). His brother (Private J W Gardiner) met, likewise, the soldier's heroic death, having fallen in action some seven months ago'.

- St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, France
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Penrith Superior Public School



GIDDY, PRIVATE GEORGE HENRY

10 APRIL 1917, AT POZIERES, FRANCE 2nd Battalion, AIF Service number: 6265

George Henry Giddy was born in 1896, the second youngest son of Esdras and Julia (nee Quinn) Giddy. The family lived on the York Estate, Penrith. Giddy received his schooling at Penrith Public School. His mother Julia (daughter of John Quinn of Jamisontown) died in 1910 and was buried in Sir John Jamison Catholic Cemetery. By 1914 the family had moved to Commandant Hill near West Kempsey, NSW. His father was a timber and sleeper cutter. On enlistment Giddy was working as a labourer. His older brother, John James Giddy served with the 8th Machine Gun Company from 2 September 1915 until his return to Australia on 27 July 1917.

As Giddy was under 21, he had to obtain his father's permission to join the AIF. He enlisted at Victoria Barracks Sydney on 27 April 1916 and served with the Dubbo Depot Battalion until 15 June 1916 when he joined the 20th Reinforcements, 2nd Battalion. He sailed for the war zone on 9 September 1916 aboard the *HMAT Euripides* and disembarked in Plymouth England on 28 October 1916. On 21 November 1916, while stationed at No 3 Camp Fovant, Giddy was found guilty of being absent without leave for several hours. He was sentenced to 7 days confinement to barracks and forfeited one day's pay. On 23 November, he marched out to the Command Depot at Denton and marched into 1st Training Battalion at Larkhill on 8 December 1916.

On 15 February 1917, Giddy proceeded to France aboard the *SS Victoria* and was taken on the 2nd Battalion's strength on 10 March 1917. Giddy's time at the front would be shortlived. In April 1917, the 2nd Battalion was advancing toward the Hindenburg Line. Giddy was wounded in action on 9 April 1917 after receiving gunshot wounds in the back. He received treatment at the 3rd Field Ambulance before being operated on at the 3rd Casualty Clearing Station. He died the following day.

- Pozieres British Cemetery Ovillers-La-Boisselle, France
- Honor Roll, St Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church
- Honor Roll, Penrith Superior Public School
- Honor Roll, War Memorial, Kempsey



STUCKEY, SAPPER VICTOR FRANK

10 APRIL 1917, AT BEUGNY, FRANCE 2nd Field Company Engineers, AIF Service number: 10944

Victor Stuckey was born on 1 May 1898 at Camden to Albert and Amy Stuckey. The family moved to Penrith in about 1909 where Albert Stuckey established his boot repair business. They lived in Warwick Street, Penrith. After leaving school Stuckey worked briefly at Penrith Post Office. In 1913, he found a position as a warehouseman with J and N Phillips and Co in Sydney. Stuckey's brother Lorrie, who served with the 30th Battalion, enlisted in October 1916 and returned to Australia at the end of the war.

Stuckey enlisted on 6 April 1916 and was allocated to the 9th Field Company Engineers. Prior to his embarkation on the *HMAT Ajana* on 5 July, 1916, he received several presentations. His employer gave him a luminous wristlet watch and he received a Brownie camera, money belt, fountain pen, etc from his friends. On 28 April 1917 the *Nepean Times* published a poem Stuckey had written on his voyage to England –

Though leagues of sea divide us; And your face I cannot see; Yet always please remember There is one who thinks of thee

Stuckey arrived at Plymouth, England on 31 August, and wrote of his impressions of England, and especially of London. After several months training in England he was sent with other Australian units on 8 February 1917 overseas to Etaples, missing his brother's arrival by a few days. Stuckey was taken on strength with the 2nd Field Company Engineers on 21 February. In one of the last letters he wrote home, Stuckey mentioned having met other local men including Sergeant Fred Earp and Corporal Reg McLean. On 10 April he was killed instantly by a shell while walking to his digs at Beugny and was buried the following day near the dressing station. An oak cross was placed on his grave. News of his death was conveyed to his bereaved parents and family by Reverend Tarn. In March 1918, Stuckey's father wrote to the military authorities regarding his 'Dear Lad' and of his disappointment that his son's watch and personal belongings taken from his body had disappeared and other belongings sent to him had been 'eaten to peaces by rats or mice'. Albert died in 1923. In October 1917, Stuckey's nephew named his son Victor Stuckey. He was killed over Germany in a bombing raid in 1944.

- Bancourt British Cemetery, Bapaume, France
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Methodist Church, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Penrith Superior Public School

SULLIVAN, PRIVATE REGINALD WILLIAM

12 APRIL 1917, AT HERMES, FRANCE

2nd Battalion, AIF Service number: 6080

Reginald William Sullivan was born in 1889 at Burwood to Benjamin Ezzy and Mary Ann (nee Melville) Sullivan. His father was a well-respected Richmond auctioneer. The family, originally from Richmond, spent some time at Lake Macquarie and Maitland before returning to Richmond around 1917. The Sullivan family were well known for their association with community life and public affairs. Before enlisting Sullivan had been a porter at Penrith Railway Station. His uncle was schoolmaster at Regentville Public School.

Sullivan enlisted on 15 September 1915 with his friend Harry Haylen and was allocated to 2nd Battalion. He underwent training before he embarked on the *HMAT Wiltshire* on 22 August 1916, disembarking on 13 October at Plymouth, England. After some officer training Sullivan proceeded to France on 13 December where he joined his battalion at Etaples.

In the early hours of 9 April 1917 Sullivan was badly wounded by a bullet to the chest during a charge in the taking of the town of Hermes. He was taken to Pozieres Casualty Clearing Station where he died a few days later on 12 April. His friend Private Alder was also wounded and they lay together in the hospital. When asked how he was Sullivan replied 'not too bad'. The next day, his answer was 'not too good'.

- Pozieres British Cemetery Ovillers-La-Boisselle, France
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Penrith Superior Public School

MCLEAN, CORPORAL REGINALD DONALD JOSHUA

15 APRIL 1917, AT LAGNICOURT, FRANCE

17th Battalion, AIF Service number: 4492

Reginald Donald Joshua McLean was born on 23 October 1895 to Police Sergeant Samuel and Colina (nee Burgess) McLean at Liverpool NSW. He attended Penrith Superior Public School, and after successfully completing the Bankers Institution Examination, McLean was employed by the Government Savings Bank of NSW. He worked at the Head Office and at the Penrith branch when it first opened, before relieving at various branches across the state. Sergeant McLean was posted to Emu Plains Police Station and later Penrith. The family lived at Emu Plains. McLean enlisted on 3 January 1916 and was allocated to the 17th Battalion. Prior to leaving for the front he was presented by the officers and staff at Head Office (Savings Bank) with a wristlet watch (suitably inscribed).

McLean embarked on the *HMAT Nestor* on 9 April 1916. One of his companions was Vic Magrath, who served with McLean in the trenches. McLean was appointed acting corporal and after a period of time in Egypt was posted to the 5th Training Battalion at Rollestone, England. In September 1916, McLean was posted to France, joined his battalion and spent his 21st birthday in the trenches. The battalion had recently moved from Pozieres to a position on the Western Front. The *Nepean Times* published a letter from McLean on 30 September 1916 in which he commented on a young Belgian girl. He wrote 'the plight ... that left her homeless, are enough to make one's heart break in a manner. It affected me in that way. I thought about my own dear little sisters at home, safe and happy in Australia, and saw the difference in the hapless state of this little girl, separated by the cruel hand of war from home and kindred... So I have come to the conclusion that anyone who is fit and able to fight, and does not join in and do his bit for his fellows and the Empire, is made of very poor stuff...'

On 6 December 1916, McLean was admitted to hospital in Amiens with influenza and was later transferred to Camiers. In March 1917 he rejoined his battalion which was advancing on German forces that had retreated to the Hindenburg Line. The Germans launched a counter-stroke in the Lagnicourt area at dawn on 15 April. It was during the counter attack that McLean was killed in action.

- Villers-Bretonneux, France
- War Memorial, Emu Plains
- Honor Roll, Emu Plains Public School
- Honor Roll, Presbyterian Church, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Commonwealth Bank, Martin Place, Sydney



EATON, LANCE CORPORAL FREDERICK GEORGE

19 APRIL 1917, AT GAZA, PALESTINE 6th Light Horse, 1st Anzac Camel Battalion, AIF Service number: 1384

Frederick George Eaton was born on 19 April 1893 at Luddenham, the youngest son of Charles and Mary Ann (nee Hayes) Eaton. Eaton was employed as a labourer and had served as a member of the Luddenham Light Horse for six years prior to the outbreak of war. He was a noted horseman and athlete.

Eaton enlisted at Warwick Farm and was allocated to the 11th Reinforcements, 6th Australian Light Horse. He left Sydney on 31 October 1915 aboard the *SS Hawkes Bay*. He undertook training in Egypt and joined the 2nd Light Horse unit at Serapeum. In June 1916 Eaton required hospitalisation and was admitted to the 2nd Light Horse Field Ambulance before being transferred to the Scotland Horse Field Ambulance at Port Said. He was later transported aboard the *HS Miagara* to the 1st Australian Dermatological Hospital where he remained until the end of July 1916. He was intermittently quarantined until the end of August. On discharge Eaton was transferred to the Imperial Camel Corps based at Abbassia. In November 1916 he was transferred to the Anzac Reserve Depot Company and was promoted to acting lance corporal on 9 January 1917.

On 8 March 1917 Eaton was transferred to 1st Battalion, No 2 Company of the Camel Brigade. His unit was then sent to Palestine. Eaton was listed as missing in action on 19 April 1917 while fighting against Turkish and Bedouin forces during the second Battle for Gaza in Palestine. Eaton's relatives were notified that he was wounded in action. On 2 July 1917, Eaton's father wrote to the military authorities asking about his son's whereabouts as word had been received from one of Eaton's mates about his death. A court of inquiry held on 19 August 1917 found that Eaton was killed in action on 19 April 1917. The *Nepean Times* reported in its issue of 15 September 1917 that Eaton 'underwent a period of strenuous training in Egypt, and took part in a number of engagements with the Turks, assisted by the Nomadic Arab tribes, and was in the battle of Romani. ... He had written home frequently, recounting his various experiences in Egypt and Palestine; and had a thorough Australian loathing of the sultry Oriental heat, immemorial sands, flies and ethnic customs of Ancient Egypt. In writing home he remarked that he had received no letters for six months, but then received about 50 in one batch, "a feast," which he observed, "made up for the famine" that had passed'.

- Jerusalem Memorial, Jerusalem War Cemetery, Israel
- Honor Roll, Methodist Church, Luddenham



LUKE, PRIVATE SAMUEL HENRY

21 APRIL 1917, AT VAULX-VRAUCOURT, FRANCE 4th Pioneer Battalion, AIF Service number: 4830

Samuel Henry Luke was born in 1877 at St Marys, the son of Robert and Elizabeth Ann (nee Morphett) Luke. The family lived at Mamre where Elizabeth's husband worked. Luke's father died in 1887 leaving his wife to care for their 8 children, the youngest just a year old. In 1896, she married John Delaney and had a further 3 children. John Delaney did contract work for St Marys Council and worked for James Hall at Mamre. Before enlisting, Luke worked as a labourer in the St Marys district and lived with his family near Erskine Park. On 10 January 1914, Luke was involved in a family tragedy. Luke was travelling home from St Marys with his mother and sister, Emily Stonestreet in their sulky. A strong hot wind was blowing and a spark from his pipe set Emily's thin print dress on fire and quickly inflamed her. They had been in St Marys to register her third child, a three week old baby. Emily died that day in Nepean Hospital. A year later, almost to the day, their mother Elizabeth Ann Delaney died.

Luke enlisted at Ashfield on 11 November 1915 after joining the Coo-ee March from Gilgandra to Sydney when it passed through St Marys. He was allocated to the 15th Reinforcements, 13th Battalion and left Sydney aboard *HMAT Star of England* on 8 March 1916. He listed his eldest brother James Luke of St Marys as his next of kin.

Luke disembarked in Egypt on 11 April 1916. Two weeks later, Luke transferred to the 4th Pioneer Battalion, Australian Fourth Division. In June 1916, Luke embarked aboard *HMAT Scotian* and disembarked at Marseilles bound for the Western Front. During 1916 the 4th Pioneer Battalion took part in operations at Pozieres and Flers.

On 21 April 1917 during the First Battle of Bullecourt the 4th Pioneer Battalion was constructing tramways in the vicinity of Vaulx–Vraucourt, France when Luke was killed by a high explosive shell. He was buried in the Vaulx Hill Cemetery.

- Vaulx Hill Cemetery, France
- Honor Roll, Victoria Park, St Marys



EARP, PRIVATE FREDERICK CLARENCE

O5 MAY 1917, AT NOREUIL, FRANCE 3rd Battalion, AIF Service number: 3752

Frederick Clarence Earp was born in 1893 at Penrith, the son of James and Ada (nee Lawson) Earp. After completing his schooling, he was employed as a shop assistant probably in his father's grocery business in High Street, Earp Bros. He had also served with the Senior Cadets.

Earp enlisted on 4 August 1915 and was allocated to the 12th Reinforcements, 3rd Battalion. After preliminary training in Australia, Earp embarked on *HMAT Medic* on 7 February 1916 and arrived in Egypt later that month. On 29 March 1916, Earp was transferred to the Western Front arriving at the 1st Australian Divisional Base Depot at Etaples on 4 April 1916. He joined his unit in the field on 24 May 1916. In July 1916, during the 3rd Battalion's first major action at Pozieres in the Somme Valley, Earp suffered wounds to both his arms. He was admitted to No 11 General Hospital at Camiers on 27 July 1916 and later transferred to England for further treatment.

On 13 December 1916, Earp returned to France. On 2 March 1917, he was promoted to acting sergeant until 1 April 1917 when he rejoined his unit on the Western Front near Bullecourt. Earp was posted missing on 5 May 1917. According to the Australian Red Cross Files, Earp was last seen about midnight while on a fatigue party to the front line at Bullecourt. At the time of his disappearance, the front lines were being shelled by the enemy. The 3rd Battalion were later informed that Earp had been killed in a communication trench in front of Noreuil and buried in the same spot. On 3 June 1917, the AIF declared Earp to be killed in action on 5 May 1917.

- Honor Roll, Villers-Bretonneux, France
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Penrith Superior Public School
- Honor Roll, St Stephens Anglican Church, Penrith



SKELTON, PRIVATE WALTER

05 MAY 1917, AT BULLECOURT, FRANCE 3rd Battalion, AIF Service number: 6357

Walter Skelton was born in 1888, the son of George and Fannie Skelton at Epsom, Surrey, England. He is believed to have migrated to Australia in 1908 and worked as a tally clerk and surveyor for A T Goldsmith of Richmond.

Skelton enlisted on 1 May 1916 and after serving with D Company at the Dubbo Depot Battalion, was allocated to the 20th Reinforcements, 3rd Battalion at Liverpool Army Camp. On 7 August 1916, Skelton married Matilda (Lilly), the daughter of Robert Shaw of Castlereagh, just before he sailed for overseas service. On 9 September, he sailed aboard *HMAT Euripides* for England. After arrival in England in October 1916, Skelton went into training for three months before being sent to the Western Front at Etaples in February 1917.

He was taken on strength by the 3rd Battalion on 11 March 1917. On 11 May 1917, Skelton was listed as missing in action. A fellow soldier, Private Bellinger was in the same trench as Skelton at Bullecourt. The troops were too far forward to receive supplies and the German troops drove them along their trench. When Bellinger last saw Skelton, he was unwounded on the fire step of the trench. Stretcher bearer Private Byrnes found him badly wounded by a bomb. He was brought out of the trench and died about an hour later. His body was then placed on a parapet. Skelton was described severally as a tall thin man, dark with a moustache and always wore glasses. He was believed to have been buried in Maricourt Wood cemetery near Vaulx-Vraucourt. Fred Earp was also buried here. Skelton was declared killed in action by a Court of Inquiry held on 27 October 1917.

Skelton's name appears on his parents' headstone in Ashley Road Municipal cemetery in Epsom, Surrey, England. His wife Matilda never remarried and continued to live in the Lower Castlereagh district, close to her family. She died in 1957.

- Honor Roll, Villers Bretonneux, France
- War Memorial, Smith Park, Castlereagh



BUNYAN, PRIVATE IRWIN

11 MAY 1917, AT BOULOGNE, FRANCE 19th Battalion, AIF Service number: 4673

Irwin Bunyan was born at Emu Plains, the ninth child and sixth son of William and Sarah Ann (nee Poll) Bunyan and was known as 'Mick'. After attending Emu Plains Public School he was employed by Bartlett at Emu Plains. He was an enthusiastic cricketer and footballer and a good rifle shot and was a member of the Light Horse unit at Penrith. On the eve of leaving for the Western Front, Bunyan was presented with a money belt and other mementos by the people of Emu Plains.

Bunyan enlisted on 27 January 1916 at Casula. His brother Edward and two cousins enlisted at the same time. Edward (Edwin) was killed on the Western Front in October 1917 and a cousin, Leslie Victor Poll, who served with the 36th Battalion, was killed on 3 October 1917.

Bunyan was posted to the 12th Reinforcements, 19th Battalion and left Australia aboard *HMAT Ceramic* on 4 April 1916, arriving in Alexandria on 29 May 1916. He then travelled to England aboard *RMS Megantic*, arriving in Portsmouth on 7 June 1916. After several months training Bunyan joined his unit in France. In December 1916, Bunyan was hospitalised for scabies and returned to his unit on 9 January 1917. In February he was sent to Lewis Gun School. On 3 March 1917, Bunyan was wounded in the mouth. He was hospitalised and rejoined his unit on 19 March 1917. At the time of his injury, the 19th Battalion was involved in action against the Hindenburg Line at Bullecourt.

On 3 May 1917, Bunyan suffered severe wounds to the chest during a charge at Bullecourt. He lay in a shell hole for three days and sustained further shrapnel wounds. Stretcher-bearers were unable to rescue him owing to German fire. Finally, he was transported to the 3rd Canadian Stationary Hospital at Boulogne on 10 May. His brother Edward was with him at the dressing station. Although Bunyan underwent surgery on admission, he died from his wounds on the following day.

- Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, France
- War Memorial, Emu Plains
- Honor Roll, Emu Plains Public School
- Memorial plaque, St Paul's Anglican Church, Emu Plains



PECK, GUNNER CECIL BERTRAM VALENTINE

11 MAY 1917, AT ETAPLES, FRANCE 10th Field Artillery Brigade, AIF Service number: 9962

Cecil Bertram Valentine Peck was born on 31 December 1895 at The Rock in the Wagga Wagga district, the son of Henry and Charlotte (nee Hitchcock) Peck. Peck's father was a teacher. He was transferred to the Macleay River district, first to Stuarts Point and later Pelican Island. Young Cecil completed his schooling at Pelican Island Public School. Before enlisting, he was employed as a storeman in a local business in Kempsey. Around 1912, Peck's father was transferred to Luddenham Public School.

Peck enlisted on 13 October 1915, citing his father as next of kin. After a period of training, he embarked on *HMAT Berrima* for Egypt on 17 December 1915. After arrival in Egypt, Peck was assigned to the Divisional Ammunition Column. On 13 April 1916, he was transferred to the 10th Field Artillery Brigade as a gunner with the Brigade Ammunition Column at Serapeum before being transferred to the 37th Battery of the 10th Field Artillery Brigade on 22 May 1916.

On 13 June 1916 Peck arrived in Marseilles, destined for the Western Front. He was wounded on 6 May 1917 and admitted to the 23rd Field Ambulance. He was transferred to the 45th Casualty Clearing Station and on the following day to the Liverpool Merchants Mobile Hospital at Etaples. Peck died on 11 May 1917 from his wounds. The local Methodist minister at Luddenham conveyed the sad news to his parents.

Peck left his property at The Rock to his father and his belongings to Lyal Weslie Judd, his sister's son. In his kit, he had among other things, Egyptian stamps, 'foreign' coins and a badge from a German helmet.

By 1920, Henry Peck was living at 'Ellerslie' in Warwick Street Hornseywood Estate, Penrith. He died in 1939 at Parramatta.

- Etaples Military Cemetery, France
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Methodist Church, Luddenham



MCGUINNESS, PRIVATE ROBERT WILLIAM

26 MAY 1917, AT BULLECOURT, FRANCE 53rd Battalion, AIF Service number: 2213A

Robert William McGuinness was born in about 1883 in Workington, Cumberland, England. Before he had migrated to Australia in about 1911, McGuinness had served two years with the 3rd Borders Regiment and another two years with the 4th Lancashire Artillery. When he enlisted McGuinness had been a railway employee, working as a senior porter stationed at Emu Plains Railway Station. He listed his elder sister Elizabeth Ellen Wilson, who was living in Lithgow, as his next of kin. His parents had died before he enlisted.

McGuinness enlisted on 28 February 1916 at Bathurst. On 11 July, he embarked on the *HMAT Vestalia* for Devonport England arriving on 9 September. On 5 December, he proceeded overseas to France and joined his battalion on 21 December.

McGuinness was wounded in action on 22 May and admitted to the 3rd Australian Casualty Clearing Station where he died on 26 May. On 24 July Catherine Fallon of Brownlow Hill near Camden enquired about McGuinness and how he died and where. She was informed he had died of his wounds.

His pension and war medals were to be sent to his sister in Lithgow. However, she had moved address by 1922 and could not be located. A dispute ensued between McGuinness' stepmother and his sisters, one in England and the other in NSW. McGuinness' mementos (plaque and scroll) had been erroneously sent to the stepmother as his next of kin. His sister in NSW was his closest next of kin and she requested the return of the mementos, but the stepmother refused to give them up.

- Grevillers British Cemetery, France
- War Memorial, Emu Plains
- Honor Roll, Emu Plains Public School

CLISSOLD, PRIVATE CHARLES ALBERT

O7 JUNE 1917, AT MESSINES, BELGIUM 36th Battalion, AIF

Service number: 1809

Charles Albert Clissold was the only son of George and Mary (nee Innes) Clissold. He grew up on his parents' farm at Emu Heights and attended Emu Plains and Penrith Public Schools. After leaving school, Clissold was employed at the Emu Gravel Works. Prior to his enlistment he was working as a horse driver. Clissold also served with the Senior Cadets. His father George had enlisted in September 1915 and left for England in April 1916.

Clissold enlisted on 12 March 1916 with his parents' consent as he was under 21. He listed his mother as his next of kin. Young Clissold left Australia aboard *HMAT Port Sydney* on 4 September 1916 and arrived at Portsmouth on 20 December 1916, a month after the death of his father on 19 November. On 11 December 1916, Clissold's sister Bessie helped turn the first sods for the foundations of the new Penrith Public School in High Street. A week later the *Nepean Times* reported on her father's death in France. Sadly, Charles Clissold would die within days of the official opening of the school.

In January 1917, Clissold joined the 36th Battalion at Etaples. On 7 June 1917, the 36th Battalion took part in the Battle of Messines and Clissold was killed in action on the same day.

The Nepean Times reported his death on 14 July 1917 stating '...the relentless deadliness of the grim Armageddon is being almost daily made the more painfully evident by the many additions to the list of Australian heroes who have fallen in battle; and to those householders who have lost not only their breadwinner (father) but also their only son, as in the case of the Clissold family of Emu Plains, the direful ravages of and the anguish caused by the war, is surely exceedingly bitter testimony of the most appalling struggle in the history of the world'.

- Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium
- Honor Roll, Emu Plains Public School
- War Memorial, Emu Plains
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith



HUGHES, CORPORAL LUKE

07 JUNE 1917, AT MESSINES, BELGIUM 45th Battalion, AIF Service number: 3339

Luke Hughes was born near Molong at Cheeseman's Creek in 1894 to Luke and Elizabeth Hughes. His parents ran a number of hotels before settling at Hilltop Farm on the York Estate in Penrith. Hughes attended St Joseph's Catholic School and afterwards worked as a blacksmith and labourer.

Hughes enlisted on 27 July 1915. He was allocated to the 13th Battalion and left Sydney for Egypt on the HMAT Port Lincoln on 13 October 1915. He was stationed at Zeitoun on the outskirts of Cairo. In March 1916 he was transferred to the 45th Battalion. In his letter published in the Nepean Times on 17 June 1916, Hughes wrote that he had spent his time in Cairo visiting the old city and the pyramids, climbing to the top of one of them. He thought the great bazaar 'a wonderful sight'. He mentioned 'the wickedness that is to be seen in Cairo, and that 'our Australian boys who tolerate these infamous houses, and some of them do – poor fools. I am pleased to say that they are very much in the minority'. While in Egypt he had managed to go to Mass on Sundays. Anzac Day was spent doing water sports in the canal with the generals and the Prince of Wales looking on.

In June, his battalion proceeded to France, disembarking at Marseilles. Hughes was appointed lance corporal in the field in July and in the following March was promoted to corporal. Hughes was killed by a sniper while running towards a shell hole during the Battle for Messines Ridge in Belgium. He lived long enough to say goodbye to his mates. He was buried close to where he died by a group of New Zealand soldiers. At the Red Cross inquiry into his death, Sergeant Lamborn described Hughes as a 'real good soldier and a very decent young fellow'. They were nearly always together and they were 'close chums'.

Hughes's brother George also enlisted and served through the war, at Gallipoli and Palestine. He returned in 1919 and lived the rest of his life in the Penrith and Springwood districts. His name appears alongside his brother on our local memorials.

- Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Penrith Superior Public School
- Honor Roll, St Nicholas Catholic Church, Penrith



BANNISTER, PRIVATE RUPERT THEODORE ALGERNON

08 JUNE 1917, AT MESSINES, BELGIUM 9th Machine Gun Company, AIF Service number: 2036

Rupert Bannister was born in Penrith on 4 July 1889 and baptised at St Stephens Anglican Church Penrith. His parents, William and Mary Bannister had migrated from Wigan, Lancashire in 1883 and settled in Penrith. William worked as a fireman for the NSW Railway Department and his mother sold milk from her dairy to local residents. They lived in Brown Street, Penrith and also had 9 acres on the York Estate. Bannister attended Penrith Public School along with his siblings. In 1900 William and Mary divorced with William citing railway man Joseph Grundy as co-respondent in the divorce case. In 1905, Mary Bannister married local man David Webb (son of William and Mary Webb). David Webb joined the AIF in 1915 and served overseas until 1917. During that time Mary Webb lived in Belmore Street Penrith.

At the time of his enlistment, Bannister was working for the Maunder family at Duri, south of Tamworth, where he had lived for many years. At his farewell from the district, Ada Maunder placed a wrist watch on his arm and he was presented with gifts from the Duri community. After his death, the Maunder family placed a memorial to him in their local newspaper.

Bannister enlisted on 11 April 1916 at Armidale and listed his father, who was living in Clyde Street Granville, as his next of kin. He was posted to 33rd Battalion, 3rd Reinforcements and embarked on 24 August 1916 on *HMAT Anchises*. He disembarked at Devonport, England on 11 October and was transferred to 9th Machine Gun Company on 18 January 1917. Bannister was killed in action on 8 June 1917 at Messines in Belgium. Around the same time, his brother Harold was in Weymouth Hospital suffering from rheumatism contracted at the front. He would remain overseas until 1918.

For many years after his death, Bannister's mother and sister inserted an In Memoriam in the *Nepean Times* to his memory. Mary died in 1941 and she is buried with her second husband in the Anglican section of Penrith general cemetery.

- Toronto Avenue Cemetery, Warneton, Belgium
- Honor Roll, Penrith Public School
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Tamworth War Memorial

DENNY, PRIVATE GEORGE BERNARD

08 JUNE 1917, AT MESSINES, BELGIUM

33rd Battalion, AIF Service number: 1817

Denny was born in Ipswich England in 1896, the son of Alfred and Lina Denny. He attended Ufford Elementary School in Suffolk before migrating to Australia with a relative in 1912 at age 16. His parents and siblings also migrated soon afterwards. The Denny family settled at 'Riverleigh', Castlereagh. Before enlistment, Denny worked as a wood and coal yard carter. On enlistment, a public farewell was given to Denny and Richard Baker (alias Voller) by the residents of Richmond where both soldiers were presented with a wristlet watch. Baker, who had been a foster child of the Denny family, died on 9 October 1917.

Denny went into camp at Armidale and was allocated to the 2nd Reinforcements. He sailed with the 33rd Battalion aboard the *Port Sydney* on 4 September 1916. From late 1916 to early 1917 Denny was hospitalised a number of times with illness. After training in Egypt, he was sent to the Australian sector in Northern France on 10 April 1917. The 33rd Battalion was sent to the Ypres Sector of Belgium in mid-1917 to take part in its first major battle, the Battle of Messines, launched on 7 June. Denny was killed in action by a shell the next day.

Denny's body was buried near where he fell in the battalion cemetery in Ploegsteert Wood. He was described as a fearless, reliable and hardworking soldier – one who always performed his duties willingly and cheerfully.

In the *Nepean Times* report of his death on 14 July 1917, it stated his father called his son 'the mainstay of the home'. His family were well represented in the war effort. Alfred Denny had no less than 15 English nephews serving.

After George's death, Corporal Woodhill, from Richmond, wrote to George's mother. In this letter, published in the *Nepean Times* on 29 September 1917, Woodhill wrote – 'Poor George, he was the finest mate I had, and it overcomes me to think he has been taken away from me. Pte A E Chapman, who wrote and told me fully how he was killed, and he wrote to Mr Denny so, in case the letter has gone astray, I will give you an extract from his letter to me. The letter goes on to say: "I suppose you will have heard about your old pal George being shot. He and I (Pte A E Chapman) were together ever since we left England. We were bombers in the big push..." I can't write any more now, Mrs Denny, I feel too upset, and I know how you feel; so may these few lines help to comfort you and the family in your solemn hours'.

Memorial Details:

- Toronto Avenue Cemetery Warneton, Belgium
- War Memorial, Smith Park, Castlereagh

Penrith City Library June 2017 | 22



STEVENSON, SERGEANT ALFRED LEWIS GROOM

10 JUNE 1917, AT YPRES, BELGIUM 45th Battalion, AIF Service number: 3479

Alfred Lewis Groom Stevenson was born in Redfern in 1894 to William and Mary Jane Stevenson. Presumably the family moved to Penrith when William Stevenson was transferred to Penrith Railway Station. He was a fireman and driver and for some years worked the elevator at Penrith Station. The family lived in Belmore Street. Stevenson attended Penrith Public School before his employment and training as a fitter and turner at Eveleigh railway workshops. He was a sergeant in the local militia before his enlistment. At the time of his enlistment his parents were living in Evans Street Penrith. Around 1917, they moved to Auburn following William's transfer to Eveleigh as head cleaner.

Stevenson enlisted at Liverpool on 28 July 1915. He was allotted to the 45th Battalion and left Sydney on 13 October 1915 on the *HMAT Port Lincoln*. He arrived in Egypt on 6 March 1916 and was stationed at Zeitoun. Following a few bouts of influenza in 1916 and early 1917, Stevenson quickly rose through the ranks. In June 1916 he was sent with his battalion to Marseilles.

On the night of 10 June 1917, Stevenson was killed in action. According to Charles Bean's report and the Red Cross inquiry into his death, Stevenson was in an unsuccessful raiding party under Lieutenant McIntyre that had been requested to attack an enemy strong-point near their trench at Messines Ridge. Fifteen went over the top and only ten men returned. Stevenson had found himself too far in front of the line and was killed by an Allied bomb. Private Bowers stated that Stevenson believed he would not return and left his belongings behind. The men nicknamed him Legs Eleven, as he was tall and slim. He was believed to have been buried in the vicinity of Messines. However, the authorities could not locate his grave after the war, believing it had been 'obliterated by shell fire' in ensuing battles.

- Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium
- Honor Roll, Loyal Alexander Lodge, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Penrith Superior Public School



MILLS, CORPORAL MERTOUN SYDNEY

12 JUNE 1917, AT NIEPPE, FRANCE 73A Australian Medium Trench Mortar

Z3A Australian Medium Trench Mortar Battery, 36th Battalion, AIF Service number: 1278

Mertoun Sydney Mills was born on 30 January 1895 at Penrith, the son of Robert and Elizabeth Mills. The Mills family had the family business called Railway House, on the corner of High and (now) Lawson Streets. The building still stands, being one of the oldest buildings in Penrith. Mills completed his schooling at Penrith Superior Public School before attending Stott and Hoare's Commercial College where he undertook courses in typing and shorthand. At the time of his enlistment, his occupation was listed as a drapery salesman, probably in his parent's store.

Mills had been a corporal in the cadets as well as a member of the militia at Penrith for 5 years. He enlisted on 14 February 1916, following a letter of consent from his father. Mills left Sydney on 13 May 1916 aboard *HMAT Beltana* and arrived at Devonport, England on 9 July 1916. He, like most other members of the AIF, then underwent training on the Salisbury Plains.

On 23 November Mills was sent to France and served in the Flanders region before being sent to northern France. On 14 January 1917, he contracted mumps and was admitted to hospital. In February, he was again admitted to hospital with boils. He rejoined his unit on 16 February. Mills was attached to the Divisional Ammunition Column, whose role it was to bring ammunition and supplies to the battery positions. He was killed just after the Battle of Messines on 12 June 1917. He was having dinner when a shell hit a house and killed an old woman, a few soldiers, two children and a young girl. Mills ran to their rescue, and another shell hit and killed him.

Rev James McKee conveyed the sad news to his parents. Writing to the Red Cross for more information on Mills' death, Rev McKee stated 'Young Mills was a good boy – the only son of good parents'. In his letters home, Mills referred to meeting up with other Penrith soldiers including Privates Rickards and Ausburn and his cousins from Maryborough in Victoria. Lieut. W J Burnett, with whom Mills was a great friend, wrote to his wife (nee Eisenhuth, of Mulgoa) - ' I was very fond of him, and he died a hero. I know where he was buried, and will see that a cross is placed over his grave'.

- Nieppe Communal Cemetery, France
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Presbyterian Church, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Penrith Superior Public School



MITCHELL, PRIVATE ALEXANDER MALCOLM

20 JUNE 1917, AT MESSINES, BELGIUM 13th Battalion, AIF Service number: 6799

Alexander Malcolm Mitchell was born in Penrith in 1883 to George and Elizabeth Mitchell. After attending school at Penrith, Bathurst and Cowra, Mitchell worked as a railway employee and held a trade as a plumber and fitter. His father also worked for the railways and after spending a few years in Penrith was transferred to Newcastle. The family was living at Wallsend by 1914. Mitchell married Rose Brodie in Sydney in April 1905 and a son Francis followed at the end of the year. According to Rose, she was ill treated by Mitchell and she had left him well before the outbreak of the war. According to his family, she had deserted him. Rose only found out he had died when she saw his death notice in the newspapers.

Prior to his enlistment Mitchell had spent five years with the 5th Regiment (AIR) in NSW. He enlisted with the Tropical Force on 8 December 1914 and served 11 months in Rabaul. After returning to Sydney he was discharged on 1 February 1916 and re-enlisted with the AIF on 7 February. He was allocated to the 13th Battalion as a sapper. Mitchell stated he was a single man, and listed his father as his next of kin. In his will he left his estate to his mother.

Mitchell left Sydney on 11 March 1916 on the *HMAT Orsova*. He arrived in Egypt on 18 April and was stationed at Tel-el-Kabir until May when he was sent to France. He remained there for four months before proceeding to England for signals training at Bletchley.

On 21 March 1917 Mitchell was sent to France and was taken on strength on 23 April with the 2nd Division Signal Company. On 12 June, during the Battle of Messines, Mitchell was wounded with multiple gunshot wounds and died of his injuries on 20 June. Mitchell's two brothers also served. Victor was wounded and returned in 1919, and Henry, who enlisted in November 1917, returned to Australia in 1919.

- Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, France
- Honor Roll, Penrith Public School



BAKER, PRIVATE OWEN WALLACE

29 JULY 1917, AT MESSINES, BELGIUM 34th & 53rd Battalions, AIF Service number: 1867

Owen Wallace Baker was born at St Marys in 1894, the youngest son of Thomas and Elizabeth Sarah (nee Thompson) Baker. Around 1910, Thomas Baker had purchased the prestigious property, Chatsworth, at Rooty Hill. He was a highly esteemed cattle and sheep breeder and grazier. After attending Neutral Bay Preparatory College, Owen Baker worked as a mechanical engineer before enlisting in the AIF.

Baker enlisted on 22 March 1916 and commenced training with K Company, Depot Battalion at Bathurst. On 18 April, he was allocated to the 3rd Reinforcements, 53rd Battalion and left Sydney aboard *HMAT Barambah* on 23 June. He disembarked on 25 August at Plymouth, England. In September, Baker transferred to the 34th Battalion and went into training. On 22 November, the 34th Battalion crossed to France and moved into the trenches for the first time on 27 November, just in time for the onset of the terrible winter of 1916–17. On 7 February 1917, Baker was detached to the 2nd Tunnelling Company, rejoining his unit on 2 April 1917.

On 13 June 1917, Baker was admitted to 77th Field Ambulance with influenza and rejoined his unit on 19 June. In July, he was sent to a rest camp for a few weeks.

Baker was killed on 29 July 1917 on the mule track along Messines Ridge. An eyewitness, Private Frederick Engel stated that Baker, a stretcher bearer, was hit by a shell when returning to the trenches with wounded men from the front lines late at night. He died before he reached the dressing station. The Germans had often targeted the area with shell fire.

A memorial service was held for Baker in St Mary Magdalene Church in October 1917. An In Memoriam was inserted by his family in the *Nepean Times* many years after his death.

- Kandahar Farm Cemetery Neuve-Eglise, Belgium
- Honor Roll, Colyton Public School
- Anzac Centenary Walk, Mount Druitt Park, Mount Druitt

WILLIS, SERGEANT HENRY RAYMOND

16 SEPTEMBER 1917, AT ZILLEBEKE, BELGIUM

7th Field Artillery Brigade, AIF Service number: 18554

Henry Raymond Willis was born in 1890 at Penrith, the youngest son of Charles and Altamira (nee Dunkley) Willis. Charles Willis was a well-known building contractor around the district. Shortly before his death in 1904 he passed the business over to his son Alexander. The family lived in Castlereagh Street until about 1903 before moving to Alice Street Newtown.

Henry Willis, who was known as Ray, completed his schooling with his siblings at Penrith Public School and prior to enlisting, worked as a business agent and wire weaver. Three brothers and two sisters became teachers.

Willis enlisted on 15 November 1915 and was allocated to the 1/15 Field Artillery Reinforcements. He was transferred to the 25th Field Battery a few months later. His brigade embarked from Sydney on *HMAT Argyllshire* on 11 May 1916, arriving at Devonport, England on 19 July. On 27 July, he was promoted to temporary corporal, with the rank being confirmed on 27 December. Two days later Willis embarked for the Western Front. The brigade including the 25th Field Battery went into action on 17 January 1917 at Armentieres.

On 25 August 1917, Willis was promoted to temporary sergeant with the promotion being confirmed on 16 September, the day Willis was killed in action at Zillebeke. At about 2 pm that afternoon, Willis was killed in the gun pit by a shell that burst between two guns. Two other members of the battery, Richards and Redman, died with him. Gunner Coleman stated 'Willis was well liked by his chums'.

Willis' family initially questioned the authorities about his death as they had received a telegram, dated 16 September 1917 from Willis saying 'All's well'. It was sent the day he died. His mother's death in 1919 was put down to her grief at losing her son. Willis' brother Alexander waived his right to his war medals in favour of his sister Amy who was also sole beneficiary under his will.

- Perth Cemetery (China Wall) Zillebeke, Belgium.
- Honor Roll, Penrith Superior Public School



CONNELL, PRIVATE BEDE SEPTIMUS

20 SEPTEMBER 1917, PRESUMED AT CHATEAU WOOD, BELGIUM 9th Battalion, AIF Service number: 3017

Bede Septimus Connell was born at St Marys on 16 December 1887, the son of Matthew and Charlotte (nee Mortimer) Connell. In the early 1890s, his family moved to Jamisontown. After Connell had completed his education at Regentville Public School, he worked as a labourer before enlisting in Brisbane on 25 June 1915. He was allocated to the 10th Reinforcements, 9th Battalion and left Brisbane for Egypt aboard *HMAT Warilda* on 5 October 1915. In March 1916, the 9th Battalion left Egypt bound for Marseilles. On 5 May 1916, while the battalion was at Sailly, Connell was charged with the crime of 'without urgent necessity, quitting the ranks' and was given 72 hours' field punishment. In June and July he was again in trouble for disobedience.

The battalion's first major action in France was at Pozieres. During this action on 23 July 1916 Connell suffered a grenade wound to the left arm. He was admitted to No 1 Australian General Hospital at Rouen and then transferred to England for rehabilitation. Between September and November Connell was again in trouble, including for insolence to an NCO, and was confined to camp. Again in May 1917 he was found guilty of damaging property and insolence. Connell returned to France on 23 July 1917. The 9th Battalion had been moved to the Belgian front opposite the Hindenburg Line. Connell was killed in action on 20 September 1917, possibly at Chateau Wood (near Menin Road) in the Ypres area when the 9th Battalion lost all of its company commanders and half its junior officers.

In a letter to his brother on 12 August, Connell wrote 'I suppose you will be surprised to hear I am a full blown soldier now, and that I have been "digging" into the Germans; of course they "dug" into me. I got a couple of wounds from them, but nothing much to speak of. I am getting on well now, and hope to continue so. I had a German handbomb burst near me while I was bombing them out of their trench, and a small piece went right through the thumb and broke it. Another piece hit me in the elbow, and I had to go under an operation to have the pieces taken out... I am a pretty good fighter – a lot better than I thought I would be. They (the Germans) can't bluff us – and that is the main point. Anyway, a man has only got to die once, and it is better to do that than let the Germans win...' His last letter received by his parents was dated 15 August. In this Connell stated he was well and still going strong.

Memorial Details:

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

Penrith City Library June 2017 | 28

KERRY, PRIVATE JOHN

20 SEPTEMBER 1917, AT LIJSSENTHOEK, BELGIUM 20th Battalion, AIF Service number: 6362

John (Jack) Kerry was born in Paisley, Scotland in April 1887 to John and Annabel Kerry, both of County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland. With his family he immigrated to Australia on the *Orient* in 1889. His parents settled at Jamisontown, establishing a timber and sawmilling business. After completing his schooling at Regentville and Penrith Public School, Kerry completed a four year apprenticeship with the Lucas family, blacksmiths at Emu Plains. Kerry and his brothers established a blacksmithing and horseshoeing business at Emu Plains and later High Street Penrith where they added coachbuilding. Kerry married Alma Christiansen on 23 September 1916 in Penrith and soon afterwards wrote his will leaving his property to his 'dear wife' of only a month. Joseph and Jessie Hoe of Penrith were witnesses.

Kerry enlisted on 16 October 1916 at the showground at Moore Park and embarked for overseas the following month on the *HMAT Suevic*. He fell ill with bronchitis during February and March of 1917. On 16 September, he was wounded in action with gunshot wounds to the legs. He died of his wounds at the 2nd Canadian Clearing Station on 20 September.

At his memorial service at the Jamisontown United Church on 28 October 1917, Reverend Tarn mentioned two other local Jamisontown soldiers, Thomas Williams and Bede Connell, who had also died the same day as Kerry. The Nepean Times report stated 'What a strange coincidence was this. Little did these three lads think, when they played their games in the old Regentville Public School, that they would die as true soldiers of the King on the same day'. For many years Kerry had been secretary to the Jamisontown Sunday School. He was described as 'a sterling, cheerful and earnest Christian man'.

Alma Kerry was living in Parker Street Penrith when she received her husband's war medals and package of personal items. Alma never remarried and died in 1970.

- Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honor Roll, United Church, Jamisontown
- Honor Roll, Penrith Superior Public School



MALLARD, PRIVATE CECIL

20 SEPTEMBER 1917, AT ZONNEBEKE, BELGIUM 19th Battalion & 5th Machine Gun Company, AIF Service number: 2445

Cecil Mallard was born in 1896 at Queanbeyan to Sarah Mallard, the unmarried daughter of John and Lucy (nee Booth) Mallard. He was raised as the son of John and Lucy. Mallard completed his schooling at Lake Bathurst (near Queanbeyan) and Kingswood. After leaving school, Mallard worked as a clerk with the postal department. On enlistment, he gave his profession as motor driver.

Mallard enlisted on 26 July 1915 after having previously been rejected for service because of an insufficient chest measurement. He was allocated to the 5th Reinforcements, 19th Battalion and left Sydney on 5 October 1915 aboard *HMAT Themistocles* bound for Egypt. On 18 March 1916, the 19th Battalion embarked for the Western Front, arriving in Marseilles on 25 March. Mallard was a member of a Lewis Machine Gun section with the 19th Battalion, which took part in its first offensive around Pozieres between late July and the end of August 1916. After a spell in a quieter sector of the Belgium frontline, the battalion moved south in October 1916. Mallard suffered gunshot wounds to the right shoulder on 14 November during the battalion's attack on Flers. He was admitted to the 1st Stationary Hospital at Rouen on 16 November 1916 before transferring to England for further treatment.

On 11 May 1917 Mallard returned to the Western Front and was taken on the strength of the 5th Machine Gun Company. On 20 September 1917 he was killed when struck by a shell during the Battle for Menin Road near Ypres. He was originally interred at the Garter Point Cemetery, Zonnebeke. This cemetery (which contained 32 soldiers, including one German soldier) was used between September 1917 and April 1918. It was later destroyed by enemy gun fire, and all traces of the site were obliterated. A poignant postscript in Mallard's service documents states that Mallard was the ex-nuptial child of Sarah Mallard, daughter of John and Lucy. Mallard's birth mother Sarah stated that he was unaware of his ex-nuptial status and that all medals should be given to her mother Lucy who had raised him as her own son. In 1919, a son was born to Sarah's brother Henry and his wife Lorrie. They named him Cecil Anzac Mallard. He served in the Second World War, returned and lived most of his life in Penrith.

- Perth Cemetery (China Wall), Zillebeke, Belgium
- Honor Roll, Victoria Park, St Marys



PERRY, LANCE CORPORAL WILLIAM

20 SEPTEMBER 1917, AT YPRES, BELGIUM 18th Battalion, AIF Service number: 1982

William Perry was born at Waterloo in 1897 to James and Margaret Perry. At the time of his enlistment, his parents were living in Princess Mary Street St Marys. Perry had been working as a van driver.

Perry enlisted on 7 July 1915 at Liverpool. He was allocated to the 18th Battalion and left Sydney for Egypt on 9 August on the *HMAT Runic*. On 22 September he was on the shores of Gallipoli. This stay was short-lived as he was moved to Mudros on 23 October suffering from diarrhoea. From there he was transported to England to the Brook War Hospital in Woolwich to recover.

On 24 March 1916, Perry proceeded with his battalion to France. He received a shrapnel wound to the head at La Boisselle in France, but was not hospitalised. On 9 October Perry was promoted to lance corporal in the field. A month later he was hospitalised with trench feet and was sent to England to recover and take leave. In February 1917 he was back in camp and did not return to France until 11 June. He rejoined his battalion on 24 June. Between 20 and 25 September the 18th Battalion took part in the Battle of Menin Road, which was part of the Third Battle of Ypres. Perry was killed in action on 20 September.

By the time of Perry's death his parents had moved to Waterloo and later Dreadnought Street Lakemba.

- Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium
- Honor Roll, Victoria Park, St Marys

WILLIAMS, CORPORAL THOMAS WILLIAM

20 SEPTEMBER 1917, AT POLYGON WOOD, BELGIUM 20th Battalion, AIF Service number: 4305

Thomas William Williams was born in 1895 at Penrith, the third child and son of George and Julia (nee Cummins) Williams. The family lived on a 9 acre farm on the York Estate at Jamisontown. They were members of the 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 licensed 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 a 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, Williams was sent to the 1st Anzac Corps School in Aveluy 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 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
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Penrith Superior Public School
- Honor Roll, Methodist Church, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Jamisontown United Church

Penrith City Library June 2017 | 32



HAYLEN, LIEUTENANT FRANCIS HENRY

21 SEPTEMBER 1917, AT HOOGE, BELGIUM 2nd Battalion, AIF Service number: Z1428

Francis Henry Haylen was born in 1892 at Queanbeyan NSW, the son of Frances Haylen, who was the daughter of Irishman Thomas and his wife Catherine (nee Day) Haylen. The family lived in the Braidwood/Queanbeyan area before moving to Sydney. Francis Haylen was raised by his grandparents as their own son. He completed his schooling at Marist Brothers High School Goulburn and the Superior Public High School, Chatswood. His mother Frances married William Brown in 1900 and they had moved to Chatswood by about 1905. After leaving school, Haylen worked as a clerk for the NSW Government Railway and was stationed at Penrith when he enlisted.

Haylen enlisted on 15 September 1915 along with his fellow railway work mate and friend Reg Sullivan. They were both allocated to the 2nd Battalion. After serving six months, Haylen was awarded his commission as a 2nd lieutenant. He was originally allocated to the 19th Reinforcements, but was hospitalised shortly before departure. He finally sailed with the 22nd Reinforcements, 2nd Battalion aboard the *SS Nicholson* which left Sydney on 8 November 1916, arriving at Devonport England on 10 January 1917. Haylen marched into the 1st Training Battalion on the following day. He was hospitalised on 15 February with an abscessed ear and returned to the 1st Training Battalion on 10 March.

Haylen proceeded overseas on 2 May and marched into the 1st Australian Divisional Base Depot at Etaples on 4 May. He joined his unit on 7 May in the Ypres area and on 10 August was promoted to Lieutenant. Haylen was killed during the Third Battle of Ypres on 21 September 1917 and was buried just east of Hooge, a small village to the east of Ypres. His gravesite could not be identified after the war. Haylen left his estate to his 'sister' Frances Brown. His war pension was granted to Frances as his mother. Haylen's friend Sullivan died of wounds on 12 April 1917 and was buried at Pozieres.

- Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Penrith Superior Public School
- Honor Roll, St Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church, Penrith



ANDREWS, CORPORAL WILLIAM

26 SEPTEMBER 1917, AT POLYGON WOOD, BELGIUM 4th & 13th Battalion, AIF Service number: 2780

William Andrews was born in 1893 at St Marys, the youngest son of William and Martha (nee Pyke) Andrews. He attended St Marys Public School and afterwards was apprenticed to St Marys' bootmaker, Anschau for four years.

Andrews enlisted on 28 June 1915 and was allocated to the 9th Reinforcements, 4th Battalion. After a brief period of training, he left Australia aboard *HMAT Argyllshire* on 30 September bound for Egypt. On 1 November, Andrews was admitted to hospital at Heliopolis suffering from influenza. He rejoined his battalion, stationed at Tel-el-Kebir, on 6 January 1916. In late January, Andrews reported sick again and was transferred to No 2 Australian General Hospital at Ghezireh before spending time in the Australian Dermatology Hospital. He was discharged on 6 March.

On 29 March Andrews then joined the 13th Battalion which was stationed at Serapeum, and by June he was bound for the Western Front. In July, the 13th Battalion took part in the battle for Pozieres. In November 1916 the *Nepean Times* reported 'At the Front: Per advices received by relatives of St. Marys soldiers at the front, we learn that Lieut A V Steel, Sergt Alf Cunninghame, Corporal Tom Haining, Private Will Andrews and Ted Boots (Kingswood) have been fighting within 'coo-ee' of each other, practically, in the Australian sectors in the big pushes which have been made since June to Oct. on the Somme Front, and the quintette named, happily, so far have escaped the receipt of the painful (physical) souvenirs in the shape of wounds and disabilities which the enemy is generally so lavish in distributing'. At this time, Andrews was promoted to lance corporal and five days later was attached to No 3 Squadron Royal Flying Corps, where he remained until 7 July 1917.

Andrews rejoined the 13th Battalion in Belgium as they slowly advanced toward the Hindenburg Line. He was again promoted, to temporary corporal, on 15 September and served with the Lewis Gun Section. On 26 September 1917, Andrews was killed at Polygon Wood, near Ypres Belgium. His machine gun section was on an outpost during an advance. About an hour after the advance started, a shell hit his position. Andrews and two other soldiers were killed instantly and another was wounded.

- Oosttaverne Wood Cemetery Wytschaete, Belgium
- Honor Roll, Victoria Park, St Marys

LOVE, PRIVATE GEORGE

30 SEPTEMBER 1917, AT POPERINGHE, BELGIUM

30th Battalion, AIF Service number: 2675

George Love was born in 1884 at Walsall, Staffordshire in England, the son of Benjamin and Susanna Love. He migrated to Australia on the *HMAT Ceramic*, arriving in February 1914. Love was employed as a draper before his enlistment and was living at Mulgrave near Windsor.

Love enlisted at Liverpool on 22 January 1916 and was allocated to the 5th Reinforcements, 30th Battalion. On 4 March a send-off party was held at Emu Plains for Love and a number of his Emu Plains friends who had enlisted, including Irwin and Edward Bunyan, Robert McGinness and Reg McLean. They were each presented with a leather money belt. After some training at the Liverpool camp the 30th Battalion left Sydney on 9 April on *HMAT Nestor* and arrived in Alexandria, Egypt for another few months of training. Love embarked with his unit in Alexandria on 6 June 1916 on board *HMT Franconia* bound for England.

The battalion moved to France in July 1916 and was immediately involved in the Battle of Fromelles. It went on to fight at Armentieres, Bapaume, Polygon Wood, Passchendaele, Amiens and on the Hindenburg Line. Love joined his battalion at Etaples in France in September. In December he was suffering from trench feet and was hospitalised and sent back to England to recuperate. He was discharged at the end of January 1917.

By June, Love was back in France. On 29 September, he was wounded in the field with a gunshot wound to the back and was admitted to the 3rd Canadian Casualty Clearing Station. He died the next day.

Love left a will in which his mother, who was still living in Walsall, received his estate.

- Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium
- War Memorial, Emu Plains
- Honor Roll, Emu Plains Public School



BLAXLAND, PRIVATE CYRIL FALKNER

01 OCTOBER 1917, AT ZONNEBECKE, YPRES, BELGIUM 18th Battalion, and, 5th Machine Gun Company, AIF Service number: 4367

Cyril Falkner Blaxland was born in 1881 at Hunters Hill, the son of John Gregory and Margaret Camden (nee Goodridge) Blaxland, the great grandson of explorer Gregory Blaxland, and of early Penrith settlers, John and Sarah McHenry. Blaxland completed his education at Kings School, Goulburn. At the time of his enlistment, he listed his occupation as farmer.

Blaxland enlisted on 19 October 1915 and was allocated to the 11th Reinforcements, 18th Battalion. Before he left, Blaxland filed his will on 6 March 1916 with McDonalds, solicitors in Penrith. He embarked on *HMAT* Nestor on 9 April and proceeded to England. After a period of training, he was sent to France on 10 September. He joined his unit in the field on 30 September, just prior to his battalion's move from Belgium to a southern position on the Western Front.

On 23 December, Blaxland was admitted to the 5th Australian Field Ambulance with an infectious disease. He was transferred to Rouen and then to the 51st General Hospital at Etaples. He did not rejoin his unit until 11 February 1917. The 18th Battalion was by then involved in heavy fighting around Warlencourt during its advance on German forces in their retreat to the Hindenburg Line. The 18th then took part in the second Battle of Bullecourt between 3 and 4 May.

On 20 May, Blaxland was transferred to the 5th Machine Gun Company. In August, he spent two weeks in a rest camp before taking leave in England in September. He was killed in action on 1 October and according to Gunner West, Blaxland was digging gun pits on Haanebeek Creek. While having breakfast in the trench he was killed by a piece of high explosive shell. He was buried on Westhoek Ridge. Blaxland left his estate to two sisters, Marjorie Simpson who lived in England, and Noel Campion, wife of Reverend Campion who was also living in England, and to his mother. They received the income from his three farms at Lambridge, tenanted by Garnet Honeman, Gordon Honeman and George Willett. An ex-nuptial daughter, Marion Wallworth, whose mother was Amy Wallworth of Pyrmont, was granted a pension of £1 per fortnight. She was not mentioned in his will. In post war correspondence, Blaxland's mother was unaware of her existence stating that her son 'was much too straight and honorable a man to have gone over to France without telling me he had left someone dependent on him'. The authorities decided Blaxland's daughter should receive the British War Medal.

- Perth Cemetery (China Wall) Zillebeeke, Belgium
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith

HARPER, PRIVATE ERNEST FREDERICK

05 OCTOBER 1917, AT BROODSEINDE RIDGE, BELGIUM

1st Battalion, AIF Service number: 6020

Ernest Harper was born in 1888 at Leichhardt, the son of William and Mary Jane Harper. Both his parents died when he was a small child and his brother Charles and sister Florrie raised the younger children. Before his enlistment he was working as a labourer and living at Emu Plains at Bendells. Harper was before Penrith Court a number of times, especially with his friend William McGee who lived in Henry Street Penrith. Harper's earliest offence was in 1911 for being drunk and disorderly. On 23 June 1916, two months before he sailed, Harper and McGee faced Penrith Court for stealing a bottle of whiskey from the Federal Hotel. They were fined in default of 14 days in Parramatta Gaol.

Harper enlisted at Bathurst on 8 March 1916. He listed his sister, Florrie Harvey as his next of kin. He embarked on 22 August on *HMAT Wiltshire* and disembarked at Plymouth, England on 13 October. By December Harper was at Etaples in France and on 8 February 1917 he was taken on strength in the 1st Battalion.

On 11 May Harper was sent to rest camp for a few days before rejoining his battalion. Between 24 and 26 September Harper was listed as AWOL and lost 14 days' pay as penalty. Again on 27 September he was absent and forfeited 3 days' pay. While coming back after a 'hop-over' during the battle of Broodseinde Ridge, Harper was killed outright by a piece of shell.

Harper's sister Florrie accepted his medals in lieu of her eldest brother not laying claim to them as he could not be located and her next brother Charles being deceased.

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



BUNYAN, PRIVATE EDWIN EDWARD

08 OCTOBER 1917, AT PASSCHENDAELE, BELGIUM 19th Battalion, AIF Service number: 4672

Edwin (known as Edward) Bunyan was born at Emu Plains, the seventh son and tenth child of William and Sarah Ann (nee Poll) Bunyan. He attended Emu Plains Public School and after leaving school, Bunyan worked as a grocer's assistant for six years for A Chapple at Emu Plains. According to his obituary in the Nepean Times, Bunyan was a keen sportsman and a good rifle shot. In April 1916, on the eve of leaving for the war, he was presented with a money belt and other mementoes by the people of Emu Plains, and also a safety razor and pocket book by A Chapple.

Bunyan enlisted on 27 January 1916 at Casula and was allocated to the 12th Reinforcements, 19th Battalion. His brother, Irwin and two cousins also enlisted at the same time. Irwin was killed on 11 May 1917 and a cousin, Leslie Victor Poll, who served with the 36th Battalion, was killed on 3 October 1917. Bunyan left Australia aboard *HMAT Ceramic* on 4 April 1916 and arrived in Alexandria on 29 May. He was transferred to England aboard *HMT Megantic*, arriving in Portsmouth on 7 June. After several months training at No 5 Training Battalion, Bunyan joined his unit in France during September. The 19th Battalion attacked near Flers between 14 and 16 November, in conditions that Charles Bean described as the worst ever encountered by the AIF.

In January 1917, Bunyan was attached to the Lewis Gun School and during his time there he was fined 10 days' pay for being found out of bounds at the English Bar in Cucq. In 1917, the 19th Battalion was involved in the advance on German forces after their retreat to the Hindenburg Line, and was one of four battalions to defeat a counter-stroke by the Germans. The battalion took part in the second Battle of Bullecourt between 3 and 4 May 1917.

In August, Bunyan was attached to the Corps School as a batman for a short period. At the end of August, he took leave in England and on his return to the front, was attached to the Bomb School as a batman. On 8 October 1917, Bunyan was killed in action, one of 38,000 Australians killed and wounded during the Battle of Passchendaele. According to his family he had many close calls as a despatch runner.

- Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium
- Honor Roll, Emu Plains Public School
- War Memorial, Emu Plains



BAKER, PRIVATE RICHARD FREDERICK (ALSO KNOWN AS VOLLER, RICHARD FREDERICK)

09 OCTOBER 1917, AT POELCAPPELLE, BELGIUM 19th Battalion, AIF Service number: 5422

Richard Henry Voller was born in 1895 in London, England, the son of Frederick George and Edna Voller. He was educated at St Paul's Church of England School in Burdett Road, Bow in London. He arrived in Australia in 1914. Voller stated on his enlistment papers that he was a telephone wireman and had served 12 months with the Territorial Army in England. Along with George Denny, he was presented with a wristlet watch at a public farewell held in Richmond NSW.

For an unknown reason, Voller enlisted under the name Frederick Richard Baker on 11 March 1916 at Cootamundra and was allotted to 2nd Battalion. In August, Voller arrived at the AIF camp at Liverpool and was allotted to the 14th Reinforcements, 19th Battalion and his army number was changed to 5422. On 22 August, he embarked aboard *HMAT Wiltshire*. On 17 September, during a stopover in Durban, South Africa Voller was charged with leaving a place of parade without permission and received a 24 hour detention. Three days later, he was charged with disobeying a lawful command given by his superior officer and received a further 24 hour detention.

Voller disembarked at Plymouth on 13 October and after a period of training, proceeded overseas to France on 13 December. On 19 January 1917, Voller was charged with conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline when he left the ranks without permission. He was fined 5 days' pay. In March, he was sent to signals school and returned to his unit on 14 April. The 19th Battalion took part in the second Battle of Bullecourt on 3-4 May. In August, Voller was in trouble again for being improperly dressed after repeated warnings. He was confined for 4 days. His battalion then took part in the Battle of Menin Road on 20-22 September and was at Poelcappelle from 9-10 October.

Voller was killed in action on 9 October. Although his parents were living in England, his personal effects were sent to Miss Mabel Mary Denny at Woollahra. He spent some of his early years in Australia with the Denny family on their farm, 'Riverleigh' at Castlereagh. They were an English family who migrated to Australia about the same time as Voller. On 15 April 1918, the Australian Army in London received confirmation that Richard Frederick Baker was in fact Richard Frederick Voller.

- Dochy Farm New British Cemetery, Belgium
- War Memorial, Smith Park, Castlereagh



SIMPSON, PRIVATE JOHN GEORGE

09 OCTOBER 1917, AT BROODSEINDE RIDGE, BELGIUM 19th Battalion, AIF Service number: 6139

John George Simpson was born in London in 1877, the son of John and Caroline Simpson. He married Isabella Jane around 1900 and by the time of their migration to Australia in 1912 they had three children, Frederick, Alexander and Stanley. Simpson and his family arrived in Australia in September 1912 aboard the *Ballarat*. They first settled at Darling Harbour where Simpson worked as a tram conductor. Later they moved to Rozelle where Simpson worked as a ship's painter and docker at the dockyards on Cockatoo Island. On his enlistment papers, Simpson stated he had served 4 years with the 1st Volunteer Battalion Royal West Surrey (Queens) Regiment which had seen service during the Boer War in South Africa.

On 22 June 1916, Simpson enlisted at the age of 39. At the time, the family was living at Rozelle. He embarked at Sydney on the *HMAT Ascanius* on 25 October. This ship was in the first convoy of ships to leave Australia carrying troops for overseas service in November 1914. Simpson disembarked at Devonport on 28 December.

By February 1917 Simpson was in Etaples in France and was in action a month later. On 9 October, while on sentry duty, Simpson was killed by shell fire in his trench at Daisy Woods on Broodseinde Ridge.

By the early 1920s, Isabella had moved to Penrith, living in a home named *Ypres Cottage* on Mulgoa Road at Jamisontown. By the later 1920s she was living in a home called *Sydenham* in Riley Street Penrith. She left Penrith for about 14 years and returned in later life to live with her youngest son and his family at Lemongrove. She died there in 1948. John and Isabella were survived by their three sons and 10 grandchildren.

- New British Cemetery, Passchendaele, Belgium
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith

FORREST, PRIVATE RICHARD LESLIE

12 OCTOBER 1917, AT PASSCHENDAELE, BELGIUM

34th Battalion, AIF Service number: 3044

Richard Leslie Forrest was born at Dubbo in 1893, the son of Richard and Mary (nee 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. Richard 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 second enlistment Forrest worked as a cook and machinist.

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 a number of times for being AWOL, 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 lying on the stretcher. Red Cross files reveal 'four men picked up Forrest to carry him back, but they did not get through'. Forrest's 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. John was discharged and returned to Australia in March 1915 and was court martialled in December 1915. 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.

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

STINSON, PRIVATE WILLIAM EDWARD (EDWIN)

12 OCTOBER 1917, AT PASSCHENDAELE, BELGIUM

34th Battalion, AIF Service number: 3117

William Henry Stinson was born at Yarramundi in 1886, the son of Edwin and Elizabeth (nee Timmins) Stinson. William and his brothers, Thomas and John, lived on the family farm at Yarramundi and attended Agnes Banks Public School. After their schooling, all three brothers went to Queensland working as drovers. Thomas settled at Moree while his elder brothers went off to war.

William Stinson enlisted as William Edward (sometimes Edwin) Stinson on 13 September 1916 at Mungindi, on the NSW/Queensland border where he had been working as a drover. On his enlistment papers he stated that he had previously been rejected as unfit for service owing to his poor teeth and recurring asthma. His mother was listed as his next of kin, presumably because of his father's failing health. They had left their Yarramundi farm in the early 1900s, renting a house and 3 acres at Cranebrook.

Stinson embarked on the *HMAT Anchises* in Sydney on 24 January 1917 and disembarked at Devonport on 27 March. Stinson reattested while at sea on 3 February 1917 owing to his records being lost while he was in camp at Liverpool. He marched into Durrington Camp on 7 April. Although Stinson was taken on strength with the 34th Battalion on 28 April, he remained in training in England until proceeding overseas on 19 September.

On 12 October 1917 Stinson was initially reported missing in action near Passchendaele. He was later confirmed killed in action. However, his parents were not informed until the following June 1918 after they inquired about not hearing what had happened to him.

Stinson's brother John enlisted at Mungindi on 8 May 1916. He was captured by the Germans on 7 April 1918 during the fighting at Hangard Wood in France. He spent the remainder of the war as a prisoner. He was released and repatriated to England in November 1918 and returned to Australia in March 1919. He lived in Penrith after the war and died in 1955.

By 1921, Stinson's mother was living at Jamisontown. His father had been ill for many years and died at Parramatta in 1922. She died in 1938.

- Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium
- Honor Roll, Memory Park, Penrith



STEELE, GUNNER ALBERT EDWARD

30 OCTOBER 1917, AT WESTHOEK RIDGE, BELGIUM 3rd Field Artillery Brigade, AIF Service number: 3298

Albert Edward Steele was born in Singleton in 1889, the son of George and Elizabeth Steele. George, a railway guard, was transferred to Penrith in the late 1890s. Elizabeth died at their home in Thurston Street Lemongrove in February 1900 leaving George to raise his children, the youngest being just 2 years old. After leaving school, Albert Steele was apprenticed as a baker for three years to William Walker, a baker in High Street Penrith. Later he worked as a head steward on several ocean liners before his enlistment. Steele's father George died in late August 1915.

A week later, Steele and his brother Percy enlisted on 6 September 1915. He was allocated to the 17th Battalion. As both parents had died, he listed his sister Evelyn as his next of kin. Two younger brothers, Arthur and Ray, also enlisted in December 1915.

Steele embarked on 20 December on the *HMAT Suevic*. After his arrival in Egypt, Steele was stationed at Zeitoun near Cairo for training. He was transferred to the 58th Battery, 15th Field Artillery Brigade as a gunner in March 1916.

After training in Egypt Steele was sent to the Western Front, disembarking at Marseilles on 29 June 1916. In January 1917, he was sent to hospital with tonsillitis. By March he was back in the field. In August he was in Etaples and was charged with being AWOL, forfeiting 8 days' pay.

Steele was killed by a 'whizz-bang' shell in Glencourse Wood on Westhoek Ridge near Ypres on 30 October 1917. He was in a dugout at the guns when a shell killed him and Gunner James Hayden outright. Steele and Hayden were buried together beside the Menin Road. The blacksmith, Farrier Sergeant Barnett and Bombardier Briggs made an iron cross to mark the site.

Steele's three other brothers survived the war and returned to Australia. They are also on the Honor Roll at Penrith Superior Public School.

- Hooge Crater Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium
- Honor Roll, Penrith Superior Public School



GREGOR, PRIVATE DAVID ANDREW

07 NOVEMBER 1917, AT PASSCHENDAELE, BELGIUM 23rd Battalion, AIF Service number: 6757

David Andrew Gregor was born in Havelock New Zealand in 1899, the son of Andrew and Amy Gregor. Gregor and his father moved to Australia in about 1910 and Gregor attended Parramatta Public School. In about 1914, the family purchased a 100 acre orchard at Cranebrook. When Gregor enlisted, he gave his occupation as a farm hand. His brother Clunie James Gregor had already enlisted the previous year in New Zealand.

Gregor enlisted on 3 June 1916. Being under 19, his father grudgingly gave permission for him to serve overseas, stating 'I hereby give my consent to my son David joining the military forces although personally I think he is too young to go to the front yet'. His enlistment papers also indicate his mother was in New Zealand. On 16 June 1916, Gregor was sent to Cootamundra for training. He was allocated to the 1st Battalion, before being transferred to the 3rd Battalion. From 4 July to 18 August, Gregor had a bout of sickness. On 22 August, he was transferred to the 2nd Battalion based at Liverpool and on 9 October, he was allocated to the 8th Battalion.

On 17 November 1916, Gregor left Australia aboard *HMAT Port Napier* and disembarked at Devonport, England on 29 January 1917. The following day he was admitted to Devonport Military Hospital with mumps and was discharged on 7 February. On 11 February, Gregor marched into the 2nd Training Battalion AIF at Durrington and was assigned to No 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs.

On 20 August, Gregor proceeded overseas to France and was taken on strength by the 23rd Battalion on 1 September 1917. On 7 November 1917, Gregor was killed in action during the Second Battle of Passchendaele, Belgium. By 1925, Andrew Gregor had left the district. He had arranged for both of his sons to be remembered on the Castlereagh War Memorial in Smith Park.

- Menin Road South Military Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium
- War Memorial, Smith Park, Castlereagh



BLOOMFIELD, SAPPER OCTAVIUS KENNETH EASON

24 NOVEMBER 1917, AT MESSINES, BELGIUM 10th Field Company Engineers, AIF Service number: 15687

Octavius Kenneth Eason Bloomfield (known as Ken) was born in Meranburn near Manildra NSW in 1891, the eighth of eleven sons of Charles and Ellen (nee Eason) Bloomfield. He attended Lyndhurst Public School. At the time of his enlistment his parents were living at *Lincoln Grove*, an orchard at Orchard Hills. They had arrived around 1912 and moved onto Mrs Woodland's orchard, close to Orchard Hills Public School. Ken Bloomfield was a good sportsman and tennis player. He was a member of the winning Trundle tennis team along with his brother Lance who took out the Country Week Championship in Sydney for a number of years before the war. These men, all farmers, later enlisted in the AIF Engineers. At the time of his enlistment, Bloomfield was farming with his brother Septimus, a property known as Ravenswood at Trundle.

Bloomfield and his brother Lance enlisted on 3 April 1916 and were allocated to the 10th Field Company, Australian Engineers. They embarked from Sydney on board *HMAT Marathon* on 31 October 1916 and disembarked at Plymouth on 9 January 1917. After some training in England they proceeded overseas on 29 March. On 9 April, the Bloomfield brothers were taken on strength in France with the 10th Field Company. They served with this Company at Hill 60.

Bloomfield was killed in action on the night of 24 November 1917 by shell fire in a trench in Warne Lane opposite Warneton at Messines in Belgium. He was buried on Hill 63 at a place known as Chateau Rosenberg cemetery. However, the Imperial War Graves Commission could not secure the site as a military burial ground and had the bodies exhumed in 1930 for reburial in the Royal Berks Cemetery at Ploegsteert.

Charles and Ellen Bloomfield left Orchard Hills in August 1918 and moved to their property *Ravenswood* at Trundle. Around the same time, their sons Wallace and Septimus enlisted in the AIF. They were demobilised a week after Armistice Day.

- Berks Cemetery Extension, Ploegsteert, Belgium
- Honor Roll, St Nicholas of Myra Catholic Church, Penrith
- Honor Roll, Orchard Hills Public School



GERRING, PRIVATE ARTHUR STANLEY

01 DECEMBER 1917, AT BOULOGNE, FRANCE 39th Battalion, AIF Service number: 2499

Arthur Gerring was born in 1895 at St Marys, the son of John Richard and Ellen Gerring. The family lived at 'Mountainview', St Marys. After attending school at St Marys and Penrith, Gerring worked at the St Marys Post Office as a postman. Prior to enlistment, he had served with the cadets and three years with the 41st Battalion. On enlistment, Gerring listed his occupation as railway employee.

Gerring enlisted on 21 February 1916, and was allocated to the 2nd Reinforcements of the Miners Corps under the leadership of Professor David. He left Sydney on 31 March aboard the *City of Edinburgh* and marched in at Etaples in France on 1 June. In October 1916 and again in January 1917, Gerring was hospitalised with dental problems. Gerring was attached to the 1st Tunnelling Company on 26 June 1916. He served with this Company at Ypres, Armentieres and Hill 60. On 6 May 1917, Gerring was classified as unfit for tunnelling and in August was taken on strength with the 39th Battalion.

On 12 October 1917, during action at Passchendaele, Gerring suffered gunshot wounds. He was treated and transferred to No 3 Australian Casualty Clearing Station. He was transferred to Boulogne on 14 October. Over the next few days he contracted bronchitis and bronco pneumonia and died on 1 December 1917. He was buried in the Boulogne Cemetery.

Gerring named his mother as the beneficiary in his will. Annie Edith Nightingale (nee Edmonds) requested Gerring's medals on behalf of their ex-nuptial son, Stanley John Edmonds, who had been born in 1914 and was receiving a war pension from his father. When the authorities notified Gerring's parents, his mother had a 'very decided objection' to any medals being allotted to this child. Her reasoning was that her son denied paternity. On 9 September 1922, the authorities split the medals – the British War Medal and bronze plaque were issued to Gerring's parents while the Victory Medal and scroll were issued to Annie Nightingale to hold in trust for her son. Annie Nightingale was the sister of Catherine 'Caddie' Edmonds.

In 1935 the St Marys-Mt Druitt RSL contacted the authorities requesting Gerring's medals be issued so that they could be presented to Gerring's parents. However, Base Records replied stating the medals had already been issued to Gerring's parents and his child, and that the parents were already aware of how the medals were disbursed.

- Eastern Cemetery Boulogne, France
- Honor Roll, Victoria Park, St Marys

This booklet has been compiled by Lorraine Stacker and the staff and volunteers at Penrith City Library

Sources:

National Archives of Australia National Library of Australia (Trove) Australian War Memorial Commonwealth War Graves Commission Penrith City Library St Marys and District Historical Society Family members of these fallen soldiers Peter Welsh

Cover image: Corporal Mertoun Sydney Mills

STATEMENT OF RECOGNITION OF PENRITH CITY'S ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURAL HERITAGE

Council values the unique status of Aboriginal people as the original owners and custodians of lands and waters, including the land and waters of Penrith City.

Council values the unique status of Torres Strait Islander people as the original owners and custodians of the Torres Strait Islands and surrounding waters.

We work together for a united Australia and City that respects this land of ours that values the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage, and provides justice and equity for all.





INDEX

Adams, Private Harry	2
Andrews, William	34
Baker, Owen Wallace	26
Baker, Richard Frederick (Richard Frederick Voller)	39
Bannister, Rupert Theodore Algernon	21
Blaxland, Cyril Falkner	36
Bloomfield, Octavius Kenneth Eason	45
Bennett, Lionel William (William Edward John Sargent)	6
Bunyan, Edwin Edward	38
Bunyan, Irwin	16
Cheesman, Reginald Hugh	3
Clissold, Charles Albert	19
Collum, John Steen Clare	4
Connell, Bede Septimus	28
Denny, George Bernard	22
Earp, Frederick Clarence	14
Eaton, Frederick George	12
Forrest, Richard Leslie	41
Gardiner, Albert George	7
Gerring, Arthur Stanley	46
Giddy, George Henry	8
Gregor, David Andrew	44
Harper, Ernest Frederick	37
Haylen, Francis Henry	33
Hughes, Luke	20
Kerry, John	29
Love, George	35

Luke, Samuel Henry	13
Mallard, Cecil	30
McGuinness, Robert William	18
McLean, Reginald Donald Joshua	11
Mills, Mertoun Sydney	24
Mitchell, Alexander Malcolm	25
Peck, Cecil Bertram Valentine	17
Perry, William	31
Purdon, Leslie Frederick	5
Simpson, John George	40
Skelton, Walter	15
Steele, Albert Edward	43
Stevenson, Alfred Lewis Groom	23
Stinson, William Edward	42
Stuckey, Victor Frank	9
Sullivan, Reginald William	10
Williams, Thomas William	32
Willis, Henry Raymond	27

PENRITH CITY LIBRARY

601 High St Phone: 4732 7891

OPENING HOURS

Monday-Friday 9am - 8pm Saturday 9am - 5pm | Sunday 10am - 5pm

Also in the Research Room Open 7 days 2pm - 5pm

PENRITH CITY COUNCIL

penrithcity.nsw.gov.au/library