

**Fort Pitt Military Cemetery,
Rochester, Kent
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



1873 PRIVATE

W. E. BARTLETT

59TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

11TH JUNE, 1917

William Edward BARTLETT

William Edward Bartlett was born on 15th August, 1887 at Munro, Gippsland, Victoria to parents William Prescott Bartlett & Catherine (Kate) Bartlett (nee McCormick – according to Victorian BD&M, however family trees on Ancestry have the maiden name as Fitzgerald).

William Edward Bartlett & Emma Maud Semple had a child in 1912 - Hilda May Semple with father listed as unknown & the mother as Maude Semple.

The 1912 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Gippsland, subdivision of Stratford, Victoria listed William Edward Bartlett, Grazier, of Munro. His parents were also listed – William Bartlett, Grazier & Catherine Bartlett, Home Duties, both of Munro.

The 1914 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Gippsland, subdivision of Stratford, Victoria listed William Edward Bartlett, Grazier, of Munro. His parents & brother were also listed - William Bartlett, Grazier & Catherine Bartlett, Home Duties & Allan Walter Bartlett, Labourer, all from Munro.

The 1915 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Gippsland, subdivision of Stratford, Victoria listed William Edward Bartlett, Grazier, of Munro. His parents were also listed – William Bartlett, Grazier & Catherine Bartlett, Home Duties, both of Munro.

The 1916 & 1917 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Gippsland, subdivision of Stratford, Victoria listed William Edward Bartlett, Grazier, of Munro. His father – William Bartlett, Grazier, of Munro was also listed.

William Edward Bartlett was a 27 year old, single, Grazier from Munro, Victoria when he enlisted on 18th January, 1916 with the 57th Infantry Battalion, 3rd Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 1873 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr W. P. Bartlett, of Munro, Victoria. William Edward Bartlett stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served for 3 years with 13th Light Horse. William Bartlett's brother – John Albert Fitzgerald Bartlett, aged 18, enlisted on 26th February, 1916 with 57th Infantry Battalion, 3rd Reinforcements & had a service number of 1872.

Private William Edward Bartlett was posted to 20th Depot Battalion at Castlemaine on 18th January, 1916. He was transferred to 57th Battalion, 3rd Reinforcements at Broadmeadows on 10th April, 1916.

Private William Edward Bartlett embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Ajana* (A31) on 8th July, 1916 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 31st August, 1916. His brother Private John Albert Fitzgerald Bartlett, 1872 also embarked that day.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Private William Edward Bartlett was marched in to 15th Training Battalion – Camp 26 at Larkhill, Wiltshire on 31st August, 1916.

Private William Edward Bartlett was admitted to Hospital on 10th September, 1916 & returned from Hospital to 15th Training Battalion on 21st September, 1916.

Private William Edward Bartlett proceeded overseas from 15th Training Battalion on 6th December, 1916 on S.S *Princess Henrietta* via Folkestone to Reinforcements of 59th Battalion.

Private William Edward Bartlett was marched in to 5th A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples on 7th December, 1916.

Private William Edward Bartlett was admitted to 20th General Hospital at Camiers on 9th December, 1916 with Scabies & discharged to Base Depot (5th A.D.B.D. Australian Divisional Base Depot) on 19th December, 1916. He was re-admitted to the same Hospital on 24th December, 1916 again with Scabies & discharged to Base Depot on 4th January, 1917.

Private William Edward Bartlett was transferred to 59th Battalion & taken on strength with 59th Battalion on 7th March, 1917.

Private William Edward Bartlett was wounded in action in France in 11th May, 1917. He was taken to 8th Australian Field Ambulance then transferred to 3rd Australian Casualty Clearing station on 12th May, 1917 with shrapnel wounds to left hand, legs & right foot. Pte Bartlett was transferred to 28th Ambulance Train on 14th May, 1917 & admitted to 3rd Canadian General Hospital at Boulogne, France on 15th May, 1917. Pte Bartlett embarked on the Hospital Ship *St. Andrew* on 16th May, 1917 for England.

War Diary – 59th Battalion, 11th May, 1917:

C.H.B. – Weather fine. Artillery (both hostile and our own) very active during the day. Capt. Kuring joined Battn from BECOURT Camp and took over command of Battn.

9 – 10 pm – Hostile Artillery fire very heavy.

9.32 pm – Received orders to “Stand to” ready to move forward if required.

9.40 pm – Hostile artillery fire slackened off.

10.30 pm – Received word that situation was normal once more.

Coy Commander of relieving Unit came up to inspect line prior to taking over.

58th Battn are to attack enemys lines tomorrow at 3.40 am. “B” and “D” Coys are placed at the disposal of C/O 58th Battn for the attack. Casualties 2 Offs wound – Capt Kuring, Lt. Dunkley. 1 Off killed – Lt. Mitchell. 31 ORanks wounded.

(Information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private William Edward Bartlett was admitted to Fort Pitt Military Hospital, Chatham, Kent, England on 17th May, 1917 with gunshot wounds to head, left hand & left leg. The Hospital report reads “*All wounds badly infected. Osteomyelitis of Tibia – left hand. Thumb blown away, lacerated & very dirty stump. Head fracture of frontal bone.*”

Mrs W. P. Bartlett, of Lucknow Post Office, mother of Private William Edward Bartlett, wrote to Base Records on 21st May, 1917 stating that she had just received a wire from her son that he was “In Hospital, England, progressing favourably.” She stated she had “no intimation from the Defence Department of his illness nor nature of same. If any had been sent I’ve not received it, will you kindly inform me if you have anything to tell on this matter.” Mrs Catherine Bartlett wrote to Base Records again on 30th May, 1917 enquiring into her son’s condition. A reply had been sent by Base Records to Mrs W. P. Bartlett on 29th May, 1917 stating that no report had reached the office to date that her son was in hospital. Advice was sent to Mr Bartlett on 1st June, 1917 advising that his son had been wounded. Advice was again sent to Mr Bartlett on 12th June, 1917 advising that Private William Bartlett had been admitted on 17th May, 1917 to Fort Pitt Hospital, Chatham, England suffering from gunshot wounds to legs and left hand.

Private William Edward Bartlett died at 7.15 am on 11th June, 1917, aged 29, at Fort Pitt Military Hospital, Chatham, Kent, England from wounds received in action in France – Gunshot wounds to left hand, leg, foot, head & exhaustion.

A death for William E. Bartlett, aged 28, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Medway, Kent, England.

Private William Edward Bartlett was buried at 3 pm on 14th June, 1917 in Fort Pitt Military Cemetery, Rochester, Kent, England – Chapel Section, Soldiers’ Corner, Plot number 1462 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Pte Bartlett - *Coffin was good polished Elm with brass mountings. The deceased soldier was buried with full Military honours, Gun Carriage, Band, Firing Party and Buglers furnished by the 5th Bn Middlesex under the command of Lieut McKenzie Rogon were in attendance. Coffin was shrouded with the Union Jack, and surmounted by several lovely floral tributes. The coffin was borne to the graveside by members of the R.A.M.C. attached to the Fort Pitt Hospital. The Revd G. A. Selbie officiated at the graveside. The*

"Last Post" was sounded and members of the band accompanied by several musical instruments rendered a hymn at the graveside. No. 1872 Pte J. A. Bartlett (Brother) of the 66th Bn A.I.F. Windmill Camp and No. 77105 Sgt J. E. Bennett (Cousin) of the 16th Bn Canadian Scottish of Shornecliffe, were present at the funeral. Temporary oak cross to be erected by Commonwealth Military Authorities.

A War Pension was granted to Hilda May Semple, of Munro, ex-nuptial child of the late Private William Edward Bartlett in the sum of 20/- per fortnight payable from 14th August, 1917 to her mother Maud E. Semple.

Pte William Edward Bartlett was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Bartlett's next-of-kin.

Provost Sergeant Taylor made a report dated 6th June, 1922 to Brigade Major, 4th Brigade affecting the disposal of the war medals in respect of the service of the late No. 1873 Pte W. E. Bartlett which reads *"I made full enquires and as a result of my investigations do not consider that Maud Emma Semple is a fit and proper person to have control of Hilda May Semple, or to accept Medals etc on her behalf, for the following reasons:-*

This child is now 10 years old and was under the mothers care until she was 18 months old, since then she has been placed in charge of two separate institutions and 8 other persons, as a result she has been neglected and is very backward in her education.

She is at present in charge of Mrs Dennis, 212 Mary St, Richmond, I saw this child, she was neatly and cleanly dressed and appeared in perfect health. I would strongly recommend that this child be allowed to remain in Mrs Dennis's charge, she has no children of her own and is prepared to accept all responsibility if placed under her control.

The pension allotted to the child is drawn by the mother and handed over to Mrs Dennis, the address of the mother is not known, she previously gave 43 Derby St, Collingwood, and latterly 212 Mary St, Richmond as her address for the purpose of receiving letter, she has not lived at either of these places."

Base Records wrote to Mrs E. Dennis, on 30th June, 1922 stating that it was proposed to hand over a portion of the War Medals of the late No. 1873 Private W. E. Bartlett to be kept in trust for Miss Hilda M. Semple, the deceased soldiers' ex-nuptial child. The medals would only be handed over on the distinct understanding that they would be preserved with due care and produced to the Department of Defence at any time upon receipt of its demand in writing. If Mrs Dennis was agreeable to accept the Medals etc under those conditions the attached bond was to be completed before a J.P. At the same time a letter was written to Mr W. P. Bartlett, of Lucknow Post Office advising that a proportion of the War Medals etc of his son – the late No. 1873 Private W. E. Bartlett would be handed over to his daughter, on whose behalf a pension is being paid by the Government. Mrs Dennis signed a Statutory Declaration on 6th July, 1922 stating that she would preserve any War Medals etc in trust for Miss Hilda M. Semple. No reply was received from Mr William Bartlett.

In August, 1922 it was decided that the Victory Medal and Memorial Scroll be kept in trust for deceased's ex-nuptial child & that the British War Medal, Memorial Plaque and brochure "Where the Australians Rest" be given to the late soldier's father.

The Memorial Scroll & the Victory Medal were returned to Base Records by Mrs E. Dennis on 9th October, 1928 as Miss Hilda Semple had left the home of Mrs E. Dennis. The Scroll & Victory Medal were taken into storage.

The Memorial Scroll & the Victory Medal were re-issued & signed for by Hilda Bartlett on 23rd March, 1929.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private W. E. Bartlett – service number 1873, of 59th Battalion Australian Infantry, A.I.F. No family details are listed.

Private W. E. Bartlett is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 167.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

W. E. Bartlett is remembered on the Munro District Roll of Honour located in the Munro Hall, Munro Road, Munro, Victoria, along with his brothers J. Bartlett & A. W. Bartlett who all died in World War 1.



Munro District Roll of Honour (Photo from Monument Australia – Craig Moralee)

(96 pages of Pte William Edward Bartlett's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



Connected to Private William Edward Bartlett:

Younger Brother (born 1890) – Private James Bartlett, 3801, was killed in action on 3rd/4th September 1916 at Mouquet Farm, Pozieres, Buried in Courcelette British Cemetery.

Younger Brother (born 1892) – Private Allan Walter Bartlett, 23/1547, 2nd Battalion, Canterbury Regiment, New Zealand Expeditionary Force. died 10th August, 1916 of appendicitis. Buried in Calais Southern Cemetery, France.



Newspaper Notices

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

316TH LIST

Died of Wounds

Pte W. E. BARTLETT, Lucknow

(The Bendigo Independent, Victoria – 28 June, 1917)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)

A letter from Base Records, dated 2nd July, 1921, to Mr W. P. Bartlett of Lucknow, via Bairnsdale, Victoria, advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of his son - the late Pte W. E. Bartlett had not been answered & non-receipt of a reply within 21 days would have to be accepted as indicating that no further action was to be taken.

Pte W. E. Bartlett does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Fort Pitt Military Cemetery, Rochester, Kent, England

Fort Pitt Military Cemetery, Rochester, Kent contains 289 identified Commonwealth War Graves.

During both wars there were naval and military establishments in the neighbourhood of Rochester, and some fishing and shipping at the port.

Fort Pitt Military Cemetery contains a plot of 266 First World War graves. The 25 Second World War graves (two of them unidentified) are north of the plot. All save two of them are together in a group.

(Information & photos from CWGC)



Photo of Pte W. E. Bartlett's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Fort Pitt Military Cemetery, Rochester, Kent, England.

