

**Hollybrook Memorial,  
Southampton, Hampshire, England  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**2652 PRIVATE**

**E. W. TOMS**

**39TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**30TH NOVEMBER, 1916**

## Eric William TOMS

Eric William Toms was born at Nelligen, NSW in 1895 to parents Matthew Samuel Toms & Ann Sophia Rose Toms (nee Wilson).

Ann Sophia Rose Toms, mother of Eric William Toms, died in 1897.

Eric William Toms attended school at Parramatta, Sydney, NSW.

Eric William Toms, a blacksmith, stated on his Attestation Papers that he had been apprenticed to Mathew Jones at Bellingen (NSW) for 5 years.

Eric William Toms married Sarah A. Freeman on 22nd December, 1915 in the district of Port Macquarie, New South Wales.

Eric William Toms was a 23 year old, married, Blacksmith from Pennant Street, Parramatta, NSW when he enlisted at Royal Agricultural Show Grounds, Moore Park, Sydney, NSW on 20th September, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2652 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Sarah Ann Toms, Pennant Street, Parramatta, NSW (a later address was listed on Attestation Papers as Rawdon Island, Hastings River, via Wauchope, NSW). Eric Toms stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously served with S.C. at Camperdown for 3 months. He also stated he had previously been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service due to his chest measurement being below standard.

Private Eric William Toms was posted as a Recruit at Show Ground Camp, Sydney, NSW from 20th September, 1916. He was transferred to 5th Reinforcements of 39th Battalion at Kiama, NSW from 29th September, 1916.

Private Eric William Toms was written up on 30th October, 1916 while posted at Kiama – for overstaying final leave of 2 days – 27th October – 28th October, 1916. He forfeited Pay for time absent.

Private Eric William Toms embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Benalla* (A24) on 9th November, 1916 with the 39th Infantry Battalion, 5th Reinforcements.

Private Eric William Toms died at 2.10 am on 30th November, 1916 on board HMAT *Benalla* (A24) while at Sea from Meningitis.

The Senior Medical Officer of H.M.A.T. *Benalla* A24 wrote the following on 30th November, 1916: "*Certificate of Death. This to certify that I attended Pte A. Toms 5/39 Bn. during his last illness. I saw him on 30/11/16 at 1.30 am. After a period of illness of five days, he died from Cerebro Spinal Meningitis at 2.10 am on 30th November 1916.*"

Private Eric William Toms was buried at Sea (Casualty Form – Active Service recorded "Died & Buried at Sea 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1916", however Field Service Form has recorded the date of death as 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1916 & Burial details as "At Sea 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1916"). He is commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England as he has no grave. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

A War Pension was granted to Sarah Ann Toms, Rawdon Island, Wauchope, widow of the late Private Eric William Toms in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 30th January, 1917.

Private Eric Williams Toms was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Toms' widow – Mrs S. A. Toms, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent December, 1921 & despatched January, 1922 & Plaque sent July, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Eric Williams Toms – service number 2652, of 39th Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Private E. W. Toms is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 132.



*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

(38 pages of Private Eric William Toms' 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) & National Archives*



**Private Eric William Toms**

## **Newspaper Notices**

### **CASUALTIES**

#### **LARGE NUMBER SICK**

#### **251st LIST**

#### **NEW SOUTH WALES**

#### **DIED OF ILLNESS**

Pte E. W. TOMS, Parramatta

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 16 December, 1916)*

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### **Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones**

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for cemeteries and memorials in 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. In all 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth forces from WWI and WWII have been honoured and commemorated in perpetuity.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of its mandate, is responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead individually and equally. To this end, the war dead are commemorated by name on a headstone, at an identified site of a burial, or on a memorial. War dead are commemorated uniformly and equally, irrespective of military or civil rank, race or creed.

Not all service personnel have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. In some instances the relative chose to have their own memorial/headstone placed on the deceased's grave. These private headstones are not maintained by the CWGC as they have no jurisdiction to maintain them.

### **Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England**

The Hollybrook Memorial is situated in Southampton (Hollybrook) Cemetery behind the plot of First World War graves near the main entrance.

The Hollybrook Memorial commemorates by name almost 1,900 servicemen and women of the Commonwealth land and air forces\* whose graves are not known, many of whom were lost in transports or other vessels torpedoed or mined in home waters (\*Officers and men of the Commonwealth's navies who have no grave but the sea are commemorated on memorials elsewhere). The memorial also bears the names of those who were lost or buried at sea, or who died at home but whose bodies could not be recovered for burial. Almost one third of the names on the memorial are those of officers and men of the South African Native Labour Corps, who died when the troop transport Mendi sank in the Channel following a collision on 21 February 1917. Other vessels sunk with significant loss of life were: HS Anglia, a hospital ship sunk by mine off Dover on 17 November 1915. SS Citta Di Palermo, an Italian transport carrying Commonwealth troops, sunk by mine off Brindisi on 8 January 1916. In rescuing survivors, two Royal Naval Otranto drifters were themselves mined and blown up. HMTs Donegal and Warilda, ambulance transports torpedoed and sunk between Le Havre and Southampton on 17 April 1917 and 3 August 1918. HS Glenart Castle, a hospital ship torpedoed and sunk off Lundy on 26 February 1918. SS Galway Castle, torpedoed

and sunk in the Atlantic on 12 September 1918. RMS Leinster, the Irish mail boat, torpedoed and sunk in the Irish Sea on 10 October 1918. Among those commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial is Field Marshall Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, who died when the battle cruiser HMS Hampshire was mined and sunk off Scapa Flow on 5 June 1916.

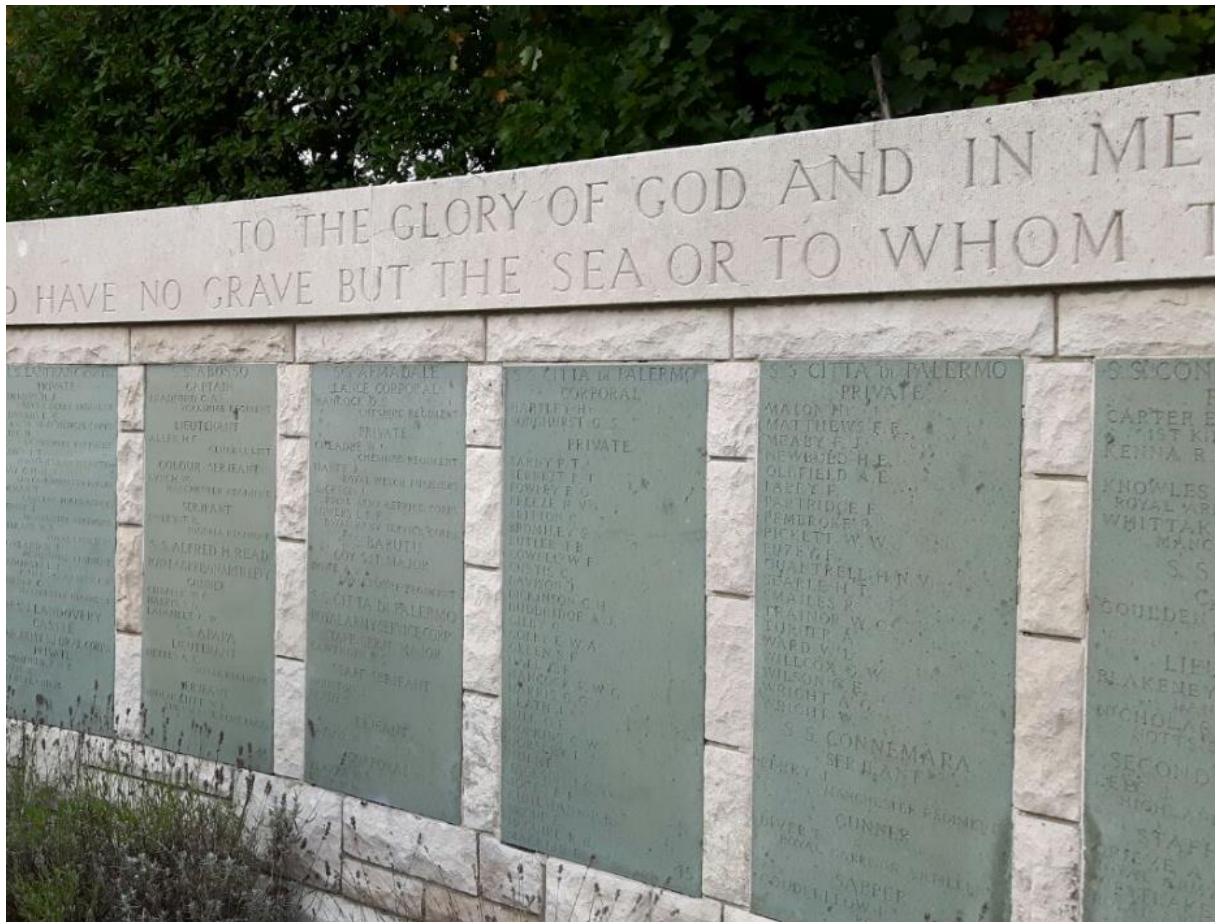
The memorial was designed by T. Newham and unveiled by Sir William Robertson on 10 December 1930.

There are approximately 162 Australian World War 1 Service Personnel commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England.

*(Information & photos from CWGC)*



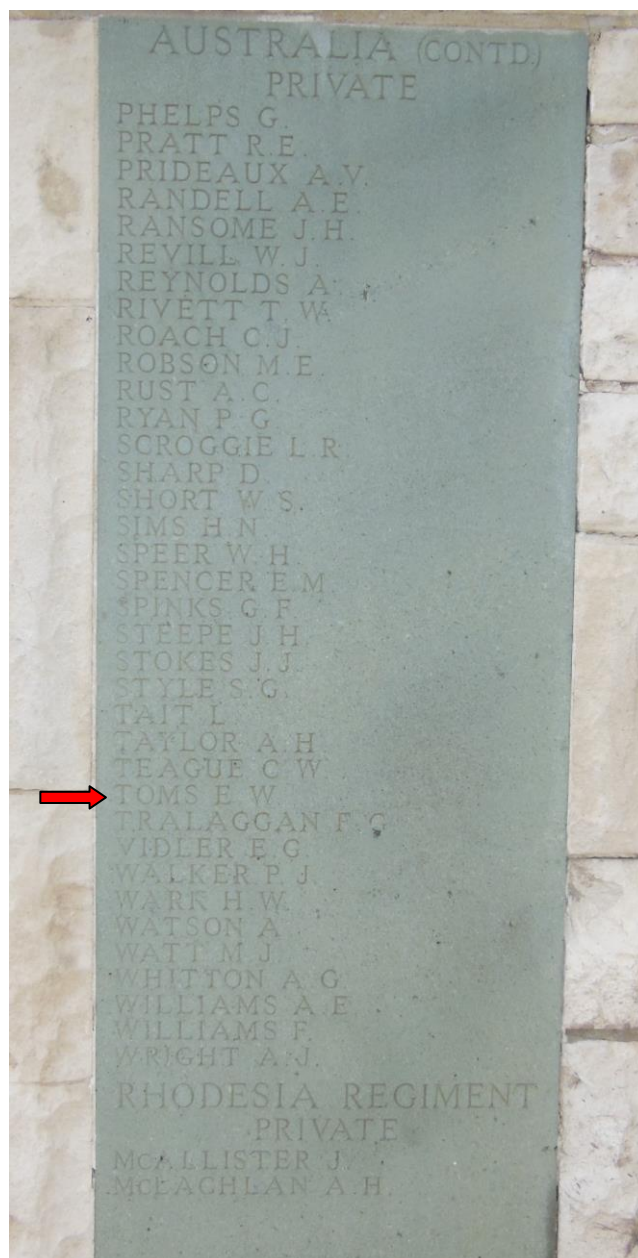
**Cross of Sacrifice**



Name Panels behind Cross of Sacrifice

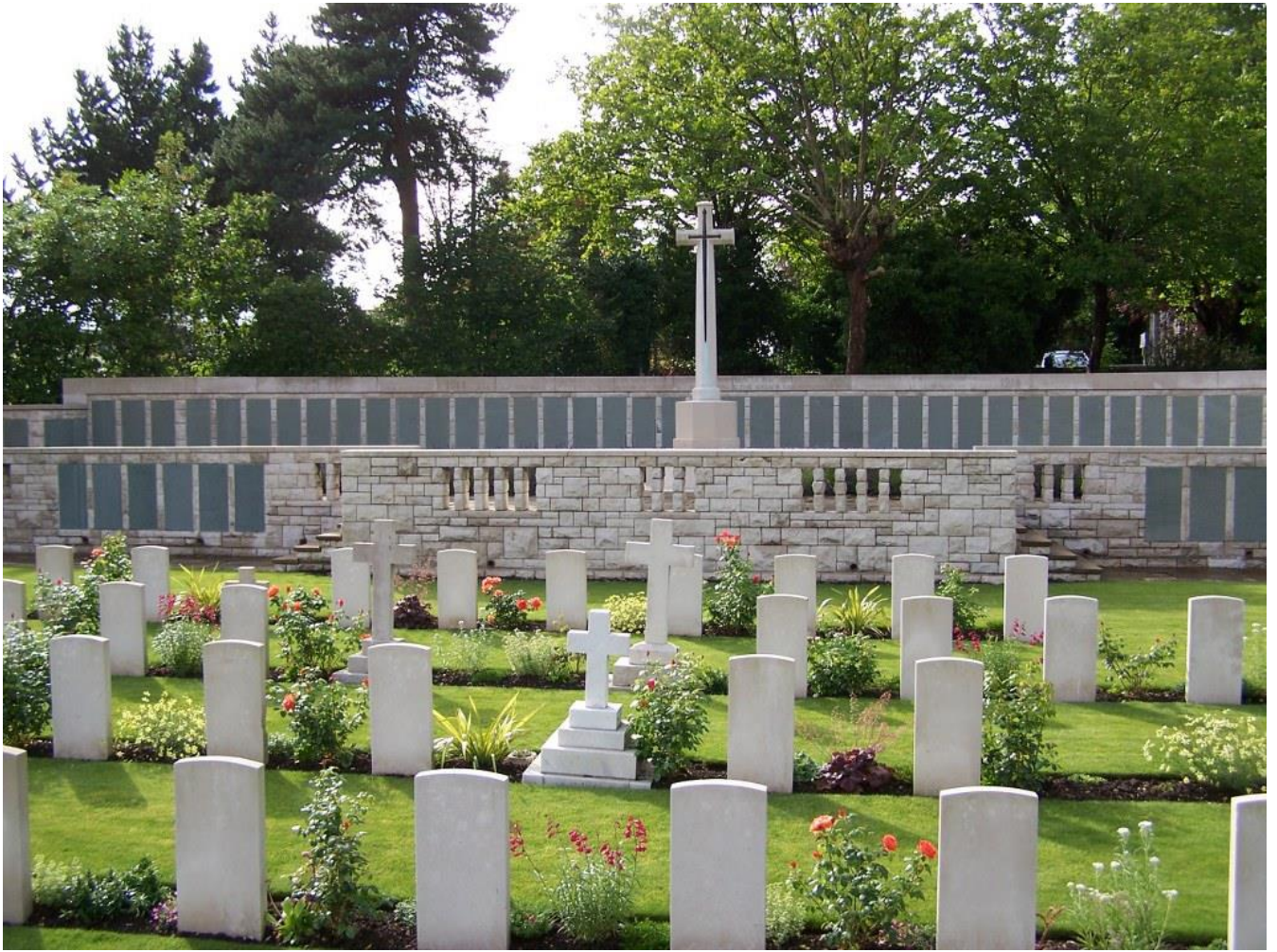


Photo of Private E. W. Toms' name on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England.



(Photo by julia&keld – Find a Grave)





**CWGC Graves in Hollybrook Cemetery with Cross of Sacrifice & Hollybrook Memorial**

*(Photo from CWGC)*