

**Cambridge City Cemetery,
Cambridge, Cambridgeshire
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



3653 LANCE CPL

E. C. WILLIAMS

57TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

11TH AUGUST, 1916 Age 22

Sacred To The Memory

Of Our Beloved Son

Our Darling Ernie

Ernest Charles WILLIAMS

Ernest Charles Williams was born at Yarrowonga, Victoria in 1894 to parents Thomas and Lillias Jessie Williams (nee Crabb).

Ernest Charles Williams attended school at Greta, Victoria.

Ernest Charles Williams was a 21 year old, single, Farmer from South Laceby, Victoria when he enlisted on 15th July, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 3653 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr Thomas Williams, of South Laceby, Victoria.

Private Ernest Charles Williams was posted to 1st Depot Battalion at Seymour on 15th July, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to 8th Reinforcements of 24th Battalion on 9th December, 1915.

Private Ernest Charles Williams embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Afric (A19)* on 5th January, 1916 with the 6th Infantry Brigade, 24th Infantry Battalion, 8th Reinforcements.

Private Ernest Charles Williams was allotted to & proceeded to join 57th Battalion from Zeitoun on 23rd February, 1916. He was taken on strength of 57th Battalion at Tel-el-Kebir on 23rd February, 1916 from 24th Battalion Reinforcements.

Private Ernest Charles Williams was appointed Lance Corporal at Ferry Post on 21st May, 1916.

Lance Corporal Ernest Charles Williams embarked from Alexandria on 17th June, 1916 on H.T. *Kalyan* to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 24th June, 1916.

Lance Corporal Ernest Charles Williams was wounded in action in France on 16th July, 1916. He was admitted to 1st Australian Casualty Clearing Station on 16th July, 1916 with gunshot wounds to head. Lance Corporal Williams was transferred to Ambulance Train on 17th July, 1916 & admitted to 35th General Hospital at Calais, France on 18th July, 1916 with gunshot wounds to forehead. Lance Corporal Williams was reported to be dangerously ill on 20th July, 1916. He embarked for England on Hospital Ship *Dieppe* from Calais on 31st July, 1916.

57th Battalion

The 57th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 18 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 5th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 5th, the 57th was predominantly composed of men from the suburbs of Melbourne. The battalion became part of the 15th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

Having only arrived in France in late June, the 57th became embroiled in its first major battle on the Western Front on 19 July, without the benefit of an introduction to the trenches in a "quiet" sector. The battle of Fromelles was a disaster. Fortunately for the 57th it was allocated a supporting role and suffered relatively light casualties compared to its sister battalions. This, however, meant that 57th carried the burden of holding the line in ensuing days for the battalion. Despite its grievous losses, the 5th Division continued to man the front in the Fromelles sector for a further two months.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 57th Battalion

15th July, 1916:

0630 – Enemy commences shelling our position. This was continued until 1230. The shelling was mostly high explosive and did considerable damage to our parapets.

2030 – The Battalion on our right made a gas attack which sharked the enemy shelling. About 2115 the fire shifted on to our "B" & "C" Coys and we suffered severe shelling till about 2330. Our communication trenches and firing line were damaged. Casualties for the day were 1 Officer (2Lt. A. E. Keys) wounded 9 other ranks killed, 1 died of wounds and 18 other ranks wounded.

16th July, 1916:

The day was spent preparing for the attack on the following day. Our guns shelled consistently throughout the day; there was very little enemy fire in reply.

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Mr T. Williams, of Laceby South, Victoria, was advised by Base Records on 25th July, 1916 that his son was dangerously ill with gunshot wounds to forehead. A request was made on behalf of Mrs & Mrs Williams by W. C. Hill on 27th July, 1916 to Mr P. J. Moloney, Esq. M. P., Federal Parliament House, Melbourne for further information regarding their son's injury & his whereabouts. Base Records replied to Mr Moloney that no further reports concerning Lance Corporal E. C. Williams had been received.

Lance Corporal Ernest Charles Williams died at 3.30 pm on 11th August, 1916 at 1st Eastern General Hospital, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England from wounds received in action – gunshot wound to Head & Pneumococcus Meningitis.

A death for Ernest C. Williams, aged 22, was registered in the September quarter, 1916 in the district of Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England.

Lance Corporal Ernest Charles Williams was buried in Cambridge City Cemetery, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England – Plot number C. 3398 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Newspaper item - Wangaratta Chronicle, Victoria – 4 October, 1916:

THE LATE LANCE-CORPORAL E. C. WILLIAMS

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Williams, of Laceby South, are in receipt of the following letters concerning their late son, Lance-Corporal Ernest C. Williams, who died on 11th August, from wounds : — Sister E. S. Riddall, of Ward 1, 35 General Hospital, France, writing on 6th July, says : — "I am sorry to tell you that your son, L.-C. Williams is in my ward with a severe wound of head, the piece of shell entering had broken his skull and there were some pieces of bone lying against his brain. The medical officer operated and relieved the pressure and he has improved since. We will send him to a hospital in England. He sends his love and says you are not to worry as he is making great headway. And he deserves to get well as he has been so good a patient and done everything to help himself to get well quickly." On 29th July their son wrote as follows : — "Just a line We are now pulling into Cambridge; left France this morning, and had a good trip. I am getting on fine soon be myself again. Expect to have a good time when I got a few days' leave. Hope you are all well at home." On 12th August. Matron A. Macdonald, of the 1st Eastern General Hospital, Cambridge, wrote : — "I regret to tell you that your son died in this hospital yesterday. He was admitted on July 30th with a convoy of wounded from the front. He received a very bad head wound and underwent a severe operation in France. For the first few days after he was admitted — in fact up to about two days before he died — he seemed to be improving; but last Wednesday evening he was taken worse and it was found necessary to operate again. A very bad abscess was found on the brain, and he never really rallied. You will be comforted to know he died most peacefully, and the Presbyterian Minister was praying with him when he died. He always spoke most affectionately of you; and he was an excellent patient. He is to be buried here on Monday next, August 14th. I feel for you in your great loss, especially as you are so far away. Please accept my most sincere sympathy." Mr. C. B. Firth, writing from Newnham College, Cambridge, on 16th August, says : — "Will you allow me to send you my sympathy. The news of the death of your son in hospital here last Friday must have come as a terrible shock to you. He had been getting on well until a few days before. His name was on a list of Australians sent to a friend of mine whom I have been lately helping in her work of looking up all Australians who come to the Hospital. I saw your son twice and had nice, though short, talks with him and was able to leave him an Australian paper to read. It was shock to me when I heard he had died. The nurses did their utmost for him, and the doctors are highly skilled, so I know you may feel that he had much care. Your son has been one of those who have made my friend and myself, in visiting Australians, feel more strongly than ever the close bond of union between us all, and more conscious than ever of the great debt we owe to the magnificent loyalty and courage of the Australian soldiers. I have been much struck by their straightforwardness and wonderful cheerful patience and their constant courtesy — and, if you will allow me to say so, your son was a true Australian. We sent a bunch of flowers tied with red white and blue ribbon to put on the coffin."

Lance Corporal Ernest Charles Williams was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Lance Corporal Williams' father – Mr T. Williams, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent November, 1921 & Plaque sent July, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Lance Corporal Ernest Charles Williams - service number 3653, aged 22, of 57th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Thomas and Lillias Jessie Williams, of Stewarton Farm, Wangaratta, Victoria, Australia.

Lance Corporal E. C. Williams is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 164.



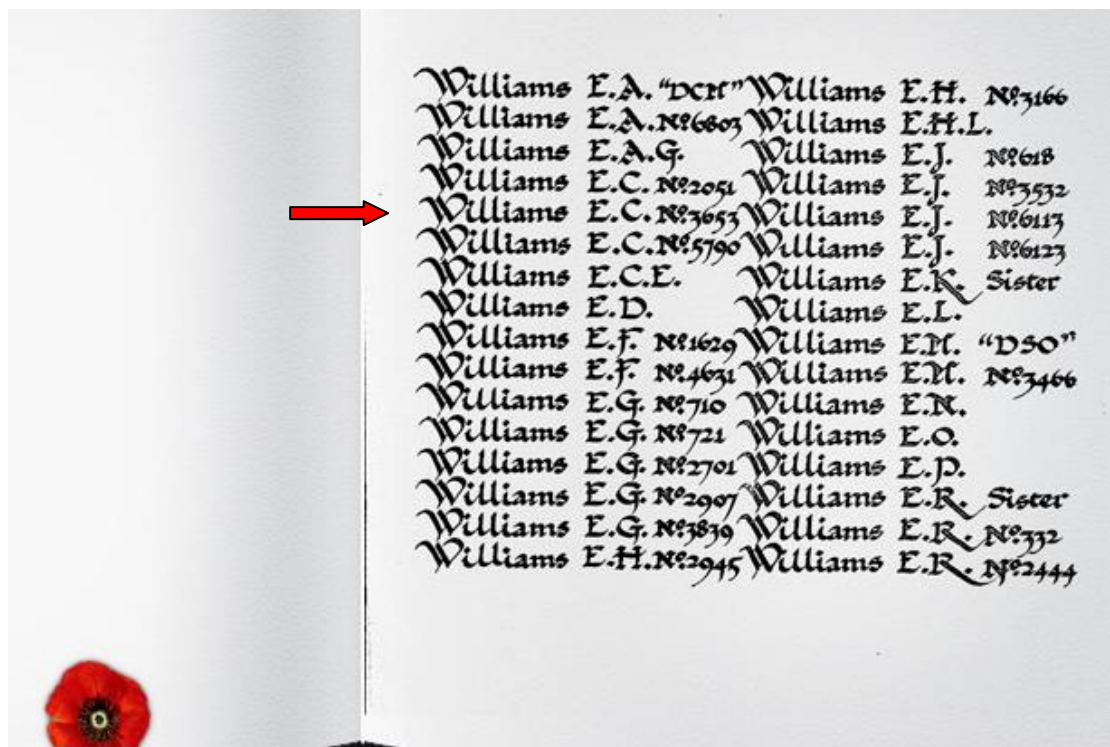
Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

E. C. Williams is remembered on the Oxley War Memorial, located in Oxley Memorial Park, Green Street, Oxley, Victoria.



Oxley War Memorial (Photos from Carol's Headstone Photos)

E. C. Williams is remembered in the Book of Remembrance at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, Victoria.



(47 pages of Lance Corporal Ernest Charles Williams' 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



Newspaper Notices

TOLL OF WAR

189TH CASUALTY LIST

WOUNDED

Lance-Corp. E. C. Williams, Laceby, South Aust.

(The Evening Echo, Ballarat, Victoria – 3 August, 1916)

CASUALTIES IN FRANCE

Mr Thomas Williams, Laceby South, Wangaratta, has received information of the death of his son, Lance-Corporal Ernest C. Williams, who was recently reported as wounded in the forehead while fighting in France. Death occurred from pneumonia at Cambridge Hospital, England. Lance-Corporal William was a young man of fine physique. He had been on service since last year.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria –26 August, 1916)

NEWS OF OUR SOLDIERS

DEATH OF LANCE-CORPORAL E. WILLIAMS

News of the death of Lance-Corporal Ernest Williams, son of Mr. and Mrs Thomas Williams, of Laceby, was made known on Wednesday, when a telegram forwarded by Colonel Hawker was received. The telegram conveyed the sad news that the young soldier had died on 11th August from pneumonia and cocus meningitis in the General Hospital, Cambridge, England. Three weeks ago Mr and Mrs Williams received a telegram notifying them that Ernest had been wounded and in hospital. The news received on Wednesday that he had died from pneumonia and meningitis therefore came as a shock. The late Lance-Cpl. Williams was the eldest son, and only 21 years of age, He enlisted in August, 1915, and left Australia on January 4th of this year. After a brief stay in Egypt he was sent to France, where after some weeks in action he was wounded. He worked on his father's farm was an industrious young fellow, and a favorite with all who knew him. Much sympathy is expressed for the parents and family in their sad bereavement. Another brother, Gunner T, Harold Williams, is fighting in France, and in addition there are two other brothers - Ferdinand and Allan, and three sisters - Dorothy, Hope and Faith, all of whom reside at Laceby.

(Wangaratta Chronicle, Victoria – 26 August, 1916)

LANCE-CORPL. E. C. WILLIAMS (Dead)

Mr and Mrs Thos. Williams, of Laceby South, have received word that their son, Lance-Corporal Ernest C. Williams, died from pneumonia and meningitis in the general hospital, Cambridge, on August 11. Three weeks previously the news was received that he was seriously wounded in the forehead by gun fire. Deceased enlisted twelve months ago, and was 26 years of age last month.

(Benalla Standard, Victoria –29 August, 1916)

DEATH ON ACTIVE SERVICE

WILLIAMS – On the 11th August, at Cambridge Hospital, died of wounds received in action, Cpl. E. C. Williams, Laceby South.

I shall know his voice in the angel's song;
His step on the golden floor;
And his smile of welcome, Oh! how sweet;
When we meet to part no more.

-Inserted by his sorrowing one, F. I. Allan, Milawa.

(*Wangaratta Chronicle*, Victoria – 2 September, 1916)

THANKS

MR and MRS THOMAS WILLIAMS desire to tender their sincere thanks to their friends for letters, telegrams, cards, and other expressions of sympathy in connection with the death of their late son, Corporal E. C. Williams.

“Redvers Park”

Laceby South, August 31, 1916.

(*Wangaratta Chronicle*, Victoria – 2 September, 1916)

TOLL OF WAR

205TH CASUALTY LIST

DIED OF ILLNESS

Lance-Corp. E. C. Williams, Laceby

(*The Evening Echo*, Ballarat, Victoria – 4 September, 1916)

IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAMS – In fond and loving memory of our dear son and brother, Lance-Cpl. Ernest Chas. Williams, who died of wounds at Cambridge Hospital, England, on the 11th August, 1916, in his 22nd year.

Bitter tears of anguish flow,
From aching hearts bowed down with woe;
For hushed is a voice that was once so gay,
For our dear son and brother is called away.

Called away, but oh, how sweet,
To think that by-and-bye we'll meet;
He is safely resting now,
With a wreath of laurels o'er his brow,

Called where angels sweetly say,
From death to life he is called away
Called where angels' voices tell,
God the Father doeth all things well

Weep not for me, my parents, sisters and brothers dear,
I am not dead, I am only sleeping here;

Far away from worldly strife and gain,
Free from all sorrow, grief and pain.

Short on earth was my stay,
But long will be my rest;

God called me away,
And he knows what is best.

The angels stooping from above,
Against our names will pencil love;
Far greater love hath no man than we,
Who under the battle's hottest fire
Laid down our lives for King and Empire.

-Inserted by his sorrowing parents, sisters and brothers, and Harold (on active service.)

(Wangaratta Chronicle, Victoria – 11 August, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAMS – In loving memory of our dearly loved son and brother, Lance Corporal Ernest Charles, who died of wounds in Cambridge Hospital, England, 11th August, 1916.

Manly, Unselfish and Brave.

The heart that throbbed with love has ceased to beat,
The busy hands are still, the willing feet.
Those kindly lovelit eyes, that beaming smile,
Are only hidden from us for a while,

He is not dead.

But far above earth's dim and misty light,
He stands triumphant on the shining height,
He is not dead, but lifted up,
To be enthroned for evermore.

Lord, with Thee.

-Inserted by his sorrowing parents, brothers and sisters, Sig. T. H. Williams, on active service abroad, and Pte F. F. Williams, Broadmeadows Camp.

(Wangaratta Chronicle, Victoria – 10 August, 1918)

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)

Base Records wrote to Mr T. Williams, of "Stewarton Farm", Wangaratta, Victoria, in September, 1921, to advise the Star of David that had been chosen to be incised on the permanent headstone for Lance Corporal E. C. Williams was the emblem of the Jewish faith & as their son recorded Presbyterian as his religion they thought that the choice of the Cross, being the symbol for Christianity, may be preferred. Mr Thomas Williams replied to Base Records thanking them for the information & choosing the cross to be inscribed on his son's headstone.

Lance Corporal E. C. Williams does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Sacred To The Memory Of Our Beloved Son

Our Darling Ernie

Cambridge City Cemetery, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England

Cambridge City Cemetery, Cambridge (known locally as Newmarket Road Cemetery) contains 1,019 Commonwealth War Graves – 186 from World War 1 & 833 from World War 2.

The 1st Eastern General Hospital, with 1,173 beds, was posted to Cambridge during the First World War, initially at the Leys School and Trinity College, later in huts. The First World War burials in Cambridge City Cemetery are mostly in two plots, one in the southern part of the burial ground, known as the Dominion Plot, and the other on the northern boundary. The Cross of Sacrifice stands on the western border of the Dominion Plot, while in the centre of the other is a memorial cross of Portland stone which was erected by private subscription. The Second World War graves are also mainly in two War Graves Plots with a few others scattered throughout the cemetery. The general Service plot was established in 1940, and the Air Force plot in 1942 for the burial of casualties from the Air Force stations set up in the eastern counties during the war. These included Bomber Command bases in Lincolnshire and fighter stations in Norfolk and Suffolk. The Stone of Remembrance, which was unveiled by Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Tedder in July 1951, stands near the centre of the Air Force plot. Cambridge City Cemetery contains 181 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and 829, (inclusive 3 unidentified), from the Second World War. The cemetery also contains four non-war service burials and ten war graves of other nationalities.

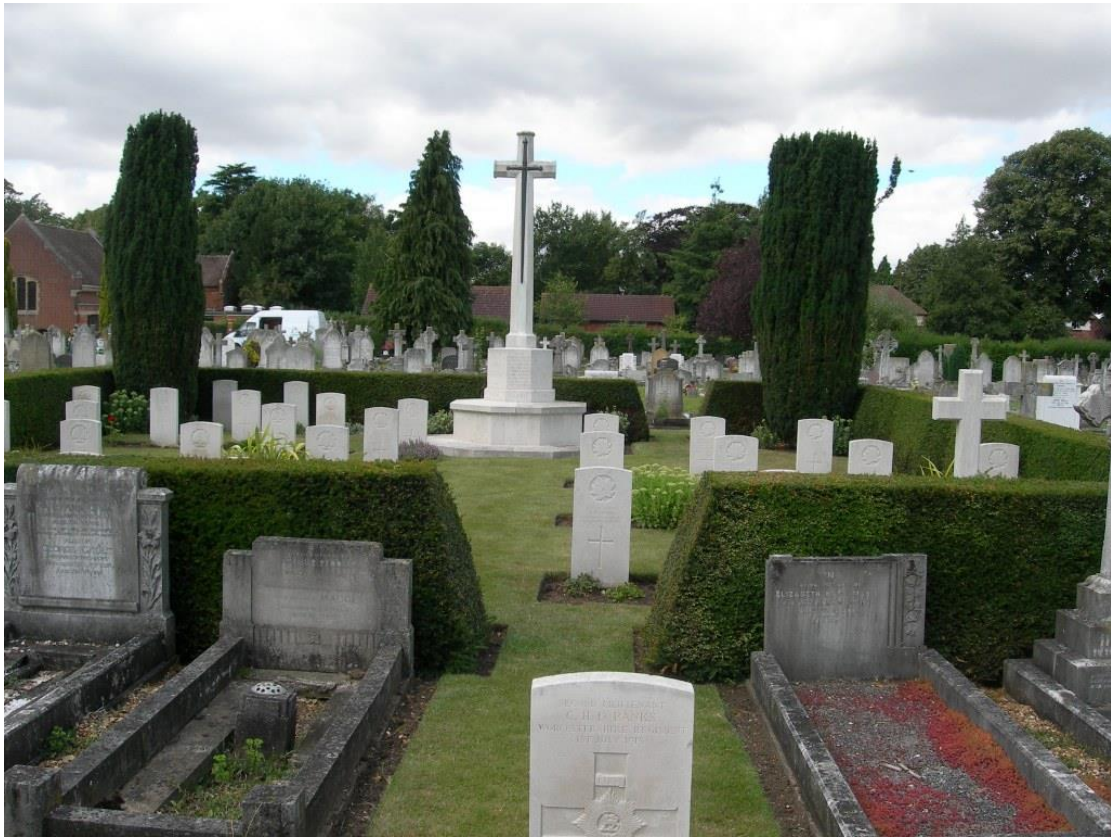
(Information & photos from CWGC)



Photo of Lance Corporal E. C. Williams's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Cambridge City Cemetery, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England.



(Photo by Julia&keld – Find a Grave)



Cross of Sacrifice (Photo from CWGC)





Entrance to Cambridge City Cemetery & Map (below) (Photos by Julia&keld – Find a Grave)

