

**Ocklynge Cemetery,
Eastbourne, East Sussex
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



3892 PRIVATE

J. S. WILLIAMS

29TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

25TH JANUARY, 1918

James Syddall (Syd) WILLIAMS

James Syddall Williams was born towards the end of 1892 at Allendale, Victoria to parents Joseph Syddall Williams & Ellen Hall Williams (nee Grainger).

James Syddall Williams was a 23 year old, single, Driver from 681 Nicholson Street, North Carlton, Victoria when he enlisted on 6th July, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 3892 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Ellen Williams of 681 Nicholson Street, North Carlton, Victoria. (Joseph Syddall Williams, father of James Syddall Williams, had died in 1911.)

Private Williams was sent to No. 2 Battalion, Geelong, Victoria for training on 20th July, 1916 to 1st August, 1916 when he was transferred to 9th Reinforcements of 29th Battalion at Geelong.

Private James Syddall Williams embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Commonwealth (A73)* on 19th September, 1916 with the 8th Infantry Brigade, 29th Infantry Battalion, 9th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.) & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 14th November, 1916.

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 Williams was marched in to the 8th Training Battalion (no date recorded).

Private Williams proceeded overseas to France from 8th Training Battalion, via Folkestone on 17th December, 1916 on S.S. "*Golden Eagle*."

Private Williams was marched in to 5th A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) on 18th December, 1916 & marched out to join his Unit on 23rd December, 1916. Private Williams was taken on strength with 29th Battalion on 23rd December, 1916.

Private Williams was written up for an Offence – "Disobedience of orders in that he ate his emergence ration without authority on 13th April, 1917." He was awarded 2 days Field Punishment No. 2 & had to pay for an emergency ration.

Private Williams was on leave from 23rd October, 1917 to 4th November, 1917.

Private James Syddall Williams was wounded in action in France on 22nd November, 1917. He was taken to 53rd Casualty Clearing Station on 23rd November, 1917 with bullet wounds to both legs. Private Williams was transferred to Ambulance Train 14 on 5th December, 1917 & admitted to 2nd Australian General Hospital the same day. Private Williams embarked from France on the Hospital Ship "*St David*" for England on 16th December, 1917.

Private James Syddall Williams was admitted to the Eastbourne Military Hospital on 16th December, 1917 suffering from gunshot wounds to both legs – legs amputated.

The Medical Case Sheet from Eastbourne Military Hospital for Pte J. S. Williams has the following information: Bomb wound both Legs. The Casualty Clearing Station had amputated both Private William's legs. Right amputated above knee on 23rd November, 1917. Left amputated below knee on 25th November, 1917. On 15th January, 1917 Private William's had to have his left leg re-amputated at Eastbourne Military Hospital.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private J. S. Williams, 3892, 29th Battalion, contains a request from the Red Cross, on behalf of the relatives in Australia, of a bulletin of his sickness or wounds, dated 31st December, 1917. A Red Cross visitor replied on 5th January, 1918 – "*Wounded Oct-Nov – Eastbourne M. Hospital – One leg has been amputated below the knee and the other above. He is in quite good spirits and when I saw him today was enjoying beef and vegetables. He is progressing favourably and his wounds are healthy.*" The R.A.M.C. Registrar of Central Military Hospital, Eastbourne wrote the following information on 2nd January, 1918 – "*Pte Williams is suffering from G.S.W. of both legs and has both legs amputated, he is progressing satisfactory, please.*"

Private James Syddall Williams died at 9.50 pm on 25th January, 1918 at Central Military Hospital, Eastbourne, Sussex, England from wounds received in action (Gunshot wounds to both legs which were amputated).

A death for James L. Williams, aged 25, was registered in the March quarter, 1918 in the district of Eastbourne, Sussex.

Private James Syddall Williams was buried at 3 pm on 31st January, 1918 in Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne, East Sussex, England – Plot number Y. 1455. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private Williams - *Coffin was good polished Elm with brass fittings. The deceased soldier was accorded a full Military funeral. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and surmounted by several beautiful wreaths, which were sent by the Hospital Staff and friends of the deceased soldier. Band and Buglers were supplied by the 13th Hussars, Firing Party by Canadian Regt, stationed at Seaford, and Pall bearers by the R.A.M.C. Staff Military Hospital, Eastbourne. Several Sisters and about 20 Patients of the Hospital followed the remains of the deceased to the graveside. A service was held in the Cemetery Chapel by Chaplain H. L. Pass. The grave will be turfed immediately and an oak cross erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private J. S. Williams, 3892, 29th Battalion contains a letter from the Central Military Hospital, Eastbourne to the Red Cross stating: *"In reply to your letter of the 31st ult. relative to 3892 Pte J. S. Williams, 29th A.I.F., he was admitted to this Hospital on Nov. 16th 1917 from overseas convoy with amputation of both legs. It was found necessary to re-amputate one leg and he ultimately died from his injuries, shock and exhaustion. He was buried with Military Honours in the Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne, Grave No. Y1455 on Thursday 31st January 1918, a representative from the Australian Head Qtr's being present. His personal affects have been forwarded to the O/c Australian Records, London. The Sister in charge of the case has written fully to his mother."*

Private James Syddall Williams requested in his Will, dated 15th August, 1916, that all his real estate & personal property he bequeathed to his mother – Ellen Williams of North Carlton, Victoria. He appointed Albert Spencer Jones of Ivanhoe, the sole Executor.

Private James Syddall Williams was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. Both Medals were returned unclaimed & then sent to Untraceables until a blood relative could be located. Mrs Ellen Williams had changed addresses several times from Brunswick, North Carlton, Ivanhoe & Glenferrie. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private William's mother – Mrs Ellen Williams, as the closest next-of-kin (Scroll & Plaque both collected October, 1923).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private J. S. Williams – service number 3892, of 29th Battalion Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Private J. S. 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 116.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

J. S. Williams is also remembered on the Eastbourne Central Military Hospital War Memorial which was located in the Chapel of St Mary's Hospital (Central Military Hospital), Eastbourne until it was demolished in 1994 at which time it was relocated to the Redoubt Military Museum, Eastbourne. The names are listed by rank, surname, initial, Regiment and date of death. The memorial is in date sequence with Officers listed first.



Eastbourne Central Military Hospital War Memorial (Photo by John Websper, 2014)

(56 pages of Private James Syddall 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, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



Newspaper Notices

DIED ON SERVICE

WILLIAMS – Died of wounds, 25th January, 1918 at the Eastbourne Military Hospital, England, James Syddall (Syd), dearly beloved second son of Ellen and the late Joseph Syddall Williams, of Glenyon Road, East Brunswick (late of Nicholson Street), aged 25, loved brother of Thomas, Mary (Mrs Spencer Jones) Flora (Mrs Carter), Gertrude, John and Allan (on active service).

Now the soldier's task is o'er,
Now the battle-day is past,
Now upon the further shore
Lands the voyager at last.

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 6 February, 1918)

DEATHS

On Active Service

WILLIAMS – Died of wounds, 25th January, at the Eastbourne Military Hospital, England, Pte James Syddall (Syd), dearly beloved second son of Ellen and the late Joseph Syddall Williams, of Glenyon Road, East Brunswick (formerly of Ballarat), aged 35, loved brother of Thomas (N.Z.), Mary (Mrs A. E. Spencer Jones, Ivanhoe) Flora (Mrs G. R. Carter, Ivanhoe), Gertrude (N.Z.), John (N.Z.) and Allan (on active service).

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 9 February, 1918)

THE 383rd CASUALTY LIST

The Victorian names are:-

DIED OF WOUNDS

Private J. S. Williams, Brunswick

(*The Mildura Cultivator*, Victoria – 20 February, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

WILLIAMS – In loving memory of my dear son and brother, Private James Syddall (Syd), 29th Battalion, who passed away at the Military Hospital, Eastbourne, England, from wounds received in France on the 25th January, 1918.

For King and country called him,
The call was not in vain:
On Australia's roll of honour
You will find dear Syddall's name.
Oh, for a touch of that vanished hand,
And a sound of that dear voice still.

- Inserted by his loving mother and brother, Allan, East Brunswick.

WILLIAMS – in sad and loving memory of our dear friend, Private Syd Williams, 29th Battalion, A.I.F., who died of wounds at Horseferry-road Hospital, London, on the 25th January, 1918.

-Inserted by his friends, Mr and Mrs L. Jones and Pearl Trengrove.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 25 January, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

WILLIAMS – In loving memory of our dear brother, James Syddall Williams, who passed away at the Eastbourne Military Hospital, England, January 25, 1918, wounded in France.

(M. and A. Spencer-Jones, Ivanhoe.)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 25 January, 1922)

IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAMS – In loving memory of James Syddall Williams, who passed away at Eastbourne Military Hospital, England, on the 25th January, 1918.

Dearly loved, and sadly missed.

(Inserted by his loving mother.)

WILLIAMS – In loving memory of our loved brother, James Syddall Williams, who made the supreme sacrifice January 25, 1918. (M. and A. Spencer Jones.)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 24 January, 1925)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

WILLIAMS – In loving memory of my dear son, James Syddall (Syd), who passed away at the Eastbourne Military Hospital, England, January 25, 1918.

Greater love hath no man.

-(Mother)

WILLIAMS – In loving memory of our dear brother, James Syddall, who made the great sacrifice on January 25, 1918.

(A. and M. Spencer-Jones)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 25 January, 1928)

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*)

Private J. S. Williams does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne, Sussex

Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne, Sussex contains 175 War Graves. There are 129 War Graves from World War 1 & 44 War Graves from World War 2. There are also 1 Belgian & 1 Brazilian Foreign National burials from World War 1. A Cross of Sacrifice stands near the Chapel, facing the main entrance.

During World War 1, Eastbourne contained a very large Military Convalescent Hospital, originally called Eastbourne Military Hospital, which opened in April, 1915. From January, 1917 to October, 1919 it became No. 14 Canadian General Hospital.



Cross of Sacrifice at Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne, Sussex (Photos from CWGC)



The four Australian Soldiers together (L to R): Pte T. R. H. Miles, 46th Battalion (died 16 May, 1917); Pte H. C. Gee, 33rd Battalion (died 21 June, 1917); **Pte J. S. Williams, 29th Battalion (died 25 January, 1918)**; Pte C. E. Emblen, 32nd Battalion (died 2 October, 1916).

Photo of Private J. S. Williams' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Ocklynge Cemetery, Eastbourne, Sussex, England.



(Photo courtesy of Roberto Lagnado)