

Sutton Veny War Graves

World War 1



Lest We Forget



56425 PRIVATE

E. W. WILLOWS

11TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

15TH NOVEMBER, 1918

*CWGC Headstone for Pte E. W. Willows is located in
Grave Plot # 33. H. 8. of St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny*

Ernest Wickham WILLOWS

Ernest Wickham Willows was born at Bendigo, Victoria in late 1892 to parents John & Eleanor Willows (nee Spencer).

He was a 25 year old, single, Motor Mechanic from Meekatharra, Western Australia when he enlisted at Perth, Western Australia on 23rd April, 1918 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.) His service number was 56425 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs E. Willows of Meekatharra, Western Australia. He enlisted as Ernest Wicham Willows.

Private Ernest Willows embarked from Albany on HMAT *Marathon (A74)* on 29th July, 1918 with the 2nd (W) Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.) & disembarked at London, England on 27th September, 1918.

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 Willows was marched in to 1st Training Battalion at Fovant, Wiltshire on 27th September, 1918 & allotted to Reinforcements of 11th Battalion.

Private Ernest Willows was sent sick with Influenza to Group Clearing Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 9th November, 1918. He was transferred & admitted to the Military Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 12th November, 1918 seriously ill with Influenza & Pneumonia.

Private Ernest Wickham Willows died at 18.15 hrs on 15th November, 1918 at the Military Hospital, Sutton Veny of Influenza & Pneumonia.

A death for Ernest W. Willows, aged 26, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Pte Ernest Wickham Willows contains a request from the Red Cross from his relatives in Australia for details into his death & burial. Several letters are included in the file with the basic information - date of death, cause & burial date. The request date was 14th March, 1919 & the former staff, Officers & Nurses had either been demobilized or dispersed so it was not possible to gain firsthand information into Pte Willow's death.

Private Ernest Wickham Willows was buried on 20th November, 1918 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny - Grave no. 33. From the burial report of Pte Willows - *Coffin was good polished Elm with Brass fittings – Deceased was buried with full Military Honours. The coffin draped with the Australian flag was borne to the graveside on a Gun Carriage. The funeral was preceded by a Firing Party and Band from the 1st Australian Training Brigade. Six of deceased's late comrades supported the Pall. Headquarters A.I.F. Depots in United Kingdom were represented at the funeral.*

Private Ernest Wickham Willows requested in his Will dated 2nd July, 1918 that all his property & effects be left to his mother – Mrs Eleanor Willows of Meekatharra, Western Australia.

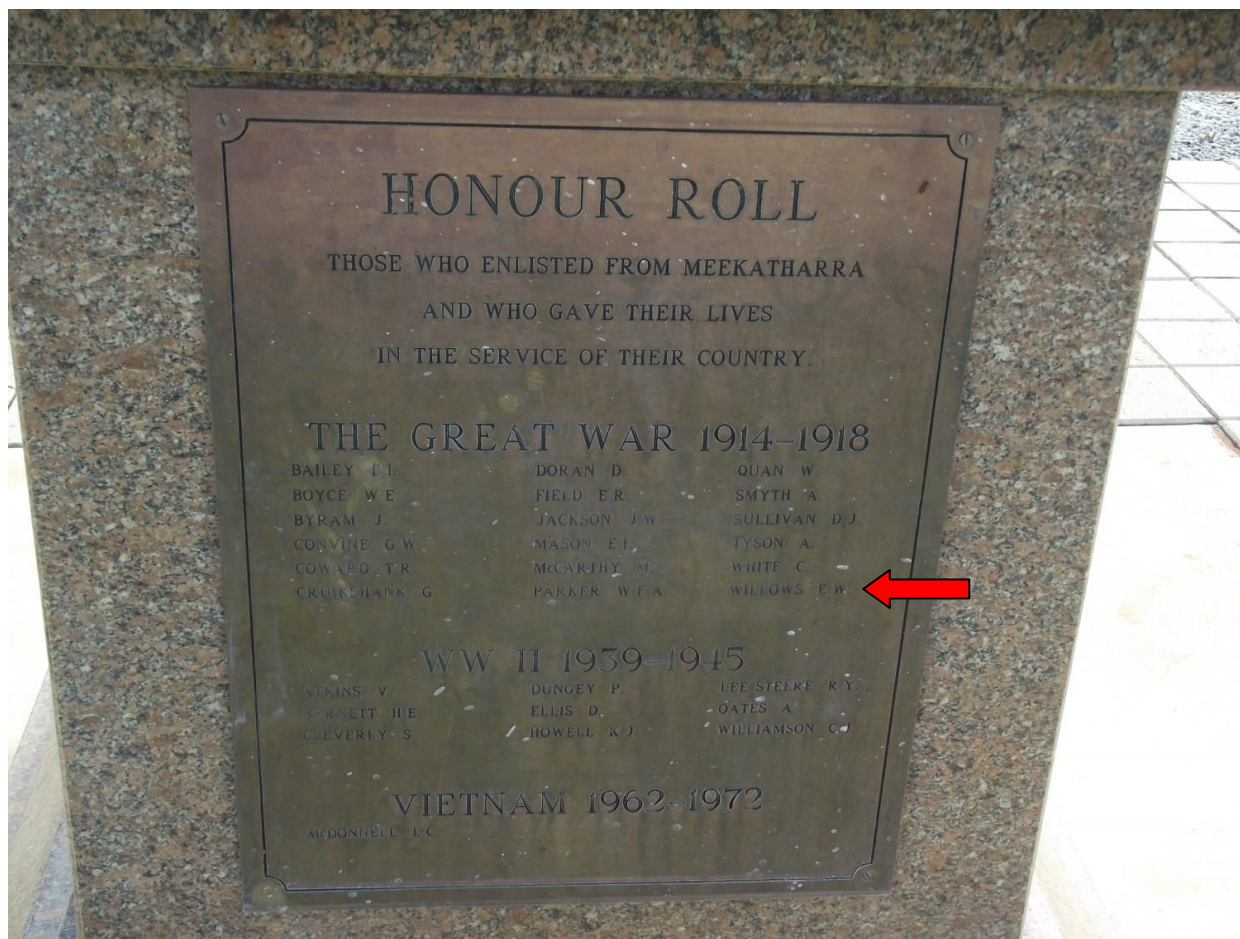
Private Ernest Wickham Willows was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Willows' mother – Mrs E. Willows (Scroll sent July, 1920 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private E. W. Willows, 56425 of 11th Battalion, Australian Infantry, A.I.F. No family details are listed.

E. W. Willows is remembered on the Meekatharra War Memorial located at McCleary Street, Meekatharra, Western Australia.



Meekatharra War Memorial (Photos courtesy of [Lorraine's Burial Records](#))



Private E. W. Willows is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 64.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(67 pages of Private Ernest Wickham Willows' Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

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



Private Ernest Wickham Willows



Newspaper Reports

KILLED IN ACTION

WILLOWS —On November 14, at Warminster, England, Private Ernest Wickham Willows, died of pneumonia, loved son of Eleanor Willows, brother of Lucy, Norman, Maude (Meekatharra), Essie (Melbourne), Jack, and Carrie (Perth).

(Western Mail, Perth, W.A. – Friday 6 December, 1918)

ROLL OF HONOUR

Died, Other Causes

E. W. Willows, Meekatharra

(Sunday Times, Perth, W.A. – Saturday 8 December, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Heroes

WILLOWS — In loving memory of my dear son and our brother "Ern" who died at Sutton Veney Military Hospital, England, on November 15, 1918.

We miss you most who love you best.

Inserted by his mother, brothers and sisters, Meekatharra.

(The West Australian, Perth, W.A. – Saturday 15 December, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Heroes

WILLOWS — In loving memory of my dear son and our brother Ern who died of pneumonia at Sutton Veney Military Hospital, on November 15, 1918.

Ever remembered.

Inserted by his mother, sisters and brothers, Meekatharra.

(The West Australian, Perth, W.A. – Monday 15 December, 1920)

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 at St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny. 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 Ernest Wickham Willows does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

St. John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire

During the two world wars, the United Kingdom became an island fortress used for training troops and launching land, sea and air operations around the globe. There are more than 170,000 Commonwealth war graves in the United Kingdom, many being those of servicemen and women killed on active service, or who later succumbed to wounds. Others died in training accidents, or because of sickness or disease. The graves, many of them privately owned and marked by private memorials, will be found in more than 12,000 cemeteries and churchyards. The 26th Division was concentrated at Sutton Veny in April 1915 and No 1 Australian Command was there from the end of 1916 to October 1919. There was also a hutted military hospital of more than 1200 beds at Sutton Veny for much of the war and No 1 Australian General Hospital was stationed there after the Armistice. Sutton Veny (St John) Churchyard contains 168 First World War burials, 167 of them in a plot at the north west corner of the church. Of these, 143 are Australian. There is only one Second World War burial in the churchyard.

(Information from CWGC)



War Graves at Sutton Veny *(Photo from CWGC)*

Photo of Private E. W. Willows' Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone in St. John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)



War Graves at Sutton Veny (Photo from CWGC)

