



# A Soldier of the Great War

## Private Herbert Williams

### 41st Battalion AIF



## Private Herbert Williams 2891

Regimental number	2891
Place of birth	Brisbane Queensland
Religion	Church of England
Occupation	Mechanic
Address	Breakfast Creek Road, Brisbane, Queensland
Marital status	Single
Age at embarkation	19
Next of kin	Father, William Williams, Breakfast Creek Road, Brisbane, Queensland
Enlistment date	17 August 1915
Rank on enlistment	Private
Unit name	<u>25th Battalion, 6th Reinforcement</u> /41 <sup>st</sup> Battalion
AWM Embarkation Roll number	23/42/2
Embarkation details	Unit embarked from Brisbane, Queensland, on board HMAT A48 <i>Seang Bee</i> on 21 October 1915
Regimental number from Nominal Roll	2891A
Rank from Nominal Roll	Private
Unit from Nominal Roll	41st Battalion
Fate	Returned to Australia 20 May 1919

**Herbert Williams** was born in Brisbane Qld .On the 17<sup>th</sup> August 1915 and at the age of 19 years and 2 months he enlisted in the AIF. His service records show that he had served in the Navy for 18 months previously but was discharged medically unfit.

It appears that he was initially taken on as the 6<sup>th</sup> reinforcements for the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion. The 25th Battalion was raised at Enoggera in Queensland in March 1915 as part of the 7th Brigade. Although predominantly composed of men recruited in Queensland, the battalion also included a small contingent of men from Darwin. The initial battalion left Australia in early July, trained in Egypt during August, and by early September was manning trenches at Gallipoli.

Herbert was to train as a reinforcement and it was not until 21<sup>st</sup> October 1915 that he was to sail for the War. He left Australian shores unaware of what lay ahead. The Anzac forces were already destined to withdrawal from Gallipoli and he was headed for France.

Herbert and his fellow soldiers were to head first to Zeitoun training base in Egypt arriving in January 1916. He arrived here where most Australian soldiers were based before departure for France. It was here that the Battalions were reorganised and retrained for deployment to France. He was to finally reassigned to the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion joining it in Habetia on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 1916. He acquired an ingrown toenail here that would eventually give him a stint in hospital. On the 27<sup>th</sup> March 1916 he along with a large force of Australians left Alexandrina bound for Marseilles in France where upon disembarkment on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1916 were transported north.

It was from here that the Australians would first see the trenches of Belgium known as "the nursery" where they would be somewhat prepared for battles on the Somme.

Herbert was now in the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion. The battalion was on the front line in a number of sectors and took part in support and rear action during the coming months. In April he was in the Saily area and in May was in the trenches in the Fromelles sector. In June and July he moved to the Petillion Sector around Sternwerke in Belgium. With the German advance the battalion was moved to the Doullens area in readiness for the Somme offensive. He spent from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> July in Naours. He may have left his name on the cave walls there or in Doullens Citadel.

The battalion's first major action in France was at Pozieres in the Somme valley in August 1916. The 9th Battalion attacked on the extreme right of the line. Herbert would survive the carnage of Pozieres even though he was wounded at some stage, not seriously though. He and the Battalion would return to Belgium in September where the battalion fought at Ypres, in Flanders, before returning to the Somme for winter.

Herbert was to be transported to Rouen near the French coast and the hospitals there in early September with trench feet and a septic toe. He was to remain here for the severe winter of 1916/17 for treatment. He would eventually be transported to Beaufort Military Hospital in Bristol England before being transferred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Auxillary hospital at Dartford in England for treatment in February 2017. He was to remain here until April 1917 marching into the No 3 Command Depot at Perham Downs on the Salisbury Plains in England where large training facilities existed. He would remain here in a training battalion before returning to active service in the 69<sup>th</sup> Battalion initially before finally the 41st Battalion returning to Belgium in December 1917.

The 41st Battalion was raised at Bell's Paddock Camp in Brisbane in February 1916 with recruits from Brisbane, northern Queensland and the northern rivers district of New South Wales. It formed part of the 11th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division.

His injuries would spare him the horrors of Passchendale, Polygon Wood and the Menin Road.

On his return to Belgium he and the Battalion operated behind the lines at Kemmel and Le Torquet during December to March. When the German Army launched its last great offensive in March 1918, the battalion was rushed south to France and played a role in blunting the drive towards the vital railway junction of Amiens.

In March, Herbert was again at Doullens and the Citadel and Vaux sur Somme and Sailly le Sec and Corbie in the Somme Valley. His Battalion took part in the successful battle and capture of Hamel on the 4<sup>th</sup> July and in and around the front line near Hamel on the 29<sup>th</sup> July he was wounded in the shoulder with gunshot wounds. He would recover and rejoin his unit on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 1918

Commanding 41st Battalion A.I.F.

30th JULY 1918.

HEADQUARTERS.

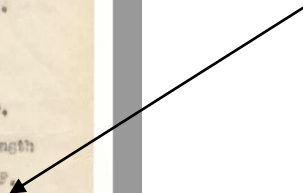
HOSPITAL. 1. The following men were admitted to Hospital on 27.7.1918  
ADMISSIONS. 3012 Pte CLARIDGE, R.O.J. 3102 L/Cpl KAVANAGH, G.  
 The following men were admitted to Hospital on 28.7.1918.  
 403 Private O'BRIEN, F.D.

STRUCK OFF STRENGTH. 2. The following men admitted to Hospital are struck off strength dated 30.7.1918.  
 3012 Pte CLARIDGE, R.O.J. 3102 L/Cpl KAVANAGH, G.  
 403 Pte O'BRIEN, F.D.

The following men evacuated wounded are struck off strength dated 30.7.1918.  
 3373 Pte ANDERSON, G.A. 3003 Pte BIEBERTRAGER, P.  
 436 " HOPKINS, W. 3144 " KEATT, H.G.  
 3015 " BOOTH, J.H. 3021 " WILLIAMS, H.

TAKEN ON STRENGTH. 3. The following men discharged from Hospital are taken on strength dated 30.7.1918.  
 3000 L/Cpl MARTIN, G.S. 3005 Pte HARRIOTT, G.H.A.  
 3715 Pte BIRCHTON, G.F., G.A., J. 4006 " BOWMAN, H.  
 452 " JAMESON, R.H. 1005 " SEXTON, J.  
 3701 " BRIDGES, G. 3437 " DIXON, G.H.  
 3647 " GIBLAND, G.R. 339 " GARTER, A.D.  
 3351 " STEWART, D. 3331 " ROUSTON, R.G.  
 3009 " ANDERSON, J.D. 377 " HUMPHREYS, S.H.

Herbert Williams  
wounded and sent  
to Hospital and  
struck off strength



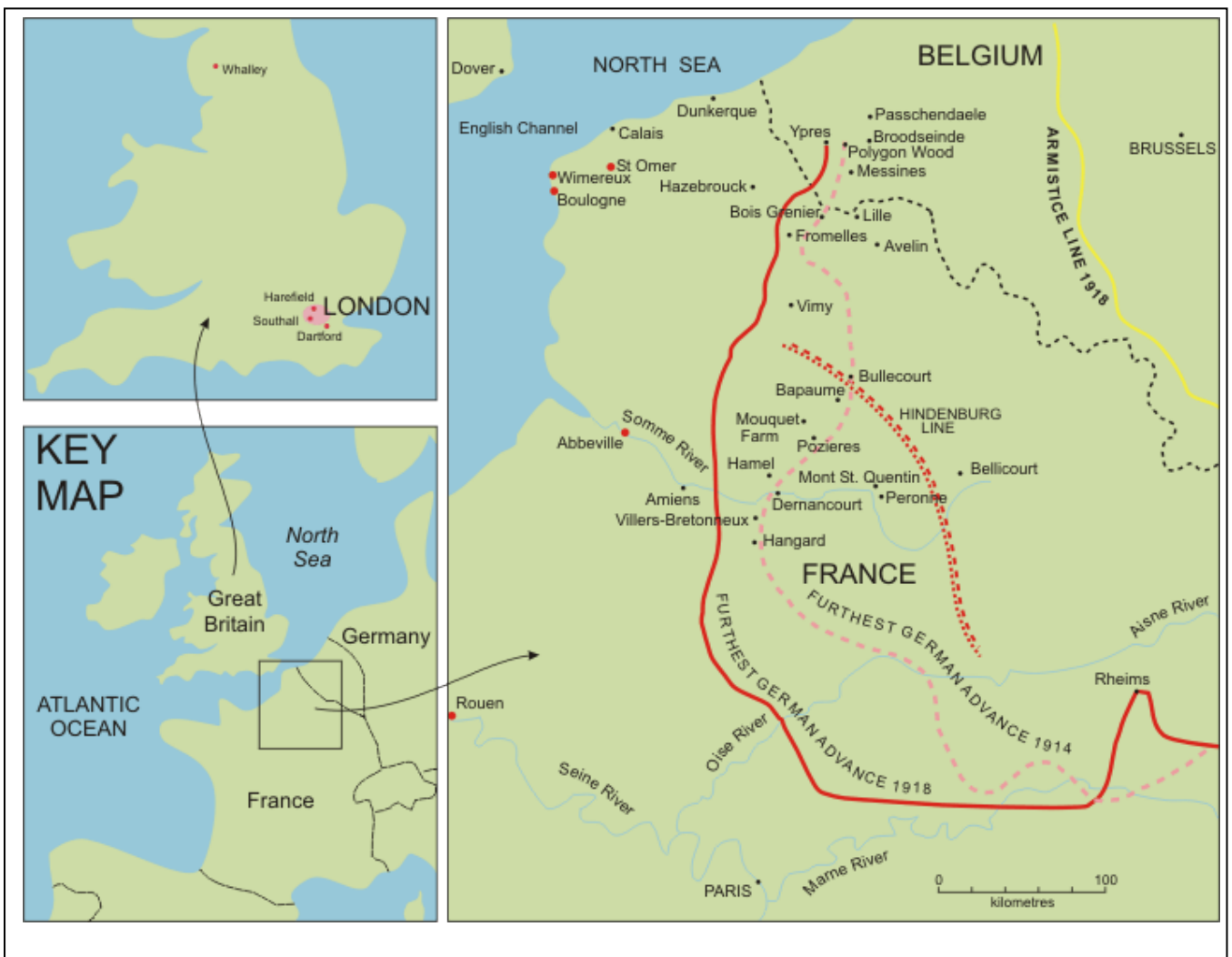
*The 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion diary for July show reference to Herbert being wounded and struck off the strength list due to his injuries.*

The Allies launched their own offensive on 8 August 1918, and the 41st played an active role both in the initial attack and the long advance that followed throughout August and into September. The 41st participated in its last major action of the war between 29 September and 2 October 1918 as part of the Australian-American operation that breached the formidable defences of the Hindenburg Line along the St Quentin Canal. The Australian forces were all withdrawn soon afterwards.

Herbert Williams had survived the Great War and some of the worst battles.

1094 of his original 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion were killed and in the 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 544 were killed. Most of these soldiers from Queensland.

Herbert would return to Australia on the Nestor departing England on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 1919.





**A**

156726

TRANSFERRED TO

2020  
9 Btm

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES.



# AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

## Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. 2891A

Name Williams Herbert

Unit 41st Bn

Joined on 17 AUG 1915

6th Reinfr's  
25th Battalion.

### Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

1. What is your Name? ... Herbert Williams
2. In the Parish of Brisbane in or near the Town of Brisbane in the County of Queensland
3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown.) ... Yes
4. What is your age? ... 19 Years 2 Months
5. What is your trade or calling? ... Machanic
6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? ... Yes Royal Mail Motor CO N.S.W. 2 Y
7. Are you married? ... NO
8. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) ... Father Mr W. Williams Breakfast Road Brisbane
9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? ... NO
10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Incurable and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with Disgrace from the Navy? ... NO
11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge ... Yes Royal Aust. Navy 18 Months Unfit
12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? ... Yes
13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? ... Yes R.A.N. Med Unfit
14. (For married men, widowers with children, and soldiers who are the sole support of widowed mother)—Do you understand that no separation allowance will be issued in respect of your service beyond an amount which together with pay would reach eight shillings per day? ...
15. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against small pox and enteric fever? ... Yes

I, Herbert Williams do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to allot not less than  $\frac{2}{5}$  of the pay payable to me from time to time during my service for the support of my wife.\* † and children.

Date 17 AUG 1915

H Williams  
Signature of person enlisted.

D. 277/1.15.—C. 902. \* This clause should be struck out in the case of unmarried men or widowers without children under 18 years of age. † Two-fifths must be allotted to the wife, and if there are children three-fifths must be allotted.



B10363  
 IR 11369  
 31/12/14

Entitled to 1914/15 Star.....

Statement of Service of No. 2891 A Name Williams Herbert

Unit in which served.	Promotions, Reductions, Casualties, &c.	Period of service in each rank.		Remarks.
		From—	To—	
6/25 Balkm	TRANSFERRED TO 9th Bn 2/2/16 PR 2/2/16 - 17/3/16 Embarked per H.S. "Le Patruer" at Rouen for England Sept 2nd	France	7-2-17	PR 17/12/17 20/2/17
	adm Beauportully Hook N.Y.P.		8-2-17	20 1/1761 E 2nd 2-2
	Pte Sick to Hosp.	France	20.1.17	L.R. 2582 29 20/ 21.5.17
	Pte Marched in to No 3 Bn Depot. Arrived from Ady St No London Le Furbigh		14.4.17	L.R. 1766 409 4E DO 31/ 2 4.5.17
	Pte Trans to 69th Bn - Duchman ex No 3 Bn Depot		24.4.17	L.R. 2251 4606 E DO 30/ 2 21.5.17
	Pte Co. from 9th Bn Arrived 27/4/17 PR 9/1609 E L.R. 2239 293 17			
	own & Bapticalin A Reg. numbers attach affise. Admin Hdqrs London		35/6/17	DO 18/2347 E 27/6/17
	Transfer to 9th Bli on marching out to 69th Bn Draft Bli.		13-9-17	DO 18/673 E 29/10/17 D.O. 44 E 29.9.17
	PROCEEDED OVERSEAS, FRANCE via ex 1st B. Sutton Veng. to S. Hampton reinforce 4th Bli.		18/12/17	IR 11369 DO 18/492 E 31/12/17
	Pte I.O.S. of 11th Bn from 69th Bn ex 2nd A.I.B.D.	France	24/12/17	DO 1/101. 8/1/18
	Pte Re-allotted new Regimental No 2891 A			DO 8/973 27/2/18
	Pte Wounded in Action		29-4-18	DO 32/4324 16/4/18
	Pte Rejoined Bn.		8-9-18	DO 35/6164 29/9/18
				DO 31/308. 19
	Pte Ret to Aust per Neator.		20/5/19	L.N 5403 18R 720. 24/5/19 #156726

I have examined the above details, and find them correct in every respect.

41st. BATTALION  
Casualty Form - Active Service.

Regiment or Corps 25 BAYN 9TH BATTALION  
 Regimental No. 2891 Rank Pte Name Williams Herbert  
 Enlisted (a) \_\_\_\_\_ Terms of Service (a) \_\_\_\_\_ Service reckons from (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of promotion to present rank } Date of appointment to lance rank } Numerical position on roll of N.C.O.'s }  
 Extended \_\_\_\_\_ Re-engaged \_\_\_\_\_ Qualification (b) \_\_\_\_\_

REPORT		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, &c., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 218, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place	Date	Remarks taken from Army Form B. 218, Army Form A. 36 or other official documents.
Date	From whom received				
16/1/16	Admitted			28-1-16	Eng. Toenails 158054
16/3/16	C.O. 7th Bn.	Allotted to & proceeded to join 9th Bn ex	Zeitoun	27-2-16	A.P. 4036
16/4/16	O.C. Bn.	Joined Battalion	Habeita	28th Feb 1916	B213-AP5-55
6/5/16	O.C. Tpt SAXONIA	Proceeding to join B E F Disembarked	Alexandria Marseilles	27-5-16 3-6-16	AP 6499 LR 5179
16/7/17	6/6 9th Bn	Sick to Hosp	France	26-1-17	A3016: L. 2572. Poss 160
27/1/17	115th Bn	Admitted to Hosp	"	28-1-17	AK 797/12
28/1/17	12th Gen Hosp	Admitted Sept. Tr	Rouen	27-1-17	AK 797/17
2-17	do	Trans to England	"	7-2-17	AK 797/28

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section D. Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.  
 (b) e.g., Signaller, Shoeing Smith, &c., &c., also special qualifications in technical Corps duties. (P.T.O.)



PURPORT.	AUTHORITY.
19/9/17. Re-transferred to 9th Btn from 69th Btn on marching out to 69th Draft Btn.	LDN 79/6-17
7/2/17. Emb. on H.S. "St Patrick" at Rouen for England Septic fee.	BEFO 17/1-17
14/4/17. Mch. in to No. 3 Command Depot. Hurdcott from Admin. Hdqrs.	LDN 31/4-17
19/9/17 Transf. to 9th Bn on marching out to 69th Draft Bn.	" 44/3-17
18/12/17 Proc. O/seas to France via Southampton, ex 1st Tng. Bn. Sutton Veny. to reinf. 41st Btn.	LDN 97/3-17
24/4/17 T.O.S. 69th Btn from 9th Btn ex Prtham Downs.	LDN 9/3-17
24.12.17 T.O.S. 41st Btn from 69th Btn ex 3rd A.I.B.D. (HH)	BEFO 4/1-18
Re-allotted new Reg. No. 2891 <sup>a</sup>	BEFO 8/2-18
29.7.18. WOUNDED IN ACTION (also IB538/53/-18) MSL	MAS. BEFO 32/2-18
3/8/18. Adm. to. L. of. C. Hosp.	M.P. BEFO. 32/4/18
8.9.18. Rejd Btn	MAS BEFO 38/4-18
29.8.18. Disc to AIBD Depot	MAS BEFO 36/7-18
8/2/17. Adm. Beaufort Mil. Hosp. N.Y.D.	EMcG. LDN. 11/2-17.



DEFENCE  
W 3726

Transferred to

D

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

No. 2891 A <sup>8602 E</sup> <sup>61209 atale</sup> <sup>2891</sup>

263 Karoola  
12<sup>th</sup> June 1915

Rank Pte Name Williams, H

Unit 41<sup>st</sup> B. Coy. 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion

Casualty Ingrowing toenails mild admitted 28.1.16 Tunis Augy Hosp Cairo C.E.B. 15068E D<sup>o</sup> 3.2.16

28.1.16 Admitted 1<sup>st</sup> Coy. 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. Ing. Toenails M/6/235/46. Cairo 28 D<sup>o</sup> 10.2.16  
21.2.16 Discharged to 1<sup>st</sup> Coy. Hosp. to duty M/6/777/63 D<sup>o</sup> Cairo 1/3/16.

French feet Actual condition not stated Adm. 6.3.17 D<sup>o</sup> Aux. Hosp.  
425 WOUNDED W.P. 119425 8602 E dated London 24.17  
318A 1939 13011 K dated London 1/16. M.T

Relg. to Aust. per H. J. "Nestor" embarked 20.5.19 Demobilised  
C. J. R. L. 3271 0120 Q dtd. Lon. 22/5/19 Rec. B. R. 29/5/19

DATE.	PURPORT.	REF. No.
11/2/16	No K advised Admitted to Hospital Cairo, Sick	
5 APR 1917	N.O.K. Advised in Hospital 6.3.17 French Feet	
AUG 0 1917	N.O.K. Advised Wounded	
	Returned to Australia per A. Nestor Disembarked 2 M.O. 4/4/18 List 250 only	
24.6.19	N.O.K. Advised returning to Australia. Form 018 C.M. Form 718 Returned to Unit Officer authorised A.M.R. 18-18. 10/11/19 1/2/264 A.M.R.	
	Discharged 1 M.D.	
	1914/1915 Star issued B.R.M. 43/1229/25140	
	WAR HISTORY INDEX	
	  	
LIST 146		