

**Tidworth Military Cemetery,
Tidworth, Wiltshire, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



3587 PRIVATE

W. LACHLAN

56TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

11TH APRIL, 1919

William LACHLAN

William Andrew Lachlan was born at Yass, New South Wales in 1880 to parents Robert Charles & Sarah Maria Lachlan (nee Croker).

Robert Charles Lachlan, father of William Lachlan, died on 29th March, 1914 at Yass Hospital, New South Wales. An inquest was held into the death "*Found unconscious and died without gaining consciousness. No evidence to show cause of death.*"

William Lachlan was a 32 year old, single, Drover from Yass, NSW when he enlisted on 1st September, 1915 in Goulburn, New South Wales with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs S. Lachlan, Cooma Street, Yass, NSW.

Private William Lachlan was posted to 8th Reinforcements of 20th Infantry Battalion.

Private William Lachlan, Service number 3587, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Berrima* (A35) on 17th December, 1915. (*Note: The Australian War Memorial have a note of Embarkation Roll "Date and ship of embarkation incorrectly recorded as 20 December 1915 and HMAT Aeneas A60 on original record."*) with the 20th Infantry Battalion, 8th Reinforcements.

20th Battalion

The 20th Battalion was raised at Liverpool in New South Wales in March 1915 as part of the 5th Brigade. A sprinkling of the 20th's original recruits had already served with the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF) in the operations to capture German New Guinea in 1914.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private William Lachlan was allotted to & proceeded to join 54th Battalion on 14th February, 1916 from 5th Training Battalion at Zeitoun. He joined 54th Battalion at Tel-el-Kebir on 16th February, 1916. (as listed on Casualty Form – Active Service, however the Statement of Service form recorded he was transferred from 20th Battalion to 54th Battalion on 21st March, 1916.)

Private William Lachlan embarked from Alexandria on H. T. *Caledonian* on 19th June, 1916 & disembarked at Marseilles, France on 29th June, 1916.

[Note: there are no movements recorded for Private William Lachlan between 30th June, 1916 & 2nd March, 1918]

Private William Lachlan was on Leave to UK from 3rd March, 1918 & rejoined his Unit from Leave on 21st March, 1918.

Private William Lachlan, 3587, 54th Battalion, declared he did not wish to make a Will (no date recorded).

54th Battalion

The 54th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 16 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 2nd Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 2nd, the 54th was predominantly composed of men from New South Wales. The battalion became part of the 14th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

Moving to France in June 1916, the 54th fought its first major battle on the Western Front at Fromelles, on 19 July. It was a disaster. The 54th was part of the initial assault and suffered casualties equivalent to 65 per cent of its fighting strength. Casualty rates among the rest of the 5th Division were similarly high, but despite these losses it continued to man the front in the Fromelles sector for a further two months.

After a freezing winter manning trenches in the Somme Valley, in early 1917 the 54th Battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line. It was spared the assault but did, however, defend

gains made during the second battle of Bullecourt. Later in the year, the AIF's focus of operations switched to the Ypres sector in Belgium. The 54th's major battle here was at Polygon Wood on 26 September.

With the collapse of Russia in October 1917, a major German offensive on the Western Front was expected in early 1918. This came in late March and the 5th Division moved to defend the sector around Corbie. The 14th Brigade took up positions to the north of Villers-Bretonneux and held these even when the village fell, threatening their flanks.

Once the German offensive had been defeated, the Allies launched their own offensive in August 1918. The 14th Brigade did not play a major role in these operations until late in the month, but its actions, including those of the 54th Battalion at Anvil Wood, were critical to the capture of Peronne, which fell on 2 September.

Heavy casualties throughout 1918 and declining enlistments in Australia resulted in a decision in mid-September 1918 to disband several Australian battalions to reinforce others; in the 14th Brigade this battalion was to be the 54th. The men mutinied in response, which resulted in a temporary postponement of the order. The 54th fought its last major battle of the war, St Quentin Canal, between 29 September and 2 October 1918. On 11 October it ceased to exist as a separate entity when it was merged with the 56th Battalion to form the 54/56th Battalion.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private William Lachlan was transferred to 56th Battalion on 11th October, 1918 from 54th Battalion. He was taken on strength of 56th Battalion on 11th October, 1918.

Private William Lachlan was attached for duty with 28th A.A.S.C. (Australian Army Service Corps) from 14th October, 1918. He rejoined 56th Battalion on 15th October, 1918.

Sarah Lachlan, mother of Private William Lachlan, died in December, 1918 at Yass Hospital from Pneumonia.

Private William Lachlan was marched out on 3rd February, 1919 to A.I.B.D. (Australian Infantry Base Depot) at Havre, France for "R. to A." (Return to Australia). He was marched out from A.I.B.D. on 14th February, 1919 for England.

56th Battalion

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The 56th fought its last major battle of the war, St Quentin Canal, between 29 September and 2 October 1918. It was resting out of the line when the Armistice was declared on 11 November. Soon after, members of the battalion began to be returned to Australia for discharge. It ceased to exist as a separate entity on 10 April 1919, when the remnants of all of the 14th Brigade's battalions were merged into a single unit.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private William Lachlan disembarked at Weymouth, England on 15th February, 1919 & was marched in to "No. 2 T.B. Con Camp" at Codford, Wiltshire on the same day.

Private William Lachlan was admitted to No. 3 New Zealand General Hospital, Codford, Wiltshire on 10th April, 1919 with a fracture of base of Skull, following an accident. The Hospital Admissions form recorded: *"Admitted, having been knocked down by motor ambulance. Marked swelling & ecchymosis of R. eyelid. Pupils at first equal and moderately dilated. Pulse 64. Unconscious but muttering. L Arm and leg paralysed. Ear cut. Steady bleeding from the nose. Later, R eye pupil widely dilated and unresponsive. Unconsciousness much deeper. Vomited dark blood. Later, both pupils widely dilated and unresponsive, pulse appreciably slower – 60, snoring. Died 3.30 A.M. 11-4-19."*

Private William Lachlan died at 3.30 am on 11th April, 1919 at No. 3 New Zealand General Hospital, Codford, Wiltshire, England from Fracture to Skull Base.

A death for William Lachlan, aged 47, was registered in the June quarter, 1919 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire, England.

Private William Lachlan was buried on 16th April, 1919 in Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire, England – Plot number C. 375 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

From the burial report of Private William Lachlan - Coffin was Elm. Brass mounts. Deceased was buried with full Military honours the coffin draped with the Australian flag being born to the graveside on a Gun-carriage preceded by a Firing Party from Headquarters A.I.F. Depots in United Kingdom, Tidworth. Six Australians supported the Pall. The "Last Post" was sounded and volleys fired over the grave. A large number of Australians followed the remains and were present at the graveside ceremony. Headquarters, A.I.F. Depots in United Kingdom were represented at the funeral.

The Public Trust Office, Sydney, NSW wrote to Base Records on 3rd June, 1919 requesting a Certificate in duplicate for No. 3587 Private William A. Lachlan, 20th Battalion & also the address of the deceased prior to enlistment. Details for the next of kin were also requested.

Base Records replied to Public Trustee, Sydney, NSW on 30th June, 1919, enclosing, in duplicate, a certificate of report of death of the late No. 3587, Private W. Lachlan, 56th Battalion. *"The late soldier's address prior to enlistment is shown as Yass, NSW and next-of-kin is recorded as mother, Mrs Sarah Lachlan, Cooma Street, Yass, NSW."*

Base Records contacted Mrs S. Lachlan, Cooma Street, Yass, NSW on 11th October, 1921 stating she was registered on the records of the late No. 3587 Private W. Lachlan & requested to know if there were any nearer blood relatives than herself & was specifically asked if his father was alive due to the "Deceased Soldiers Estates Act 1918" which stated that the War Medals & Mementoes of a deceased soldier were to be handed in the following order of relationship – Widow, eldest surviving son, eldest surviving daughter, father, mother, eldest surviving brother, eldest surviving sister etc.

Base Records wrote to District Finance Officer, 2nd Military District, on 22nd December, 1922 asking *"...whether any claim has been received for the War Gratuity of the late No. 3587 Private W. Lachlan, 56th Battalion, and if so, does your file disclose the present address of deceased's father, or any other blood relation? The favour of early attention is requested in order that War Medals, etc, may be disposed of."*

The District Finance Officer, 2nd District Base replied to Base Records on 5th January, 1923 advising *"... that a claim for War Gratuity on behalf of the abovementioned deceased soldier was made by his Brother Mr J. E. Lachlan, Yass, but was rejected."*

Base Records wrote to Mr J. E. Lachlan, Yass, New South Wales on 22nd January, 1923 with the following: *"I desire to be in a position to dispose of the war medals, etc, of your brother, the late No. 3587 Private W. Lachlan, 56th Battalion, in helping with the instructions under the Deceased Soldiers' Estates Act of 1918, and shall be obliged if you will inform me whether his father and mother are living, and if so, their present address. If they no longer survive, are there any brothers alive older than yourself, stating the name and address of the eldest?..."*

J. E. Lachlan, Yass, New South Wales, replied to Base Records on 27th January, 1923 advising that both his father & mother were both deceased. He advised that he had a brother – Charles Lachlan who was older than him. *"....I may state that I was the only Legatee and Executor in my deceased Brother's Estate, which was wound up by the Public Trustee of NSW on my behalf, and naturally thought war medals &c should come to me, however if they o to my Brother I am quite satisfied. Should not either my Brother or myself be entitled to War Gratuity ___ I wrote on 21 April 1920 to Sydney...."*

Base Records replied to Mr J. E. Lachlan, Yass, New South Wales, on 7th February, 1923 advising that *"....the War Medals, etc., issuable on account of the service of the late No. 3587 Private W. Lachlan, 56th Battalion, are being*

transmitted to your brother, Mr C. Lachlan, in accordance with the instructions under the Deceased Soldiers' Estates Act of 1918, which prescribe that they must go to the next-of-kin in the following order of relationship – unless good and sufficient reasons for varying the procedure are submitted – “father, mother, eldest surviving brother...” Your enquiry re War Gratuity has been referred to the District Finance Officer, Victoria Barracks, Paddington, NSW. For attention, as financial matters do not come within the purview of this Branch.”

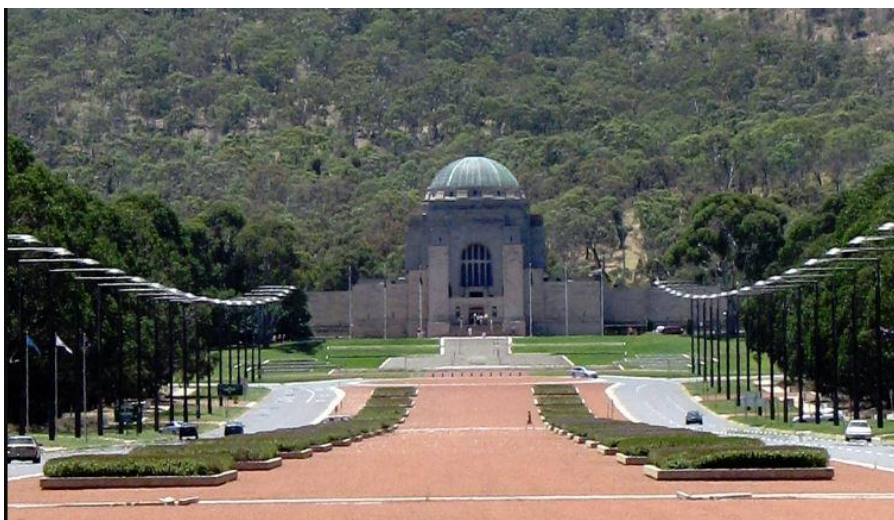
Private William Lachlan was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Lachlan's eldest brother – Mr C. Lachlan, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque sent March, 1923).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private William Lachlan – service number 3587, of 56th Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Private W. Lachlan is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 162.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia



W. Lachlan is remembered on the Parish of Yass Memorial Hall Roll of Honour, located in St Clement's Anglican Church, Church & Rossi Streets, Yass, NSW.



Parish of Yass Memorial Hall Roll of Honour (Photo from Monument Australia – Sandra Brown)

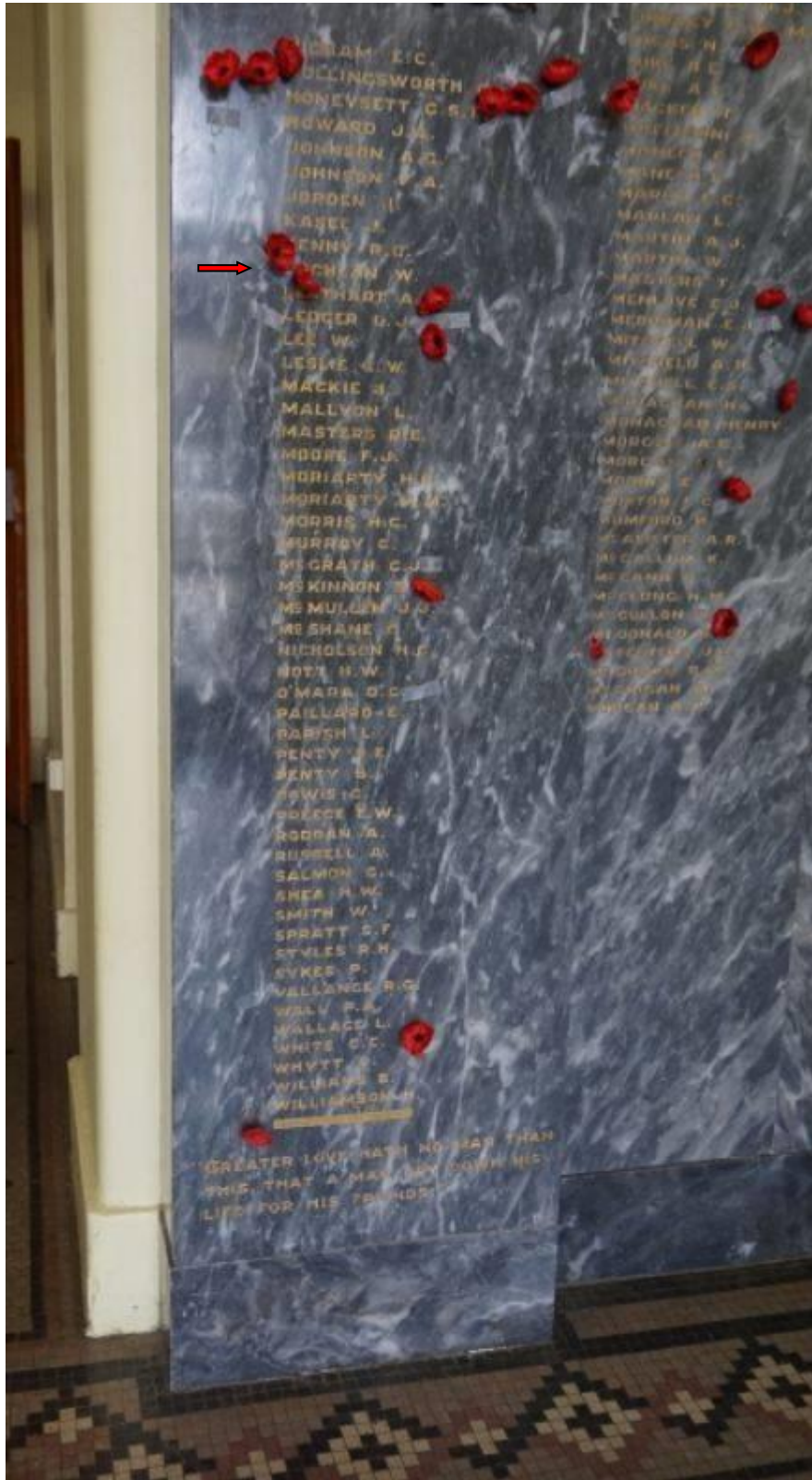


St Clement's Anglican Church, Yass (APH Pixels)

W. Lachlan is remembered on the Yass & District Roll of Honour, located in Soldiers Memorial Hall, 82 – 94 Comur Street, Yass, NSW



Yass & District Roll of Honour (Photos from Monument Australia – Chris McLaughlin)



(58 pages of Private William Lachlan's 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 William Lachlan (*Find a Grave*)



Newspaper Notices

OBITUARY

The Rev. A. G. Rix received a wire from Colonel Brown on Tuesday that Pte William Lachlan, of Yass, had died of a fractured skull on 11th inst.

(*Young Witness*, NSW – 25 April, 1919)

St. Clement's Parish

Those recently confirmed will receive their first Communion at St. Clement's Church at the 8 o'clock service on Sunday next. At 11 o'clock a memorial service will be held at St. Clement's for the late Private William Lachlan, who died whilst on active service. The Yass Band will be present at the service, and the militia are asked to attend and also all returned soldiers.

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(*The Yass Courier*, NSW – 1 May, 1919)

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)

A letter from Base Records, dated 19th July, 1921, to Mrs S. Lachlan, Cooma Street, Yass, NSW, advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of her son, the late No. 3587 Private W. Lachlan, 56th Battalion, had not been answered & non-receipt of a reply within 21 days would have to be accepted as indicating that no further action was to be taken.

Private W. Lachlan does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire, England

Tidworth Military Cemetery, which contains burials of both wars, was directly connected with training grounds on, or near, Salisbury Plain.

During the First World War, the cemetery was used for burials from Tidworth and Fargo Military Hospitals and the 417 graves, many of them of Australian or New Zealand servicemen, are scattered throughout the cemetery.

There are 106 Second World War graves in the cemetery, two substantial groups of which can be found in sections F and D. The rest are scattered.

The cemetery also contains 40 war graves of other nationalities, many of them Polish.

(Information from CWGC)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00481

Tidworth Military Cemetery – 12 June, 1919



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00327

The AIF Tidworth cemetery under snow. – March 1919.

Identified graves marked by a cross and headstone in the foreground

Front row: 50727 Private Rowland James Dickson, Australian Machine Gun Corps, died 14 October 1918.

Second row, left to right: 18282 Driver John Thalma Jackson, Details Australian Engineers, died 30 October 1917; 17445 Pte Roland Travers Woodville, Australian Army Medical Corps, died 13 September 1917; 31712 Gunner John Alexander McDonald, 15th Field Artillery Brigade, Australian Field Artillery, died 30 July 1917, aged 37, at Tidworth Military Hospital; 3062 Pte Even Thomas Kennedy, 3rd Australian Pioneers, died 7 August 1917.



Tidworth Military Cemetery (Photo by *julia&keld* – Find a Grave)



Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire (Photo courtesy of *John Prestidge*)



Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire *(Photo by Chris Talbot 2009)*



(Photo courtesy of Portsmouth Remembers – Kevin)

Photo of Private W. Lachlan's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Tidworth Military Cemetery, Wiltshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of Selena Hardie)

