



Our forgotten ANZACs

Here are brief biographies of the five Perth Modern soldiers who were recently added to the plinth on the school's War Memorial.

ARTHUR BACON

PMS STUDENT 1912

Edited from *Forgotten Anzac – Arthur Bacon* by Neil Coy with material from the ADFA website
<https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/showPerson?pid=10014>

Without any doubt the saddest omission from the School's war memorial, and one of Perth Modern School's most tragic personal stories of the Great War, is that of Arthur Bacon.

Arthur Bacon was born on 24 September 1896. His family lived in a town site called Darling Range Quarries and his father operated a bluestone granite quarry at Gooseberry Hill. The School's war memorial is built from granite from a nearby quarry.

Arthur was educated initially at Midland Junction State School and then Guildford Grammar, where he passed the Senior Certificate. He enrolled in Perth Modern School on 7 February 1912. Arthur's academic success at Modern School enabled him to study electrical engineering at UWA, at that time a fairly new and exciting field.

Arthur enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces on 7 June 1915 and was assigned to the 16th Battalion. The Battalion had suffered 70% casualties by the end of the first week at Gallipoli and Arthur was to be one of the reinforcements. He was given less than six weeks' training before he arrived at Gallipoli during the last phase of preparation for the August, 1915 offensive. The 16th Battalion was set the most demanding of objectives, the capture of Hill 971, which was the highest point on Sari Bair Ridge. The attack failed with Arthur being wounded in the face. He was evacuated to a military hospital on Lemnos Island and then to Reading Hospital near London, England. He returned to the Battalion on 27 December, 1916.

In the spring of 1917, Australian troops on the Western Front were brought to the Hindenburg Line for the first time for a planned breakthrough at Bullecourt. The battle began on 11 April 1917 and the 16th Battalion was involved in another disaster as the British tanks, key to the attack plan, broke down before reaching the front lines. The Australian 4th Brigade, comprising the 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th battalions, suffered 2,339 casualties (80%) of the 3,000 men committed to the action. Arthur received a second gunshot wound to the face on the first day, this time causing temporary damage to an eye. After recovering at Le Havre in France, Arthur returned to his unit on 11 June 1917.

He was wounded for a third time near Ypres in Belgium on 6 August 1917, on this occasion sustaining a gunshot wound to his left foot. As a surviving Gallipoli campaign veteran, Arthur had the right to wear an embroidered capital letter 'A' over his unit colour patch, signifying that he was an original ANZAC. By this stage of the war, few were left who were eligible for this honour and those who did commanded significant respect.

Arthur rejoined the 16th Battalion from England on 31 December 1917, survived his second winter on the Western Front, and was promoted to Lance Corporal on 10 April 1918. He was killed in a minor action at Bellenglise, 60km east of Villers Bretonneux, on 18 September, 1918. His body lies nearby in the Jeancourt Communal Cemetery Extension.

There are several sad ironies in Arthur Bacon's fate. Having survived through so many failed attacks, he died in the midst of a victorious action by his unit. He is buried at a site that few would bother to stop to investigate, let alone pay their respects. The cruellest irony of all is that Bellenglise was the 16th Battalion's last action. Arthur was killed on what would have been his last day in combat. He was also the last Modern School boy to be killed in action in the Great War.





In memory of Douglas Chidgzey.

DOUGLAS ROY CHIDGZEY

PMS STUDENT 1912

Douglas was born in Albany in 1896. He was the son of an orchardist, and with the family home having moved to Dinninup, he attended Bridgetown State School before joining the Agriculture course offered by Perth Modern School in 1912.

This course was started in 1911 with about 12 students, and Prof Pfister had sent to Rothamstead Agricultural College for cereal seeds which were planted in the south-west corner of the grounds. There was a shed for a laboratory and a store room. The course embraced chemical science, domestic science, commercial and agricultural subjects.

Military records revealed previous military service in Junior Military Cadets in Perth. As a 20-year-old farmer from Blackboy Hill he enlisted in 1916 as a Private in the 10th Light Horse Regiment, 24th Reinforcement. His Unit embarked on board HMAT *Clan Corquodale*, from Fremantle. Trooper Douglas Roy Chidgzey was killed in action in Palestine on 30 April 1918. With no known grave, his death is commemorated at the Jerusalem Memorial, Jerusalem War Cemetery, in Israel.

**Bridgetown Notes. *Bunbury Herald*, 22 May 1918
(From Our Correspondent)**

Douglas Chidgzey was a son of Mrs Chidgzey, of Dinninup, and brother of Frank, George, Percy and Vernon. Mrs Moore, of Preston, and Mrs Jones, of Waroona, were sisters. Vernon enlisted with his brother, and is doubtless now in Palestine. This brave soldier was but a young man, and grew up in Bridgetown. He was a lad of much promise, and stirring character. – Trove

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chemical_weapons_in_World_War_I#British_casualties

ERNEST DANIEL TIMMINGS

PMS FOUNDATION STUDENT 1911

Ernest was born in Jarrahdale in 1895. He attended James Street State School and lived with his mother, Agnes Marion Timmings (née McGregor) at 19 Hooper Street, West Perth. He entered Perth Modern School as a foundation student, joining other 16-year-olds in the science course, in February, 1911.

He enlisted in the AIF on 1 May 1916 at the age of 20. His service number was 17444 and he was appointed to the Army Medical Corps (AMC). His previous service in the Militia included three and a half years with the 22nd Army Medical Corps including 10 months at the Base Hospital in Fremantle.

Private Timmings embarked at Fremantle on 29 June 1917 on the ship HMAT A30 *Borda*. He disembarked at Plymouth, England, on 25 August 1917 and was sent to France on 1 October 1917. He was transferred on 8 October to the 3rd Field Ambulance (the same unit in which John Simpson Kirkpatrick, the man with the donkey, served at Gallipoli).

The unit was based at Wittenhoek in Belgium when Ernest was gassed on 5 November 1917. He was transferred to England and admitted to the 1st Western General Hospital at Fazakerley in Liverpool (aka Toxteth Park Military Hospital, now the Aintree University Hospital) on 14 November 1917. Notes on Ernest's hospital records while in Liverpool include "Shell gas poisoning", "? debility – later an occasional sibilant in chest".

On 14 December 1917 he was transferred to 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford in Kent for treatment. He was transferred from there on 31 December 1917 to No. 3 Command Depot at Hurdcott near Salisbury, a convalescent facility. On 2 January 1918 Ernest was classified as B.1.A, that is, fit for service in lines of communications in France, but not in the front line.

On 19 March 1918 Ernest was discharged from No. 3 Command Depot at Hurdcott and transferred to the Overseas Training Brigade, also in Hurdcott. On 28 March 1918 he was transferred to the Australian Army Medical Corps Overseas Training Brigade in Parkhouse, England.

On 26 April 1918 he re-joined the 3rd Field Ambulance, then based at St Sylvestre Cappel, a small village six kilometres north of Hazebrouck in France. Hazebrouck had been



Ernest Timmings' headstone and grave at Karrakatta Cemetery.



Frank Williamson's headstone.

defended with great determination by the 1st Division from 13 April 1918 to 30 April 1918 against intense German attacks that were a part of the German Spring Offensive of 1918.

On 22 January 1919, Ernest was transferred to the Army Pay Corps with the 1st Division in France, on 28 April he was transferred to England and on 6 September he embarked on the *Berrima* for Australia, disembarking at Fremantle six weeks later on 18 October 1919. Exactly three months later on 18 January 1920 he was discharged from the AIF in Perth. He was awarded the 1914–15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Ernest died on 26 February 1927 at Edward Millen Repatriation Hospital in Victoria Park. His death certificate states that he was a clerk and that he died of tuberculosis and heart failure. There is no indication in his records that the effects of being gassed in 1917 contributed to his death. However, it was not unusual for the victims of gas to have their immune systems debilitated to the extent that they were more susceptible to diseases such as tuberculosis.

Effects of being gassed

A British nurse treating mustard gas cases recorded:

They cannot be bandaged or touched. We cover them with a tent of propped-up sheets. Gas burns must be agonizing because usually the other cases do not complain even with the worst wounds but gas cases are invariably beyond endurance and they cannot help crying out.^[68]

A post-mortem account from the British official medical history records one of the British casualties:

Case four. Aged 39 years. Gassed 29 July 1917.

Admitted to casualty clearing station the same day. Died about ten days later. Brownish pigmentation present over large surfaces of the body. A white ring of skin where the wrist watch was. Marked superficial burning of the face and scrotum. The larynx much congested. The whole of the trachea was covered by a yellow membrane. The bronchi contained abundant gas. The lungs fairly voluminous. The right lung showing extensive collapse at the base. Liver congested and fatty. Stomach showed numerous submucous haemorrhages. The brain substance was unduly wet and very congested.^[69]

FRANK BENJAMIN WILLIAMSON

PMS FOUNDATION STUDENT 1911

Born in 1898, Frank lived with his orchardist parents in Gill Street, Cottesloe Beach, and attended Cottesloe State School. He was 13 when he entered Perth Modern School as a foundation student in 1911. His father is listed as Norwegian and living in Gill St in his enlistment form.

Before the war Frank was employed as a clerk. He was listed as missing at age 17. His enlistment Form is dated 1915, and his age recorded as 18 years 11 months. Although the record in the Australian War Memorial's Roll of Honour identifies him as only 'Frank Williamson', details on his enlistment form (address, age) confirm that he is Frank Benjamin Williamson.

Private Frank Williamson, 3954, served with the 51st Battalion which was raised in Egypt in the first week of March 1916, as part of the 'doubling' of the AIF. Approximately half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 11th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 11th, the 51st was predominantly composed of men from Western Australia. The battalion became part of the 13th Brigade of the newly-formed 4th Australian Division.

Arriving in France on 12 June 1916, the 51st moved into the trenches of the Western Front within a fortnight. It fought in its first major battle at Mouquet Farm in August and September, and suffered casualties equivalent to a third of its strength in both of the attacks (14 August and 3 September) it launched. After Mouquet Farm, the battalion saw out the rest of the year, alternating between front-line duty, and training and labouring behind the line. This routine continued through the bleak winter of 1916–17.

Private Frank Williamson, 3954, 51st Battalion (Infantry), Australian Army, 1914–1918, was killed in action, 3 September 1916 in France and remembered at Regina Trench Cemetery, Grandcourt, France, AWM145 Roll of Honour cards, 1914–1918 War, Army.

HENRY (HARRY) WILLIAM WULFF

PMS FOUNDATION STUDENT 1911

Henry (Harry) William Wulff was born 18 March 1894, in Broken Hill NSW. His family came to Western Australia when the Kalgoorlie gold fields were booming.

Henry was a Modern School foundation student, commencing on 1 February, 1911. His home address is shown as Boundary Street, South Kalgoorlie, and his lodging address as 186 Park Street, Subiaco. The school's records show that he entered Perth Modern School from Normal School along with others in his class who had attended Normal School for one year and generally sought to complete their studies to qualify for a teaching career.

A normal school is a school created to train high school graduates to be teachers. Its purpose is to establish teaching standards or norms, hence its name. Most such schools are now called teachers' colleges; however, in some places the term normal school is still used. – Wikipedia

His academic preferences or achievements are unknown but he left the school in November 1911 and appears to have enrolled to study at UWA. His father, John Wulff, was a carpenter who lived in Kalgoorlie. Although Henry's Army enlistment form shows his first name as 'Harry', his Perth Modern School enrolment card shows it as 'Henry'.

Henry enlisted in the Army at Blackboy Hill near Northam on 24 October 1916 when he was 22 years and seven months old. An examination by an Army doctor had it written that he was five feet nine inches (175 cm) tall and weighed 145 pounds (66 kg). By the time he enlisted in the AIF, Henry was a school teacher.

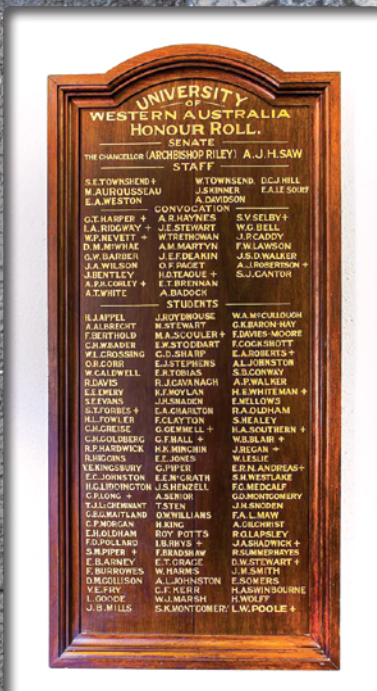
He was posted to the 16th Battalion, a largely Western Australian unit, and served in France in 1917 and 1918. The battalion spent much of 1917 in Belgium advancing to the Hindenburg Line. The battalion, along with most of the 4th Brigade, suffered heavy losses at Bullecourt in April, when the brigade attacked strong German positions without the promised tank support. In March and April 1918, the battalion helped to stop the German Spring offensive. The battalion participated in the great allied offensive of 1918, fighting near Amiens on 8 August 1918. This advance by British and empire troops was the greatest success in a single day on the Western Front.

He died in Edward Millen Repatriation Hospital in Victoria Park, WA, on 23 April, 1922, when he was 28 years old. The Edward Millen Hospital, previously a maternity hospital, was used during and after WWI as a Repatriation Hospital where ex-soldiers received ongoing treatment for their war caused injuries and conditions. Did he suffer from being gassed? Did he have long term wounds the effects of which led to his death? Did he catch pneumonic influenza (although by 1922 the worst of the epidemic was over)?

Research carried out at UWA seems to indicate that his name appears on the University of WA Honour Board as H. WOLFF.

WULFF.— The Friends of the late Mr. HENRY WILLIAM (Harry) WULFF, late of the Education Department, Perth, formerly Warrant Officer, 16th Battalion, A.I.F., are respectfully invited to follow his remains to the place of interment... – Trove

LEST WE FORGET



UWA Honour Board