

Durrington War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



6832 PRIVATE

C. A. WILSON

5TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

19TH FEBRUARY, 1917 Age 24

Loved By All

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte C. A. Wilson is located in Grave Plot # 205
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

Charles Alfred WILSON

Charles Alfred Wilson was born on 26th March, 1892 at Schnapper Point, Mornington, Victoria to parents Albert Edward & Ann Elizabeth Wilson (nee Absalom).

Charles Alfred Wilson was a 23 year old, single, Butcher when he enlisted at Melbourne on 14th July, 1915 with 24th Battalion, 5th Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 2484. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr Albert Wilson of Broadford, Victoria. Charles Wilson stated that he had previously been rejected for enlisting due to his chest measurement.

Pte Charles Alfred Wilson was admitted to Hospital in Heliopolis, Egypt on 24th November, 1915 with “Cardiac Disease.” He was invalided back to Australia on 12th December, 1915 & returned to Australia on the *Wandilla* on 14th January, 1916 due to Mitral Heart disease. He was discharged on 26th May, 1916. The Medical Board’s opinion that the cause of the Mitral Stenosis was caused by Rheumatic fever that Pte Wilson had 3 years ago, prior to his enlistment. The Medical Board stated that Pte Wilson had a permanent disability in regards to Military Service & that he was to be discharged medically unfit & they recommended that his future workplace consist of “light work within suitable limits” as he suffered from shortness of breath on severe exertion.

Charles Alfred Wilson was a 24 year old, single, Motor Driver from Mornington Road, Frankston, Victoria when he re-enlisted on 30th August, 1916 with the 5th Infantry Battalion, 22nd Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 6832 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr A. Wilson of Mornington Road, Frankston, Victoria. Charles Wilson stated that he had previously been rejected for enlisting due to his teeth & had not served previously.

Pte Charles Alfred Wilson was promoted to Acting Corporal on 13th September, 1916. A/Cpl. Charles Alfred Wilson embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Ulysses (A38)* on 25th October, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 28th December, 1916. His rank reverted back to Private on 28th December, 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 Charles Alfred Wilson was sent sick to Bulford Hospital on 12th February, 1917 & then admitted to Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire on 14th February, 1917.

Private Charles Alfred Wilson died on 19th February, 1917 at Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire from Pneumonia.

A death for Charles A. Wilson, aged 24, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

Private Charles Alfred Wilson was buried on 21st February, 1917 at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire – Plot number 205 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Private C. A. Wilson is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 45.

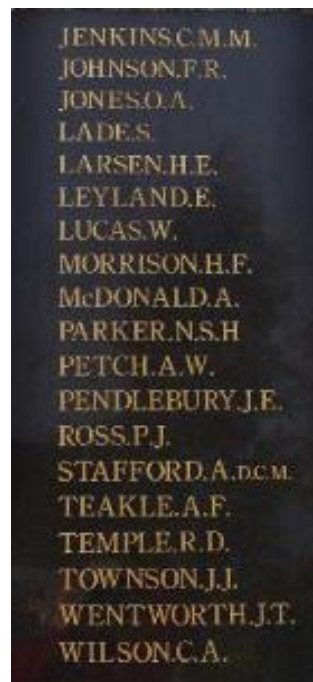


(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

C. A. Wilson is also remembered on the Broadford War Memorial located on High Street Old Market Place, Broadford, Victoria.



Broadford War Memorial (Photos courtesy of Carol's Headstone [Photographs](#))

Pte Charles Alfred Wilson was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War this service. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Wilson's father – Mr A. Wilson (both sent March, 1922). Pte Charles Alfred Wilson's previous service had entitled him to the 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. His Service Record file has "Returned 10/5/23" next to the 3 Medals.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Charles Alfred Wilson – service number 6832 as being 24 years old & served with 4th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Albert Wilson, of Broadford, Victoria, and the late Elizabeth Wilson. Born at Mornington.

(92 pages of Pte Charles Alfred Wilson'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

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*Charles Alfred Wilson
son of Albert and Anne Wilson*



(Photos courtesy of Laurie Wilson – [Bonnie William from Dundee](#))



(Photos courtesy of Laurie Wilson – [Bonnie William from Dundee](#))



Memorial Plaque for Pte Charles Alfred Wilson – also referred to as the “Dead Man’s Penny”

Letters Home to Australia from Pte Charles Alfred Wilson

Jim Wilson was a half brother to Charles Alfred & Albert Edward Wilson who both enlisted with the Australian Imperial Forces. Thanks to Mike Wilson – Jim's son for these two letters that Charles wrote – the first was written on the voyage to England & the second letter was written from Lark Hill Camp, Durrington just over 2 weeks before he died of Pneumonia. (with thanks to Laurie Wilson- [Bonnie William from Dundee](#))

The first letter is dated Sunday 26th November 1916:

Dear Dad and all,

I am writing a few lines to say I am keeping well, we are now many miles from Australia, we have call [sic] in at two ports since we left & we are not allowed to tell you the names of them, the first port we call at we stopped there 4 days & I had a good look round, I sent you a post card of the city so you know it was the first port we call at, we have been having a lovely trip so far, only for two days which we got it very rough, that was two days before we call in at the first port, & the last port we call in at we only stopped there for about 8 hours. I am going to try & get transferred to Bert – that is when we land, we are not allowed to say where we are going, but I suppose you will be able to guess, I will send you a cable as soon as we land. We are getting better food on board now to what we are getting at first, we have any amount of sports on board & concert sports every Wednesday & concerts three time a week. I have met two or three chaps on this boat from Frankston. Well Dad I will write as soon as we land & I will be able to tell you more about the trip as we are not allowed to tell you the names of the ports we have call at. We get plenty of drill on board, so the days don't seem very long, the first we call at we had three or four route marches through the city & I also met a chap by the name of [illegible] at the first port he was the chap that I enlisted with, I met him in the YMCA it was a bit of luck to strike him there as he left Melbourne three or four days before me, but I was only with him for two hours when we had to report back to boat. Well Dad I think I have said all the news that I can think of that the present. Wishing you All a Merry Xmas & a Happy New Year.

I remain Your loving son,

Charlie XXXX

The second letter was written from the Lark Hill Camp, Durrington on Saturday 3rd February 1917:

Dear Dad and All at Home,

Just a few lines to say I am quite well up to the present, I have just come back from leave from London after four days I had a good time but if I have the luck to get another four days leave, I would not spend it in London because it is over run with soldiers, soldiers from all parts of the world, if we want to enjoy ourself it is better to get out into the country, were [sic] there is not as many soldiers. They had us on a draft to go to France last week, but we kicked up about it because they were sending us to France without any leave, so they took us off the draft & sent us on our leave to London. We have been in the camp 6 weeks now, & I have not received any letter from home yet only one from Jim, I have received two letters from Bill, & five from Nean up to the present. I am having my Photo taken over here so as soon as I get them I will send you one of them, I am not having them taken until tomorrow. I am sending by this mail views of London & I send will by the next mail views of Salisbury. I am also sending by this mail some cigars card which I have saved since I have been here they can share them up between them-self. It has been terrible cold here lately, it has been snowing & rain & we have been drilling in it without our overcoats.

I am going to try to get transferred [sic] into the motors transports, next week, We have had a few deaths out of this company, since we have been here, for three weeks we average one death a week, so you can guess how bad the weather is over here. I don't think this war will last much longer to what the papers say over here. Just about five miles from here is the (Spreading Chestnut) under which the village blacksmith stands, there is only the blacksmith shop there now.

Well Dad & all at Home I think I have said all the news at present hoping this letter will find you all in the best of health as it leaves me at present, I will now close with Love to all at Home.

I remain Your Loving Son

Charlie XXXXXXXXX.

Newspaper Reports

THE 276TH CASUALTY LIST

DIED OF ILLNESS

Private C. A. Wilson. Frankston

(The Mildura Cultivator, Victoria – Wednesday 7 March, 1917)

Connected to Pte Charles Alfred Wilson:

Brother – Pte Albert Edward Wilson, 12435 – 10th Field Ambulance. Enlisted 15th March 1916 & proceeded Overseas in June, 1916 then to France on 24th November, 1916.

Wounded in France on 19th September, 1917 but remained on duty (Shrapnel wound to shoulder).

Returned to Australia from England on 8th October, 1919 with his wife – Jeanne Vangraschepe whom he had married in London in August, 1919.



Original Wooden Cross marking the grave of Pte Charles Alfred Wilson in 1917

(Photo courtesy of Laurie Wilson – [Bonnie William from Dundee](#))

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 Durrington War Graves Cemetery. 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)

Pte C. A. Wilson does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Loved By All

Photo of Pte C. A. Wilson's Headstone at Durrington War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire.



(Photo © Ian King - with permission)