

# Sutton Veny War Graves



*Lest we Forget*

## World War 1



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 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 1918 with the 2<sup>nd</sup> (W) Reinforcements of the Australian Army (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 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1918 & disembarked at London, England on 27<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> Training Battalion at Fovant, Wiltshire on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 1918 & allotted to Reinforcements of 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

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

Private Ernest Wickham Willows died at 18.15 hrs on 15<sup>th</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.*

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

Pte 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 CWGC lists Private E. W. Willows, 56425 of 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Australian Infantry, A.I.F. No family details are listed.

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

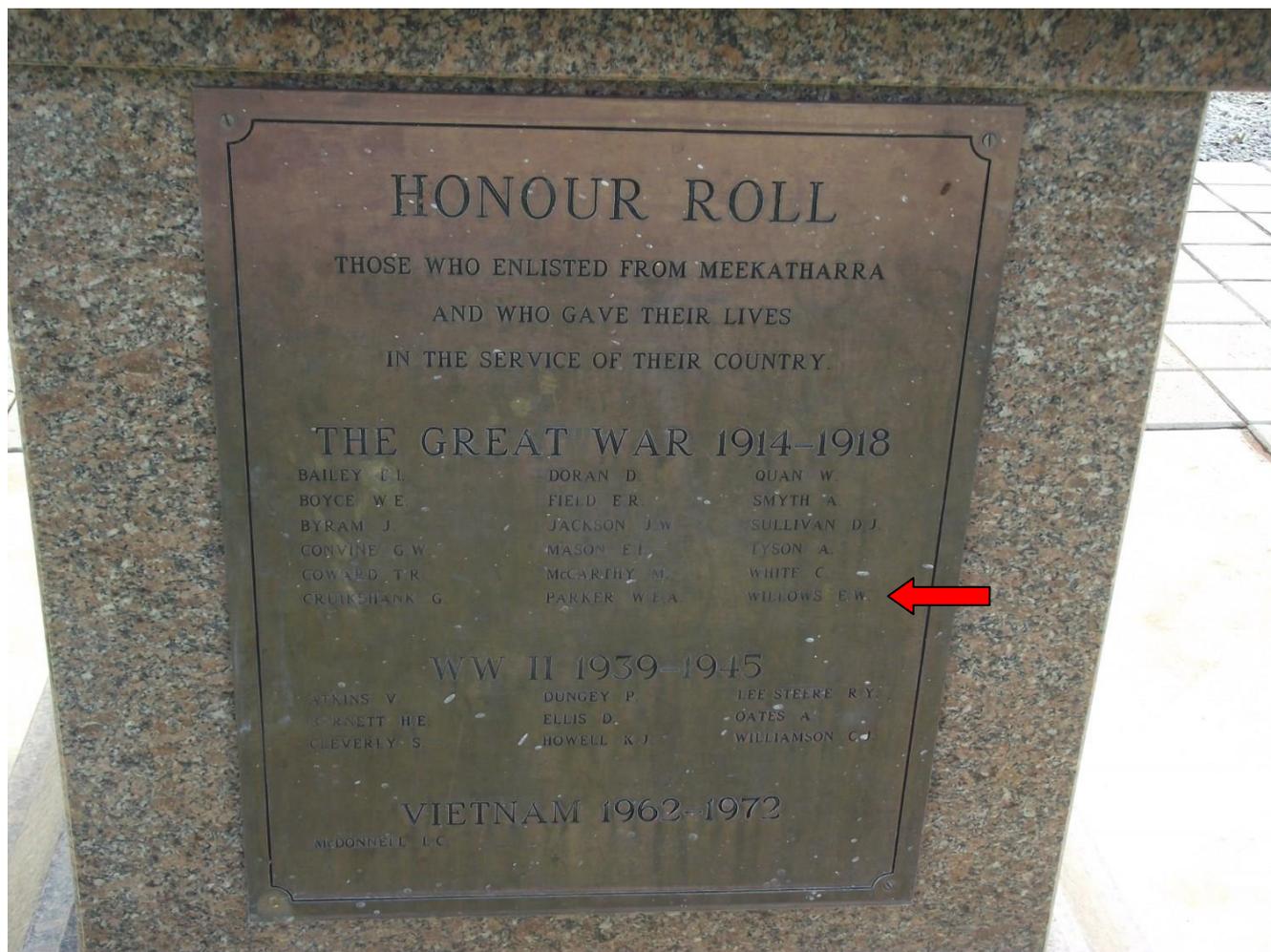


*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

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](#))



(67 pages of Pte 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)*

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### **ROLL OF HONOUR**

#### **Died, Other Causes**

E. W. Willows, Meekatharra

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

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### **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)*

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### **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)*

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#### **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 Veney. 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.

Photo of Pte E. W. Willows' CWGC headstone in St. John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.



*(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)*



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

