

Sutton Veny War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War 1



4238 PRIVATE

W. R. SYLE

54TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

3RD SEPTEMBER, 1918 AGE 32

He Died For His Country

*CWGC Headstone for Pte W. R. Syle is located in
Grave Plot # 356. E. 8. of St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny*

William Robert SYLE

William Robert Syle was born at Richmond, Victoria on 8th January, 1886 to parents Leonard Robert Coulson Syle and Jane Leslie Syle (nee Gordon).

William Robert Syle married Ethel Mary Hume on 26th October, 1912 at Rockdale, NSW. They had 2 children – Marjorie Ada Syle (birth registered in 1913 at Rockdale, NSW) & Joyce Lilian Syle (birth registered in 1914 at Rockdale, NSW).

William Robert Syle was a 29 year old, married Clerk from “Breton” Mitchell Street, Arncliffe, Sydney when he enlisted at Warwick Farm, NSW on 23rd August, 1915 with the 2nd Infantry Battalion, 13th Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 4238 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs E. M. Syle of “Breton” Mitchell Street, Arncliffe, Sydney.

Private William Robert Syle embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Aeneas* (A60) on 20th December, 1915 & disembarked at Egypt (date not recorded).

Pte Syle was allotted to and proceeded to join 54th Battalion from Zeitoun on 16th February, 1916. Pte Syle joined 54th Battalion on 21st February, 1916 at Tel-el-Kebir.

Pte Syle embarked on H.T. *Caledonian* from Alexandria to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) & disembarked at Marseilles, France on 29th June, 1916.

Pte Syle was sent to Field Ambulance then transferred to 38th Casualty Clearing Station on 2nd November, 1916 with varicose veins. He was transferred & admitted to 1st Canadian General Hospital at Etaples on 16th November, 1916. From there he was transferred to 6th C.D. on 17th November, 1916. He was sent to Details & Classified P. on 18th November, 1916.

Private Syles was marched out to his Unit & rejoined his Unit on 7th December, 1916

Pte Syle was declared illegally absent by a court of enquiry from 2nd January, 1918. A Court Martial was held on 23rd May, 1918:

CHARGE – A.A. Sect. 12 (1a) When On Active Service deserting H.M. Forces, in that he, in the Field on the 2nd Day of Jan. 1918 absented himself from the 54th Bn. A.I.F. until apprehended in a small wood outside Harponville about 10 a.m. on the 28th March, 1918 by the Reg. M.P.

FINDING – Not guilty of desertion but guilty of A.W.L.

SENTENCE - 90 days F.P. No.1 (Field Punishment). Time Awaiting Trial – from 28/4/18 to 22/5/18 25 days. Total forfeiture 201 days' pay.

Mrs Ethel Syle received a letter from the Military on 21st May, 1918, advising her that her allotment would be stopped from next Monday on account of her husband Pte William Robert Syle being an absentee.

Pte Syle was sent sick to Hospital from Detention on 17th August, 1918. He was taken to 11th Australian Field Ambulance with Debility then transferred to 61st Casualty Clearing Station & then transferred again on 19th August, 1918 to 10th General Hospital at Rouen with Diarrhoea. Pte Syle was invalided to England from France on 24th August, 1918.

Private William Robert Syle was admitted to the Military Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 25th August, 1918 with Colitis (severe).

Private William Robert Syle died at 8.50 pm on 3rd September, 1918 at the Military Hospital, Sutton Veny of Tuberculosis generalised & Peritonitis generalised. Cause of death was verified by a Post Mortem.

A death for William R. Syle, aged 32, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

Private William Robert Syle was buried on 7th September, 1918 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny - Grave no. 356. From the burial report of Pte Syle - *Coffin was good polished Elm – Deceased was buried with full Military Honours, the gun carriage being preceded by a Firing Party and Band of the A.I.F. Overseas Training Brigade. Six Australians from the 54th Bn acted as pallbearers. About 100 Officers, N.C.O.'s and Men from the Overseas Training Bde attended as mourners. Headquarters A.I.F. Depots in United Kingdom were represented at the funeral.*

Private W. R. Syle is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 160.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Pte William Robert Syle was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Syle's widow – Mrs E. Syle (Scroll sent November, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The CWGC lists Private William Robert Syle, 4238, of 54th Battalion, Australian Infantry, A.I.F., as the son of Leonard Robert and Jane Syle; husband of E. M. Syle of 10 Beach St, Randwick, Sydney. Born at Richmond, Victoria. No family details are listed.

(57 pages of Pte William Robert Syle's 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) & National Archives.



Newspaper Reports

436th CASUALTY LIST

NEW SOUTH WALES

DIED, OTHER CAUSES

Pte Wm. Robt. Syle Coogee (Illness)

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – Tuesday 22 October, 1918)

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 Veny. 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 William Robert Syle does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

He Died For His Country



Photo of Private W. R. Syle's 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)*