

A SOLDIER'S STORY



Service No.: 1989
Name: Norman Roland SIVIOUR
Nickname: Norm



Medals and Decorations

British War Medal
Victory Medal

Rank: Private
Service: Army
Enlisted: 22 Feb 1916
KIA: 11 Apr 1917

Norm was born at Collinsfield (near Red Hill, SA) on 25 Aug 1897 to Richard Henry Siviour and Clementine White Siviour (nee Roland). There were 12 children in the family, 5 boys and 7 girls, of which he was the youngest. His father was a farmer at Collinsfield, but after experiencing many dry years the family, in 1902, journeyed to Wallaroo to load their livestock and possessions aboard a boat for Tumby Bay. On arrival in Tumby they then travelled to a scrub block of 14,294 acres (just under 6,000Ha) located approx 5 miles (8Km) north-east of the present day township of Cummins. This property was later named ***"Hillside"*** and the Siviour family became the furthest inland settlers from Tumby.

As an aside the rates paid to the Tumby Council for this block were 6/3d (63 cents) in Feb 1903.

Norm's schooling was undertaken at Stokes. On the completion of schooling he worked on the family farm until his enlistment in the Army in 1916. He listed his occupation at this time as farmer.

On enlistment he was posted to 2nd Depot Bn at Mitcham to complete basic training, but this was amended on 1 Mar 1916 and he was posted to Base Light Horse for training as a reinforcement for 9th Light Horse Regiment. After a further amendment on 17 Apr 1916 he was then transferred to 3rd Reinforcements/ 48th Battalion (Bn) and undertook further training before embarking on 12 Jul 1916 aboard SS *"Seang Bee"* at Outer Harbour bound for Plymouth (UK). He was in the same draft as his friend from Lipson, Walter Williams.

On arrival in UK he undertook further training at 12th Training Bn at Folkstone (UK) before embarking on SS *"Princess Clementine"* on 28 Dec 1916, bound for Etaples

(France). He was finally taken on strength of his Bn (48th) on 6 Feb 1917.

The 48th Bn had been raised in Egypt in Mar 1916, the men of the 48th coming mainly from regional S.A. and W.A. The Bn first went into action on the Western Front in Aug 1916 at Pozières. During this action the Bn endured what was said to be the heaviest artillery barrage ever experienced by Australian troops and suffered 598 casualties. In the same year the Bn also saw action at Mouquet Farm. Like most AIF battalions, the 48th rotated in and out of the front line.

On 11 April 1917 the Bn, as part of the 4th Brigade of the Australian 4th Division, assaulted the Hindenburg Line in the First Battle of Bullecourt. The attack was hastily planned and mounted and resulted in disaster. Tanks which were supposed to support the attacking Australian infantry either broke down or were quickly destroyed. Nevertheless, the infantry managed to break into the German defences. Due to uncertainty as to how far they had advanced, supporting artillery fire was withheld, and eventually the Australians were hemmed in and forced to withdraw. The two brigades of the 4th Division that carried out the attack, the 4th and 12th, suffered over 3,300 casualties; 1,170 Australians were taken prisoner - the largest number captured in a single engagement during the war.

It was on the first day of this battle that Norm was killed in action (KIA) – it was also during this battle that his friend Walter Williams was awarded the Military Medal for “conspicuous bravery.”

Norm is commemorated at Villers Bretonneux Memorial (France). His name is also recorded on the Tumby Bay Memorial

Again the difficulty of communications of this time is highlighted by letters from Norm’s mother to the Army and their replies. On 15 Apr 1918, a full 12 months after his death, his mother wrote requesting that any of her late son’s possessions be forwarded to her; the reply was to the effect that there was limited shipping space and the effects would be forwarded when they came to hand. On 16 Jan 1920 his mother again wrote, this time pleading for the return of any of his possessions; the reply was that his possessions must have been lost on the battlefield as none had come to hand.



British War Medal Victory Medal

Memorial at
Villers-Bretonneux
Military Cemetery,
France

