

William Charles Stevens.  
By Penny Harris Jennings 2026.

Today we remember soldier William Charles Stevens, Service No's 58, V76856, 69120 and V83558.

William was born in Kensington, the suburb of Melbourne in 1892. On completion of school although William's father was a carpenter, William took on employment as a grocer.

Will, as he was known, came to live in Beaconsfield prior to 1914. When it was announced that Australia would participate in WW1, Will is recorded as the first Beaconsfield resident to enlist in August 1914. He was described as 5 feet, five inches in height, fair complexion, brown eyes and fair hair.

After training in Australia Will embarked HMAT Benalla on 19<sup>th</sup> October 1914.

After the initial landing at Gallipoli, in April 1915, fighting continued with sporadic sniping and grenade attacks, the opposing trenches only metres apart. A number of Australian Soldiers lost their lives during this period of the fighting, Will Stevens sustained gun shot wounds to both his left and right thighs.

Will was transferred to Ras-el-Tin Hospital, Alexandria, Egypt to stabilize the severe bleeding, prevent infection and to minimize the loss of leg function. Having supposedly recovered from his injuries he returned to duty, though he was repeatedly admitted to hospital in 1916 and later he was transferred to hospital in England due to the severe wound of his right thigh. Will would stay in Dartford, England until his return to Australia 4 March 1918 and was discharged as medically unfit.

Determined to continue Will re-enlisted in May 1918 but a few weeks later he was discharged again as medically unfit. Yet again, continuing his unwavering commitment to service Will re-enlisted in July 1918 serving a further 6 months before the demobilization of the Australian Imperial Force.

Will stayed with his parents in Fitzroy to convalesce before getting married and becoming a Post master.

In 1940 when WW2 was announced once again Will enlisted. Now in his 40's Will remained in Melbourne and served as a hospital orderly at the military hospital for 3 years.

In 1929 although no longer living in Beaconsfield. Will was remembered by his fellow soldiers when the Beaconsfield Avenue of Honour was planted. His name plaque is testament to that.

Will died in 1963 at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital.

Will was remembered by his Beaconsfield mates as courageous, fearless and a brave man who despite his injuries he was unwavering in his determination to serve his country, Australia.

Lest We Forget.