

Thomas Norman Willis

Private (Pte) 2757 Thomas Norman Willis enlisted in the 57th Infantry Battalion in the 15th Infantry Brigade of the 5th Australian Division in Melbourne on 2 August 1916. He embarked overseas on 2 October and disembarked in Plymouth on 16 November, where he joined the 15th (Brigade) Training Battalion at Hurdcott Camp.

He left England on 30 December and landed in France the next day, where he was taken on strength of the 57th Battalion at Delville Wood on 7 February 1917, one of 133 reinforcements received that day.

Following the Germans' strategic withdrawal to new defensive positions during February 1917, the 57th Battalion moved into the new front line at Bullecourt between 9 – 13 May to defend the gains made by the 2nd Division, for the loss of 73 casualties (15 killed).

On 17 September, the 57th Battalion moved north to Belgium to participate in Third Ypres, where Pte Willis was promoted to Lance Corporal (L Cpl) on 20 September.

The battalion was already formed up late on 25 September in readiness for the 5th Division's assault on Polygon Wood the next day, when a German artillery barrage struck them during the night and caused 82 casualties (30 killed or missing), one of whom was L Cpl Willis, who was initially declared missing, then later, killed in action on 26 September 1917. His body was never recovered, and he has no known grave.



Moolap Honor Roll

Lance Corporal 2757 Thomas Norman Willis is remembered on Panel 29 of the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium.

Name: Willis, Thomas Norman	
Service Number	2757
Date enlisted	2 August 1916
Place enlisted	Melbourne, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	57 th Infantry Battalion
Previous military service	29 th Light Horse (CMF) – 2 years
Date and ship embarked for overseas	2 October 1916 HMAT A71 <i>Nestor</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	20 years 7 months (7/12/1895)
Place of birth	Moolap, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Stockman
Religion	Church of England
Next of kin and address	Willis, Mr Joseph, father, Moolap, Victoria
Permanent address	Moolap, Victoria
Appearance	Fresh complexion, brown hair, brown eyes, height – 5 feet 10 inches, weight – 9 stone, 7 lbs, chest measurement – 34/37 inches
Final Rank	Lance Corporal
Final Unit	57 th Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	France, Belgium
Fate	Killed in action
Date and place died	26 September 1917 Polygon Wood, Belgium
Cemetery details	No known grave. Remembered on Panel 29 of the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium
Honours/medals	British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Also remembered on the Leopold & District Honor Roll, Leopold War Memorial, Moolap Honor Roll, East Geelong St Albans & Moolap War Memorial and the Geelong College Roll of Honour.