



Captain Robert William Laws CHAMBERS

[1893 – 1916]



9th Infantry Battalion

Robert William Laws Chambers was born in Brisbane on 5 April 1893, the third of four children of Claude William Chambers (architect) and Eveline Clara Dalrymple Chambers (nee Cowan) of Merthyr Road New Farm.

He was educated at Brisbane Central Boys State School (three years) and Brisbane Grammar School (five years). At Grammar, he was a member of the school's Rifle Team.

On leaving school he was articled as a draftsman in his father's architect firm and by 1914 he was employed as a draftsman.

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Chambers served three and a half years in the Militia prior to the war with 9th Infantry (Moreton) Regiment and during this time he appears to have been quite social and popular. He was mentioned in the Brisbane newspapers on occasions, usually in the context of dances and parties, athlete, marksman and citizen force soldier.

He enlisted in the AIF and was appointed Second Lieutenant, 9th Infantry Battalion on 28 August 1914. Chambers was promoted to Lieutenant in Egypt on 1 February 1915.

The 9th Battalion landed at Gallipoli in the first wave on 25 April 1915, but Chambers was wounded in the arm a few hours later. He was evacuated to Cairo, re-joining his unit on the peninsular on 22 June 1915. On 8 October he was evacuated due to illness, initially to Malta but then sent-on to England on 31 October 1915.

Chambers returned to his unit, by then in Alexandria, on 4 March 1916 and a week later was promoted to Captain.

He went with his unit to France, arriving on 2 April 1916. The Australians were initially deployed to the *Nursery Sector* near Armentieres, before being moved south to rear area behind the Somme battlefields.

The Australians were committed to the battle to capture Pozieres, attacking on the night of 22/23 July and capturing the shattered village in hard and intense fighting. Captain Chambers was the only remaining company commander in the unit by the end of the attack.

On 19 August 1916, 9th Battalion was back in the line, facing the strongpoint of Mouquet Farm. Captain Chambers was killed there by shellfire on 21 August 1916.

He was 23 years old and one of the eight USC members killed on the Western Front. Chambers had survived the Gallipoli campaign and survived the battle of Pozieres without injury but was killed a few weeks later.

The precise location of his death is not clearly stated, but it is believed to be in or near trenches occupied by C Company on the Australians' left flank.

Captain Chambers now lies in the Regina Trench Cemetery, Grandcourt, France.



Sources included:

- Australian War Memorial
- National Archives of Australia
- Various web pages
- *United Service Club, Queensland: The First Century, 1892-1992* by Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton
- Club Meeting Minutes, Annual Reports and sundry documents