

Ernest William Evans

Ernest William Evans was 25 years old when he joined the 25 Reinforcement 10th Battalion on June 23, 1917, stating he was a cook. His parents, William Francis Evans and Eliza Mary Evans (nee Johnston) lived at Gellibrand near Colac but Ernest was born in Kilmore in 1892.

His attestation date was later crossed out and made September 26 with the addition of a wife, May living at Wanga Wanga in Gellibrand. His oath was actually taken in Mt Gambia, South Australia by Col. Howland.

Private Evans, Service No. 7484 embarked from Melbourne on HMAT Aeneas, and on arrival in England marched in to Sutton Veny in late December 1917. During training he was charged with hesitating to obey orders and awarded 168 hours of detention in late January 1918 and was in custody awaiting trial then forfeited nine days pay.

In March 1918 Ernest was admitted to hospital at Sutton Veny with rheumatism for a month.

In mid May 1918 he was sent to Estaples in France via Folkston then joined his Battalion in the field.

In June 1918 Ernest was gassed and spent five days in hospital. In early August he was involved in a fight and received a knife wound to the left thigh with ligament and femoral artery damage and invalided to the United Kingdom on August 24. He inferred that the wound was accidental.

Ernest returned to Australia per 'Mamari' leaving the England on December 21, 1918. He disembarked in Fremantle but failed to re-embark. He remained absent until February 5.

He was discharged in February 1919 having had a dental examination with some teeth removed.

The Kilmore Advertiser of April 1922 said that 'Puck' Evans was a well-known boxer and that few people would know he was a stretcher bearer wounded in No Man's Land in Belgium while assisting a wounded man.

His comrade was killed and Evans received a gapping wound to his stomach but carried the soldier on his shoulder to hospital. The article also states that he received a medal for a conspicuous act of bravery on the battle field.

In September 1946 Ernest, then living in Abbott Street, Bendigo wrote to AIF Base Records in Canberra requesting replacement of his British War Medal and Victory Medal. He also had received the 1914/15 Star.

Ernest stated that his discharge papers, with other papers, had been burnt in a house fire in Abbott Street. He submitted a Statutory Declaration stating his Next of Kin as his mother, Elsie Evans living at Gellibrand. Ernest William Evans died in Swan Hill in 1965.

Contributed by the Kilmore Historical Society