

Durrington War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



1405 PRIVATE

C. E. SARGENTSON

39TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

6TH NOVEMBER, 1916

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte C. E. Sargentson is located in Grave Plot # 118
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

Charles Edward SARGENTSON

Charles Edward Sargentson was born at Pleasant Creek, Stawell, Victoria in 1880 to parents John & Margaret Sargentson (nee McGinley).

Charles Edward Sargentson married Lena Jameson in 1914 at Stawell, Victoria.

A birth was registered in 1914 for Nancy Jameson Sargentson daughter of Charles & Lena Sargentson.

Charles Edward Sargentson was a 37 year old, married, Dairy Farmer from Stawell, Victoria when he enlisted on 3rd April, 1916 with the 10th Infantry Brigade, 39th Infantry Battalion "D" Company of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 1405 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Lena Sargentson of Crowlands Road, Stawell, Victoria.

Pte Charles Edward Sargentson embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Ascanius (A11)* on 27th May, 1916 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 18th July, 1916.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Private Charles Edward Sargentson was admitted to Hospital, seriously ill with a bayonet wound to the abdomen on 30th October, 1916. Pte Sargentson's wife was advised of the serious injury.

Private Charles Edward Sargentson died on 6th November, 1916 at Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire from Bayonet Wound to Abdomen (Accidental).

A death for Charles E. Sargentson, aged 38, was registered in the December quarter, 1916 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

A Coroner's Inquest was held on 6th November, 1916 at Fargo to inquire into the death of Pte C. E. Sargentson, from injuries sustained from a bayonet whilst "skylarking" with other men of his company. The Jury returned a verdict of accidental death.

Private Charles Edward Sargentson was buried on 8th November, 1916 at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire – Plot number 118 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing File for Pte Charles Edward Sargentson contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of the family of the late Pte Sargentson asking for details of his death & place of burial. A reply from the Assistant Matron of Fargo Military Hospital in answer to the request reads: *"Died of Wounds – He was admitted to hospital with a bayonet wound of abdomen perforating the gut and also piercing through a small piece of the liver. He was operated on at once but the surgeons could give practically no hope. A few days later he was operated on again to relieve distention and make him more comfortable, but all of little avail. Pte Sargentson was buried on Nov. 8th at Durrington, grave no. 118 Right hand side of the cemetery path. The Chaplain for the hospital, Captain Skipper saw him but unfortunately his brother arrived just too late to see him alive. He was such a very good patient, and his sisters were all very fond of him."*

Court of Enquiry convened on 1st November, 1916:

FIRST WITNESS: No.1417 Private T. W. WILLIAMS:, the Witness, being duly sworn, states:-

My name is Thomas William WILLIAMS. I am a private in "D" Coy 39th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force. On Monday October 30th 1916 I was dining Room and Hut Orderly and had not been on parade, but went with the Compant to the Armoury and was there issued with a rifle, after which I returned to my duties in the hut. Shortly after I returned at about 5 p.m., several others (including SARGENTSON) came into the hut. We all started skylarking with the rifles which had the bayonets and scabbards on. After about five minutes Private Sargentson turned and put his rifle on the rack. As he again turned towards me, I made a point at him with my rifle. He caught hold of the scabbard and as I withdrew the rifle, the scabbard remained in his hand and the bayonet became unsheathed. In the duck, I did not notice that the scabbard had been removed. I then made a lunge towards him and he said "Oh you have stuck it in me". Word was then sent to the Army Medical Corp and Private Sargentson was removed to the Hospital. There was never any ill feeling between myself and Private Sargentson.

1/11/16.

T.W.Williams, Pte. 1417.

THE WITNESS WITHDRAWS.

SECOND WITNESS: No.6063 Private W. H. MATHESON: The Witness having been duly sworn, states:-

My name is William Henry MATHESON. I am a Private in "D" Company, 39th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force. On Monday October thirtieth 1916 at 5 p.m. after being dismissed from parade at which we had all been issued with new rifles and bayonets, and on entering the hut we started skylarking with the rifles which had the bayonets with scabbards on fixed to the muzzle. After about 10 minutes of this we, with the exception of Private WILLIAMS who continued skylarking, put the rifles away.

I was standing about three yards from Privates WILLIAMS AND SARGENTSON but owing to the darkness, I did not notice that WILLIAMS' scabbard had been removed. WILLIAMS was at the "On guard" position and made a movement towards SARGENTSON but did not throw the rifle forward. SARGENTSON then said "You've got me" or words to that effect and it was noticed that he had been wounded. It was not until then that I noticed that the scabbard had been withdrawn from WILLIAMS' bayonet. There was no ill feeling in the skylarking going on in the hut.

W. H. Matheson, Pte. No.6063.

1/11/16.

THE WITNESS WITHDRAWS.

THIRD WITNESS: Lance Corporal R. G. McKENZIE: The Witness having been duly sworn, states:-

My name is Roderick George McKenzie. I am a Lance Corporal in "D" Coy, 39th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force. After dismissal from parade at 5 p.m. on Monday thirtieth October 1916, we returned to the hut and several of the men commenced skylarking with the rifles and bayonets which had just been issued to them. I was examining my rifle with my back turned to the men when I heard somebody call out "You have got me"; on turning round I saw Pte SARGENTSON drop the scabbard of Private WILLIAMS' bayonet and he began to undo his tunic and trousers. I went over to him and he lifted up his shirt and showed me the wound in his stomach. I told SARGENTSON to lie down and immediately sent a messenger to the Army Medical Corps. The light in the hut was very bad at the time of the occurrence. All the men in the hut belonged to one platoon and had not had any bayonet fighting that day. There was no ill feeling shown during the skylarking in the hut. I was the only non-commissioned officer present but did not think it necessary to stop the skylarking.

1/11/16.

R.G.McKenzie, L/Cpl. 1362.

THE WITNESS WITHDRAWS.

THE COURT adjourned and later re-assembled at the FARGO HOSPITAL for the purpose of taking Private SARGENTSON'S evidence, but the Medical Officer in charge stated that SARGENTSON'S condition was such that it was not advisable to disturb the patient for this purpose for several days.

THE COURT THEREFORE AGAIN ADJOURNED.

S.E.Tucker, Major
39th Battalion A.I.F.
PRESIDENT,

W.R.Bingle, Lieut.,
39th Battalion A.I.F.
MEMBER.

1st November 1916.

THE COURT RE-ASSEMBLED ON NOVEMBER SIXTH 1916 AND TAKES FURTHER EVIDENCE AS FOLLOWS:-

FOURTH WITNESS: Captain W. I. CLARK. The Witness being duly sworn, states:-

My name is Wendell Inglis CLARK. I am a Captain in the Australian Imperial Force and Medical Officer of the 40th Bn. On Monday October thirtieth 1916 at about 5.15 p.m. I received a message that a man in the Thirty-Ninth Battalion had received a Bayonet Wound. I proceeded to his hut to examine him, Captain DERAVIN being on leave at the time. When I saw the deceased he was lying on his bed, was quite conscious, showing no evidence of shock but was evidently in pain. I had his removed to the 40th Bn Army Medical Corps Room, as the light in his hut was too poor to examine him by. I there removed the dressing that had been applied by the Thirty-Ninth Medical Corps Corporal and found a clean cut wound about three quarters of an inch in length about two inches from the middle line of the stomach and about two inches below the margin of the ribs on the right side. After cleaning the skin with iodine I made an examination of the wound which did not appear to have completely penetrated the abdominal wall. Owing to the position of the wound and the possibility of penetration of the bowel I applied an antiseptic dressing and he was then transferred to Fargo Hospital, a quarter of an hour later. His condition at that time was quite good. It has since come to my knowledge that

a portion of the bowel (duodenum) has been penetrated, the bayonet thus having passed to a depth of from two to three inches. It would not require great force to cause the wound.

W. Inglis Clark.

THE WITNESS WITHDRAWS.

6/11/16.

S. E. Tucker, Major,
PRESIDENT

W. R. Bingle, Lieut.,
MEMBER.

THE COURT re-assembled on November Seventh 1916 and proceeds to take evidence as follows:-

FIFTH WITNESS:

Captain A. C. T. WOODWARD: The Witness being duly sworn, states:-

My name is Alfred Chad Turner WOODWARD. I am a Captain in R.A.M.C. and surgical specialist at Fargo Hospital. I examined deceased on admission who was suffering from an incised wound in the upper part of the belly. The internal organs wounded were the duodenum, the liver and the transverse colon. The depth of the wound was probably about two inches.

A.C.T.WOODWARD F.R.C.S.,
Capt., R.A.M.C.,
7th November 1916.

S. E. Tucker, Major
39th Battalion A.I.F.
PRESIDENT.

W. R. Bingle, Lieut.,
39th Battalion A.I.F.,
MEMBER.

7th Nov 1916.

Private C. E. Sargentson is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 131.

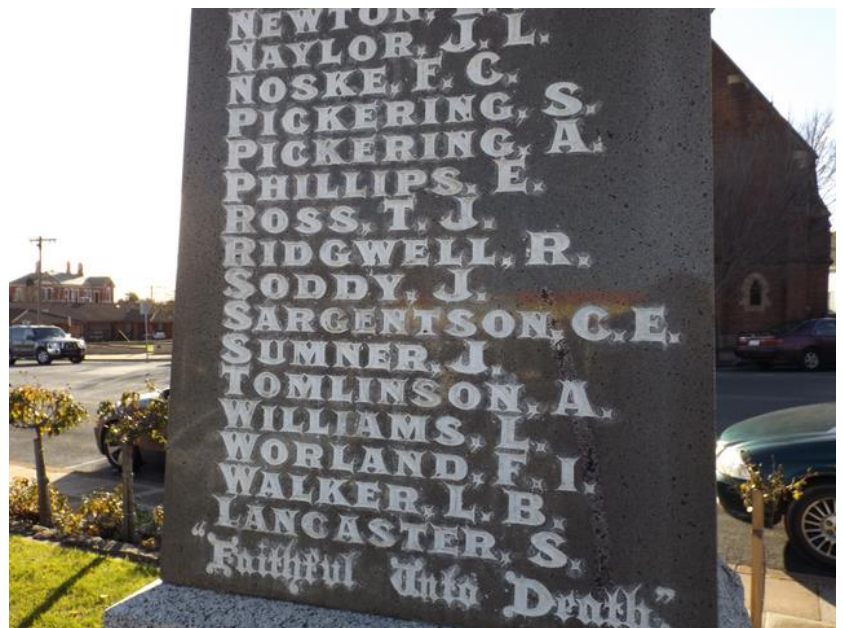


(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Private C. E. Sargentson is also remembered on the Stawell War Memorial located at Main & Victoria Street, Stawell, Victoria.



Stawell War Memorial (Photos from Left – Monument Australia; Right – Allan Longstaff)

Pte Charles Edward Sargentson was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Sargentson's widow – Mrs L. Sargentson (sent February, 1922 & July, 1922)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Charles Edward Sargentson - service number 1405 as being 37 years old & served with 39th Battalion Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

A War pension was granted to Len a Sargentson, widow of late Pte Charles Edward Sargentson, in the sum of £2 per fortnight from 10th January, 1917. A War Pension was also granted to Nancy J. Sargentson, daughter of the late Pte Sargentson, in the sum of £1 per fortnight from the same date.

(37 pages of Pte Charles Edward Sargentson's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives

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Newspaper Reports

AUSTRALIANS IN WAR

243RD CASUALTY LIST

DIED OF WOUNDS

Pte C. E. Sargentson, Stawell.

(Hamilton Spectator, Victoria – Tuesday 21 November, 1916)

IN MEMORIAM

SARGENTSON - In sad and loving memory of my dear husband, Chas. Edward Sargentson, who died in England on the 5th November, 1916.

"In the midst of life we are in death."

We pictured your safe returning

And longed to clasp your hand,

But God has postponed the meeting;

It will be in a better land.

-Inserted by his loving wife and child.

(Stawell News and Pleasant Creek Chronicle, Victoria – Saturday 3 November, 1917)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone at Durrington War Graves Cemetery. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)

Pte C. E. Sargentson does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Photo of Pte C. E. Sargentson's Headstone at Durrington War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire.



(Photo © Ian King - with permission)