

Private William Parr Stevens[©]
Regimental number: 3490
4th Pioneer Battalion, Australian Imperial Force

born: 10 February 1883 – died: 27 June 1916

Private William Parr Stevens was born on 10 February 1883 in Peachy Belt, Port Gawler in South Australia, the son of Charles Bennett Stevens and Elizabeth Parr.¹ His father was born in 1840 in Unley, near Adelaide,² and his mother may have been born in about 1847.³ Charles and Elizabeth married on 4 August 1865 in Gawler River.⁴ William was probably the youngest of at least seven children: Alice Ann (born in 1867, but died at the age of 13 in 1883),⁵ Emily Eda (born in 1869),⁶ John Charles (born in 1870),⁷ Ross Herbert (born in 1875),⁸ James John Parr (born in 1877),⁹ Louesia [*sic*] Ellen (born in 1881)¹⁰ and William.

William enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 23 July 1915 in Keswick, South Australia.¹¹ He was 32 years old, 6' tall and had a fresh complexion, blue eyes and brown hair. He was initially posted to the 3rd Training Battalion. He was in Australia until June 1916. While still in Australia William had a disciplinary incident: he was found to be "illegally absent without leave from 6.45 A.M. to 10 pm 12/10/15," for which he was admonished and forfeited one day's pay.

In February 1916, he transferred to the 50th Battalion in Tel-el-Kebir in Egypt. The following month he transferred to the 4th Pioneer Battalion and in June he left Egypt to join the British Expeditionary Force. He disembarked in Marseilles, France on 11 June 1916.

Later that month, his battalion was stationed near Armentières in northern France.¹² The 4th Pioneers relieved the 2nd Pioneers on 22 June. On 24 June, half his battalion was sent to "Gas School," the first half having been trained the day before. The other half were sent to the Divisional Battalion. At some point on 24 June William was injured and evacuated to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station by the 6th Australian Field Ambulance. He had a shrapnel wound to the right buttock and abdominal rigidity had already begun in the field. He died three days later. He was one of 1,986 admitted to No. 1 CCCS in June and one of 86 to die there.¹³

He was buried in Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord (Grave reference: II, E, 146), with the Canadian chaplain C. K. Whalley presiding. Bailleul is in France, close to the Belgian border. It was occupied on 14 October 1914 and became an important railhead, air depot and hospital centre. Several casualty clearing stations, including No. 1 Canadian CCS, were quartered there for considerable periods. The earliest Commonwealth burials at Bailleul were made in April 1915. An extension was built and burials continued until April 1918; they occurred again in September and after the Armistice, when soldiers' remains were brought in from the neighbouring battlefields.¹⁴

William's father, who was living at 13 Falcon Avenue, Mile End, South Australia, received his personal effects: two discs, letters, three photos, cards, belt, testament, prayer book, diary, writing pad, two titles, pipe, knife, cotton bag and three coins.

William was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918), the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the 1914–15 Star (for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).

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- ¹ "Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 November 2016), entry for William Parr Stevens, Page number: 495, Volume number: 298
- ² "Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 8 November 2016), entry for Charles Bennett Stevens, Page number: 136, Volume number: 1
- ³ "Australia, Death Index, 1787–1985," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 8 November 2016), entry for Elizabeth Stevens, Page number: 283, Volume number: 272
- ⁴ "Australia, Marriage Index, 1788–1950," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 8 November 2016), entry for Charles Bennet [*sic*] Stevens, Page number: 305, Volume number: 63
- ⁵ "Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 November 2016), entry for Alice Ann Stevens, Page number: 85, Volume number: 54; "Australia, Death Index, 1787–1985," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 8 November 2016), entry for Alice Ann Stevens, Page number: 115, Volume number: 128
- ⁶ "Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 November 2016), entry for Emily Eda Stevens, Page number: 19, Volume number: 74
- ⁷ "Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 November 2016), entry for John Charles Stevens, Page number: 264, Volume number: 89
- ⁸ "Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 November 2016), entry for Ross Herbert Stevens, Page number: 371, Volume number: 148
- ⁹ "Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 November 2016), entry for James John Parr Stevens, Page number: 20, Volume number: 185
- ¹⁰ "Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 November 2016), entry for Louesia [*sic*] Ellen Stevens, Page number: 252, Volume number: 257
- ¹¹ "Australia, WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 October 2016), entry for William Parr Stevens. Unless otherwise noted, all information about William's military career comes from his source.
- ¹² "AWM4 Subclass 14/16 - 4th Australian Pioneer Battalion," *Australian War Memorial* (<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/RCDIG1000375/>: accessed 27 November 2016), AWM4 Class 14 - Engineers, ID number: RCDIG1000375, Collection number: AWM4 14/16
- ¹³ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FIN&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G: accessed 7 September 2014)
- ¹⁴ "Bailleul Communal Cemetery, Nord," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/2000047/Bailleul%20Communal%20Cemetery,%20Nord>: accessed 5 August 2015)