

GOODCHILD, William Birkett



William Birkett Goodchild
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William Birkett Goodchild was born at Paddington, NSW in 1893. He was the oldest of five boys born to William George Birkett and Emilie Louise nee Long, between 1893 and 1899. William's brothers were Frederick HV b.1894, Albert Sydney b.1896, Colin CF b.1897, and Norman E b.1899.

William was schooled at Bundaberg (on scholarship) and Maryborough Grammar School, Queensland. He then attended Hurlstone Agricultural

High School on scholarship. William was 17 years old when he entered HAC in 1910 to commence the full Diploma course. William obtained his Diploma, and a Burdekin Medal in 1911. Frederick (1910-1911) and Albert (1913) were also HAC students. Albert was the best Practical Student in 1913.

William was farming in Gayndah, Qld, by 1913, and was there at the time he enlisted, 1 March 1916, in the 26th Battalion, 15th Reinforcement. William had previously served in the Junior and Senior Cadets.

William wrote to the College in May 1916 saying 'At last I have been enabled to get away from the farm to join the colours. It is a privilege for which I have waited long, and to be in camp as a member of the Commonwealth Military Forces fills one with a great sense of satisfaction, although one still desires to be still further "in it". I am very pleased indeed to know of the manner in which the old H.A.C. has responded to the call, and am proud to have belonged to an institution that has given such a large proportion of its men—past and present—to the Empire in her hour of need. It is my opinion that there is probably no other secondary educational establishment in the Commonwealth that has sent such a large percentage of students to the front' (HAC Journal May 1916 p.86).

Embarking from Brisbane, Queensland, on board HMAT A46 *Clan Macgillivray* on 7 September 1916, William arrived in Plymouth, England in November. William was in France by January 1917.

Serving in France, William was wounded several times, before suffering from a shell wound to the right knee, a fractured tibia, and severe gassing whilst in the support lines at Zonnebeke Ridge, on 31 October 1917. William died later that day from the effects of gas poisoning, aged 24, and is buried in the Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium.

William's brother, Albert Sydney, enlisted 24 August 1914 as a Driver in the 1st Light Horse Field Ambulance, A Squadron. Serving at Gallipoli, and Egypt, Albert transferred to the 1st Light Horse Regiment in 1917. Rising to the rank of Lieutenant, Albert returned to Australia 7 April 1919.