



Club member who made the supreme sacrifice 1914-1919

The Story Behind the Name

The 'Allen' Brothers



ERNEST



JAMES EDWARD



JOSIAH



Private Ernest ALLEN

8 October 1883 - 25 April 1918

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The Story Behind the Name



Private Ernest ALLEN

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PRE-ENLISTMENT:

- Ernest was born on 8 October 1883 in Ox Hill, Gin Gin, Queensland
- He was the eldest son of William ALLEN and Sarah Jane CHILDS
- He was educated at Gin Gin State School
- His occupation was that of a Grazier with Joseph Allen lessee of a large selection on the Bania Ranges, 40 miles west of Gin Gin.
- He was a keen sport being a member of all the sporting associations in the district and an expert horseman.

SERVICE:

- Service Number 2615.
- 5 July 1916 Ernest enlisted in Bundaberg, Qld with his brothers Pte James Edward and Pte Josiah ALLEN, all three having consecutive Regimental Numbers.
- The three brothers enlisted in the 49th Infantry Battalion.
- 7 Oct 1916 he embarked as a Private in the 49th Infantry Battalion, on HMAT Ceramic, Sydney, aged 32 years, along with his two brothers.
- They arrived in England in November 1916 and sent to France on the 8th January 1916 and joined the 49th Battalion in the field.
- Ernest was hospitalised in August 1917 with trench fever then he re-joined the 49th Battalion in February 1918, aware that both his brothers had died.
- In April 1918 the Australian 13th Brigade (of which the 49th Battalion was part) was given the task of recapturing Villers-Bretonneux from the Germans.
- Ernest ALLEN was 'Killed in Action' on 25 April 1918 while fighting to recapture the town of Villers-Bretonneux, France. He was 34 years 6 months.

CEMETERY &/OR MEMORIAL:

- Cemetery: Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery, Panel 147 'No known grave'
- Memorials: Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour
- Bundaberg War Memorial
- Gin Gin War Memorial

MILITARY HONOURS & AWARDS:

- British War Medal
- Victory Medal





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INDIVIDUAL SHOOTING:

- Ernest won great distinction as a marksman whilst a member of the Gin Gin Rifle Club.
- During 1912-1913, he won the club cup.
- He also won a Gold Medal 1913-1914.
- The Wide Bay and Burnett districts Championship Badge was won by Ernest Allen.
- He also won several other prizes.
- He achieved several 'possibles' at 500 yards.

ARMISTICE CENTENARY WAR MEMORIAL

Commemoration Service

- Remembrance Day 2018 Service Booklet Ernest was listed along with his two brothers, James Edward and Josiah.
- ANZAC Day 2021 Keynote Address Ian Errington

LEAVING A LEGACY



A legacy of the Allen brothers can be found near Gin Gin. It is this wooden bunkhouse they once slept in at the back of the family homestead. It now forms part of the Kookaburra Park eco-village.



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LETTERS HOME

The Australian War Memorial has preserved a Collection of letters relating to the First World War service of the three Allen brothers: 2615 Private Ernest Allen, 2614 Private Josiah Allen, and 2616a James Edward Allen, all of the 49th Battalion. The collection consists of 28 letters written by the brothers between 1916 and 1918 to another brother at home, William (Will) Jr. Also included are 6 letters written to Will by other soldiers, 3 news clippings, and biographical notes on the 3 Allen brother, all of whom were killed in action. This Colection provides an amazing insight into the day to day lives of three Queensland riflemen who enlisted for King and Country.

This are letters written by Ernest (Ernie) to Will (his brother). The first was just before arriving in France and the second letter is the last letter he wrote which was about a month before he was killed on the Western Front.

Codford
2nd Jan 1916

Dear Will,
Just a few lines to let you know we are still awaiting orders for embarkation but I think tomorrow night will see us in France & seven days when you get this we will be hard up against it.

This day is out of a packet of cigaretttes & as I took a fancy to it I am sending it to you. I got a letter from Lil today. I went on a route march today & when we got back we were pretty tired & when we on as well so we had to pack up & march about 7 miles in 3 hours with about a 50 lb pack & weighed in weight since landing here & gained a stone or more.

What do you think of the new army scheme for raising food for the Army. They put us digging up the ground today between the huts a little as it is for potatoes. I imagine the huts will produce by then the boys are done tramping on it especially as it is a bed of clay.

Folkestone
26th Mar 18

Dear Will,
As I am just returning from leave & have a few minutes to spare I will let you know how I think of things in general.

To begin with I had a splendid holiday & wish I was going in place of returning. Will I suppose before this you will know that Fritz has started a very big offensive & is causing a lot of trouble at present but if he keeps it going things will be alright & he will get something worth hauling shortly & may return quicker than he bargained for.

He will find that he has to contend with on this front. The way things are at present I think my career will end one way or the other very soon now. Probably I am surprised at my speaking in a tone but as things are in the air at the present time (I Whirl from Hell) you will probably

... has taken a turn & is warmer than the winter days in ... I suppose we will suffer for ... We had sausages for tea tonight or pigs we made of cats of dogs or ... they were made of cats of dogs or ... thoroughly enjoyed them. We got at the G.M. Co. The food at the G.M. Co. for soldiers is cheap & good & it is there we thoroughly enjoy a good cup of coffee or cocoa.

Oh well dear Brother, no more news this time. So hoping you are all well at home & with best wishes for a bright & Prosperous New Year & Hoping you are all well.

I am
your loving Brother
Ernie.

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I cant understand my meaning & it cant last forever & it will be sweet from now on.

There was a shower this morning & a cool wind. I expect to get a kick when I get back again & I will write you again if I have any news. Remember me to all your friends & I'd like to be over there in a few weeks now. Love & kind remembrance all at Home & best wishes for a mild Winter.

I am
Your Fond Brother
Ernie

No 2615-
Pte E Allen
49th Battalion
A Coy
A. I. F.



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KILLED IN ACTION - 25TH APRIL 1918

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Allen Family of Gin Gin Queensland pictured 1912 from the back left: Fanny, John, Edith, Ernest, Agnes, Josiah and Edward. Front from left: Willie, William snr., Mrs. Allen and Lily. The three sons standing at the back right were all killed in World War 1. Ernest the eldest (back middle) age 34, died in 1918, and the Josiah and James Edward standing together (back right) were both killed at Messines in Belgium on the same day, June 7 1917. The three sons all enlisted the same day and all served with the 49th Battalion AIF.

Photograph is held by John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland