

William Frederick RUSSELL aka Billy Byng



Regimental No. 5181
 Religion Roman Catholic
 Occupation Labourer
 Marital status Single
 Age at embarkation 18
 Next of kin Father, J H Russell, 36 Donald Street,
 Footscray, Victoria
 Enlistment date 15th March 1916
 Rank on enlistment Private
 Unit name 6th Battalion, 16th Reinforcement

AWM Embarkation Roll No. 23/23/4
 Embarkation details Unit embarked from Melbourne,
 Victoria, on board HMAT A23 *Suffolk*
 on 1st April 1916

Rank from Nominal Roll Private
 Unit from Nominal Roll 6th Battalion
 Recommendations Military Medal for 'Work at Lihons
 on 10th August 1918.'

1916 29th August Proceeded to France.
 1916 15th September Taken on strength of 6th Battalion.
 1916 12th November Wounded in the field. Gun shot
 wound to the right arm. Transferred
 to England on 19th November.

1917 23rd March Taken on strength 65th Battalion from 6th Battalion.
 1917 17th October Proceeded to France via Southampton ex 63rd Battalion to reinforce 6th Battalion.
 1917 3rd November Taken on strength Suez.
 1918 25th March Admitted to hospital in the Field with tonsillitis. Transferred to hospital in Boulogne.
 1918 22nd May Returned to Unit until 31st October 1918.
 1918 14th October On leave in UK.
 1919 10th April Transferred to England from France.
 1919 18th April Admitted to Australian Dermatological Hospital in England.
 Fate Returned to Australia 18th July 1919 per *Takada*.

Other details Discharged on 30th October 1919.



Billy Byng at the beach with
 friends before enlisting 1915

War service: Western Front

Medals: Military Medal, 1914 - 15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal

William Russell was born in Sth Melbourne on 19th June 1897 to Harrietta Thoburn nee Russell.

Described as 5 ft., 6 in., 168 lbs., Fair complexion, blue eyes and fair/brown hair on enlistment in 1916. William was bought up by his Grandparents Jane and John Byng at The Patch. He took their name and was usually called 'Billy Byng'.

1919 Electrol Roll states - John Francis Byng - Farmer, Monbulk.

Billy married Gladys Cairns on 27th April 1922 in Melbourne.

Died in Fitzroy in 1941.

Military Medal

'For gallantry and devotion to duty. This soldier has been a stretcher bearer for the last two years, and during his career with the Battalion he has at all times carried out his duties in a conspicuously self sacrificing manner. On innumerable occasions his gallant work has been instrumental in saving life particularly at LIHONS on the 10th August 1918, when he worked for many hours on end under heavy shell-fire dressing and carrying wounded, with an utter disregard to danger.'

Source: 'Commonwealth Gazette' No. 135

Date: 11 December 1919

Family/military connections

Brother: 5179 Private Leopold Joseph RUSSELL, 6th Battalion,
 returned to Australia, 12th June 1919.

Sons on Active Service
 World War Two

No. VX 143520 Private William A. Russell. 14/10 Australian
 Infantry Brigade. Served Australia and abroad.