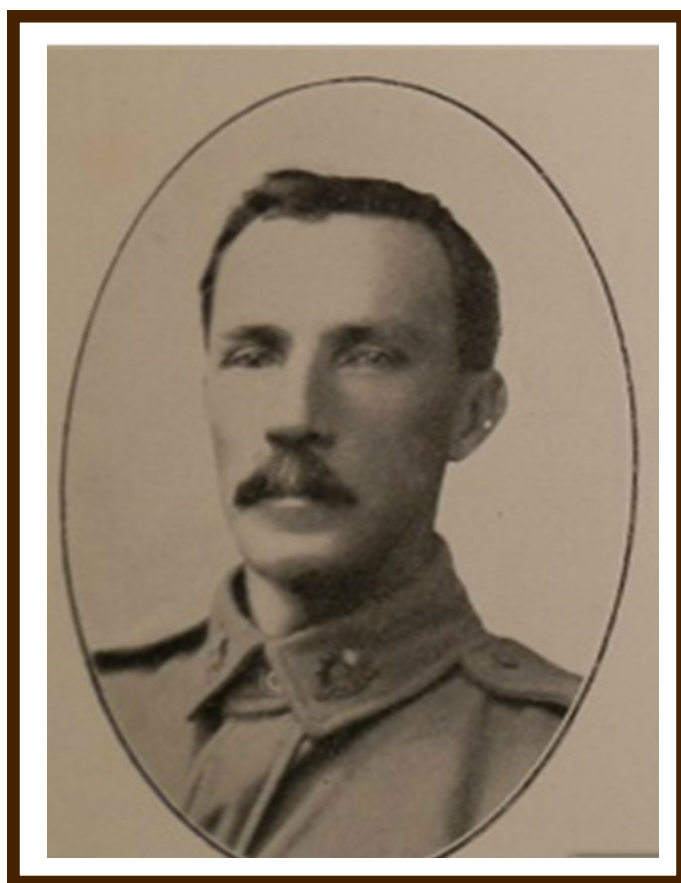


Stories from the Honour Boards

Stories of those who served and are remembered on the Honour Boards in the Merrington Anzac Memorial Peace Chapel at Saint Andrew's Uniting Church

Booklet Number 17

WILLIAM BRENNAN 1872 - 1915



This booklet remains the property of Saint Andrew's Uniting Church.
Please see a Guide if you would like a copy.

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Corner Ann and Creek Streets
Brisbane QLD 4000
2014

Private William Brennan

William Brennan was born in Gympie on 15 January 1872, third son of James Brennan and Margaret Mills (née Dale). He attended Brisbane Grammar School from February 1885 to October 1887 and joined the State Civil Service in the Department of Public Lands. Two brothers and a sister were older and two sisters and a brother younger. Bill's eldest brother (James Brennan) served as honorary secretary of the Committee of Management at the Wickham Terrace Presbyterian Church before the congregation moved to Creek and Ann Streets.

At the age of 42 years 8 months, William Brennan, a single man and Public Servant, enlisted in Brisbane for service in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia on 30 September 1914. His mother and father, at that time were living in Milis Street, Woolloowin. Given service number 577 and assigned to the 15th AIF Battalion, Bill Brennan was appointed Lance Corporal on 1 December and embarked from Melbourne on 22 December 1914 aboard HMAT *Ceramic* bound for Egypt.



HMAT Ceramic

The Ceramic weighed 18,481 tons with an average cruise speed of 15 knots or 27.78 kmph. It was owned by the Oceanic SN Co Ltd, Liverpool, and leased by the Commonwealth until 9 July 1917.

He was engaged in continuous fighting till 18 May 1915 when he was killed in an advanced trench at Quinn's Post. In his book, *Quinn's Post Anzac Gallipoli*, Peter Stanley described the dreadful assaults occurring at Quinn's where "the bomb duel continued." Referring to the May 18 battle, he says in part, "The massing of Turkish troops on the brow of Mule Valley was several times broken up by machine-guns firing from north and south of Quinn's, but the lines were so close that defenders at Quinn's threw bombs and even fired revolvers into the packed masses emerging from the opposing trenches."¹ Hundreds were killed or wounded that day. Padres Merrington and Green conducted burials. .

1. Peter Stanley, *Quinn's Post*, page 63



In the trenches, Quinn's Post

Hansard records a speech in the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 10 December 1915 by Hon. James Tolbie, Member for Toowoomba and Secretary for Public Lands. He reported on the loss felt by the Department of Public Lands by “the death of the late Mr William Brennan who fell defending the Empire and the cause of liberty.” Tolbie referred to his recent conversation with the head of the Department of Public Lands who held a very high opinion of Bill Brennan’s work and influence.

He continued, “Mr. Brennan was an officer of the department who was most highly valued. He (departmental head) did not know that any other officer was held in higher esteem by his superior officers. He left a position of responsibility, and a position that carried with it a very considerable amount of emolument. He left a position that was very nearly the head of one of the sub-departments, and had that gentleman lived he was sure that in the course of events he would have had charge of one of the most important sub-departments of the department. He left all those things to accept the pay of a private soldier of 6s. a day - less than one third of his salary and knowing well what was in front of him.

“He felt that as a single man the responsibility was on him of taking the place of married men in fighting the battle of the Empire, and it was only last week that he had heard something of him from one of the men who had returned from the front. It happened that two young men, members of the Light Horse, known to Mr Brennan, landed at Gallipoli, and he happened to come across them. He spoke to them, gave them good advice as to what their conduct should be, he having had some weeks' experience on the field himself.

“One of those men had just got into the trench when he was taken away, and the next morning Mr. Brennan also fell. The third man, after nearly six months in the trenches, returned to Queensland shattered in health and he spoke in the warmest possible terms of the high esteem in which Mr. Brennan was held by his fellow soldiers. He regretted that the Queensland Lands Department had lost so valuable and so faithful an officer.”²

Lone Pine Memorial 44 honours the memory and sacrifice of William Brennan.

2. *Hansard*, Queensland Legislative Assembly, 10 Dec 1915

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N E Adsett August 2014



**In Memory of
Lance Corporal WILLIAM BRENNAN**

**577, 15th Bn., Australian Infantry, A.I.F.
who died age 43
on 18 May 1915**

**Son of Margaret Mills Brennan, of Milis St., Woolloowin,
Queensland, and the late James Brennan.*
Native of Gympie.**

**Remembered with honour
LONE PINE MEMORIAL**

*Bill Brennan's father died at his residence in Milis Street, Woolloowin on 13th June 1917 .



Lest we forget