

FARMER, Melville Orchard (76) AIF



Name	FARMER, Melville Orchard Lieutenant AIF
Service Number	76
Date of Birth	29th June 1888
Died	30th April 1918
Place of Birth	Woodside SA
Resident	Victor Harbor SA
Commeration	Jerusalem Memorial Panel 58

Image 1 © Tom Farmer Family Collection 2016
Studio portrait of Melville FARMER

Melville Orchard Farmer was born on 29 June 1888 at Wallaroo, South Australia, the youngest child of Henry Farmer and Louisa Margaret Farmer (nee Orchard). Henry Farmer, a policeman, was stationed at various towns in the State before being transferred to Victor Harbor in 1911. After leaving school Melville worked as an insurance clerk for the AMP Society Ltd in Adelaide. On 4 August 1914, Britain entered the First World War when it declared war on Germany. On the 20 September 1914, Melville enlisted in the AIF. He was 26.

Given the serial number 76, he was posted to 'A' Squadron of the 9th Light Horse Regiment, which was still being formed in Adelaide. Trooper Farmer was promoted to corporal on 1 November and soon after, to squadron Quartermaster Sergeant. Later that month the Regiment travelled to Melbourne to continue training at the Broadmeadows Camp just outside of Melbourne city, before heading overseas. 'A' Squadron boarded HMAT A26 Armadale at Victoria Dock on 12 February 1915. Two other transport vessels carried the remainder of the Regiment. They all arrived in Egypt in mid-March 1915.

The Light Horse was considered unsuitable for the initial operations at Gallipoli and the Regiment was subsequently deployed without its horses. The 3rd Light Horse Brigade, of which the 9th Light Horse Regiment was part, landed at Gallipoli in late May 1915 and was attached to the Australian and New Zealand Division. Sgt Farmer was evacuated from Gallipoli on 28 June with dysentery but returned ten days later. He was evacuated again two days after his return and rejoined his unit a few days later. The Regiment was fortunate to be in reserve for the Brigade's disastrous attack on the Nek, on the 7 August. They suffered 50 per cent casualties attacking Hill 60 on 27 August. Sgt Farmer was again evacuated, this time with fever, on 5 September. He never returned to Gallipoli.

Back in Egypt, the 3rd Light Horse Brigade became part of the ANZAC Mounted Division. Sgt Farmer was promoted to Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant (RQMS) in February 1916. In March 1916, the Regiment joined the forces defending the Suez Canal from a Turkish drive across the Sinai Desert. The Turks were turned at Romani. Although it did not take part in the actual battle, the 9th Light Horse was involved in the advance that followed the Turks back across the desert. On 29

July 1916, Melville Farmer married Miss Ruby E. Adams in the officers' mess at Port Said. Miss Adams had travelled from Adelaide. The Reverend A. M. Thorn and the British Consul performed the ceremony.

By December 1916, the Regiment's advance had reached the Palestine frontier and the 9th was involved in the fighting to secure the Turkish outposts of Maghdaba (23 December) and Rafa (9 January 1917), both of which were captured at bayonet point. On 2 February 1917, RQMS Farmer was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and on 15 May, he was promoted to Lieutenant.

The next Turkish stronghold to be encountered was Gaza. The 3rd Light Horse Brigade, now part of the Imperial Mounted Division (later re-named the Australian Mounted Division), was involved in two abortive battles to capture Gaza directly (27 March and 19 April 1917) and then the operation that ultimately led to its fall – a wide outflanking move via Beersheba that began on 31 October. With the fall of Gaza on 7 November 1917, the Turkish position in southern Palestine collapsed.

The 9th Light Horse joined the pursuit that followed and led to the capture of Jerusalem in December. The focus of British operations then moved to the Jordan Valley. On 30 April 1918 commencing at 0445 hours, the Regiment advanced against Turkish positions near Es Salt. During the day they encountered artillery and machine gun fire and enemy cavalry. The battle continued throughout the day and 200 enemy were captured and an unknown number killed. Lt Farmer was one of two of the Regiment's soldiers killed in the action. He was buried in the field but his grave has never been found.

A Norfolk Island pine in Victor Harbor's Soldiers' Memorial Gardens bore a plaque with Melville Farmer's name on it to commemorate his sacrifice. It was removed, along with other memorial plaques due to the concerns of theft. They are now stored in the RSL Clubrooms.

References:

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World War I Pictorial Honour Roll of South Australians. (2026). *Fa*. [online] [Accessed 2 Jan. 2026].
<https://ww1sa.weebly.com/fa.html>

Compiled by the Victor Harbor RSL History Research Team, February 2016. Updated by T.Young
02/01/2026

Appendix



Image 2 © *Tom Farmer Family Collection 2026*
Studio portrait postcard style of Melville Orchard Farmer and his wife Ruby Ethel Farmer (nee Adams). The photograph was taken when Lt Farmer was in England on two weeks leave from 7 September 1917, where his wife joined him.



Image 3 © *World War I Pictorial Honour Roll of South Australians 2026*

SourceAWM145 Roll of Honour cards, 1914–1918 War, Army

Location on the Roll of Honour

Melville Orchard Farmer's name is located at panel 7 in the [Commemorative Area](#) at the Australian War Memorial (as indicated by the poppy on the plan).

Roll of Honour name projection

Melville Orchard Farmer's name will be projected onto the exterior of the Hall of Memory on:

Monday, 6 October 2025 at 3.32 am

Thursday, 1 January 2026 at 3.44 am

Thursday, 9 April 2026 at 7.01 pm

Thursday, 16 July 2026 at 2.10 am

Tuesday, 8 September 2026 at 12.32 am

Friday, 15 January 2027 at 2.37 am

For more information view the [Roll of Honour name projections page](#).

Please note: These dates and times are estimates. The actual time of projection could also change as a result of weather and other factors, so it is advisable to check closer to the date. In the rare event of a temporary loss of electrical power, the names scheduled for display in that period will not appear until the next time listed.

Image 4 & 5 © *awm.gov.au 2026*
Roll of Honour Projection

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Casualty Form - Active Service.

Army Form B. 103.

Regiment of ~~400~~ **9th LIGHT HORSE.**
 Regimental No. **76** Rank **Sgt. M.S.** Name **FARMER M.O.**
 Enlisted (a) **2/9/14** Terms of Service (a) _____ Service reckons from (a) _____
 Date of promotion to **20/5/17.** Date of appointment **to** _____ Numerical position on **roll of N.C.O's.**
 present rank _____ to lance rank _____
 Extended _____ Re-engaged _____ Qualification **(4)**

REPORT		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, &c., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 218, Army Form A. 26, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place	Date	Remarks taken from Army Form B. 218, Army Form A. 36 or other official documents.	
Date	From whom received					
	C.C.Stm	Proceeded to join M.E.F.		16/5/15		D.O.
10/7/15	Bsgt	Adm to 24 CCS Dysentery	Mudros	28/6/15	C 2322	22/758
10/7/15	do	Retd to Duty	Anzac	8/7/15	A.P.B.213	25/909
17/7/15	do	Adm to Hosp Influenza	do	10/7/15	do	25/970
17/7/15	do	Ad No 1, St H. NYD	Lemnos	10/7/15	C 2526	25/999
24/7/15	Regt	Transf to Base Diarr	"	15/7/15	C 2590	26/1027
	Regt	Retd to Duty	Anzac	19/7/15	Field Return No 19.	
	Non Roll	Arr. Pr. Gloucester Castle	Alexandria	5/9/15	A 6898	27/1724
	Hosp	Adm No 3 Aux. G.D. Pyrexia	Heliopolis	5/9/15	C 3311	31/ 1948
27/11/15	Non Roll	Taken on strength of Composite L.H. Regiment.	Alexandria	20/11/15	Non Roll	40/3438
"	Compt Rg	Promoted Tem/Bgt Cook	Mex	20/11/15	AP 2386	4/121
		Reverts to former rank on rejoining original Unit.				
22/1/16	9 Regt	Taken on Strength	Heliopolis	18/1/16	Pld Return 42	7/252
24/2/16	do	To be Temp Reg Q.M.S.	do	22/2/16	do	5/1198
24/3/16	do	To be Regt Q.M.S.	do	22/2/16	do	7/1659
	do	Marched out to	Serapeum	27/2/16	AP 4876	11/1922
3/2/17	do	To Cavalry School Zeitoun	E.E.F.	27/1/17	LH 2566	4/455
24/2/17	do	Returned from do	"	18/2/17	LH 2875	7/704

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged, or enlisted into Section D, Army Reserve, particulars of each re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.
 (b) e.g., Signaller, Shoeing Smith, &c., also special qualifications in technical Corps duties.

(P. 10)

Image 9 & 10 © naa.gov.au 2026
 Casualty and Active Service Form

National Archives of Australia

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REPORT		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, &c., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 218, Army Form A. 26, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place	Date	Remarks taken from Army Form B. 218, Army Form A. 36 or other official documents.	
Date	From whom received					
24/2/17	9 Regt	To be 2nd Lieut to complete establishment	E.E.F.	2/2/17	LH 2875 LP 1200	D.O.
21/2/17	A.M.D.	do	do	6/3/17	List No 9 (LP 947	7/773
20/3/17	9 Regt	To School Inset Zeitoun	do	18/3/17	LH 3140	9/956
24/3/17	do	Retd from do	do	17/3/17	LH 3308	11/1048
23/3/17	ImSc Inst	Instructor Hochk Gun B Cree	Zeitn	17/3/17	D 19340	14/1438
16/7/17	AIF Order	To be Lieutenant	E.E.F.	3/4/17	LP 1746 LH 5398	28/2869
16/8/17	do	Date of prom to Lt to be		20/5/17	LP 1910	31/3125
15/9/17	9 Regt	To Rest Camp Port Said	do	28/8/17	LH 6285	35/3450
24/9/17	D.A.A.G	Granted 2 Weeks leave UK	do	7/9/17		
27/10/17	9 Regt	To 3rd L.H. Trn Regt	do	21/9/17	LH 7030	42/9997
26/9/17	3 L.H. T.R	Taken on Strength x 9 Reg	Meascar	25/9/17	LH 6546	42/4228
6/10/17	do	Proceeding to England	do	2/10/17	LH 6673	40/9572
7/10/17	Non Roll	Embarked 2 Wks leave U.K.	Alexandria	3/10/17	D 24403	51/1/165 44/10230
29/11/17	Staff	Disembarked x H.T. Telling	do	25/11/17	LP 2495 LP 2595	
8/12/17	9 Regt	Officer from England	E.E.F.	7/12/17	LH 1119	3/163
1/5/18	3 B.H.Q.	Reported killed in Action	do	30/4/18	AR 646 AT 1101	30/1635
4/5/18	A.Mt.Div	do	do	"	AR 611 CEBG 1111	
	9 Regt	do	do	"	LH 10523	
	Burial Report	Buried by R.C. Turner G.F. near Es-Salt 1/63360 Composite Map H 29		30/4/18	AJ 587 AJ 589 AS 94	20/1435 31/1770
29/5/18	AIF Egypt	Reported killed in Action				
	List 25	is struck off strength of 9th L.H.	30/4/18.	LP 5065		34/1978

Macdonald
2nd Lieut.
 O. 1/c Records.

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357819

RECEIPT FOR MEMORIAL PLAQUE.

Received from the Officer i/c Base Records, Army Head-quarters,
one Memorial Plaque in connexion with the late

LIEUT. M. O. FARMER



9th LHRgt.

Signature

Ruby E. Cockburn

Date

December 12th 1922

This slip to be returned to the Officer in Charge, Base Records, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, Victoria,
within seven (7) days.

D.2903/9.22.-C.13:50.-5M.

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Image 11 © naa.gov.au 2026
Plaque notification 1922

XXXX 4780

30 AUG 1927

E.

Dear Madam,

With further reference to the report of burial of the late Lieutenant M.O. Farmer, 9th. Light Horse Regiment, I have to inform you with regret that despite the most searching enquiry the Imperial War Graves Commission has not been successful in recovering the remains of this Officer, and his name has accordingly been inscribed on the Memorial to the Missing erected in Jerusalem War Cemetery in conjunction with those of other members of the Imperial and Dominion forces who fell in Palestine and Syria and have no known graves.

The Unveiling ceremony was recently performed by Field Marshall Lord Allenby in the presence of a representative gathering, and at a later date the opportunity will be afforded relatives of obtaining a copy of the printed Register containing full particulars of those commemorated in this manner.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs. R.E. Cockburn
163, Vattle Street,
Malvern, S.A.

Captain,
Officer i/c Base Records.

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Image 11 © naa.gov.au 2026
Notification as to the location of
Melville Orchard Farmer

Australian Imperial Force.

Inventory of Effects of— Lieut Farmer M.O. 9th A.L.H. REGT

Number and Description of Packages— One Hessian Package.

Date Despatched— JUL 2 - 1918 Under War Precautions Regn. No. 32.

Contents of— Package.

One Brown Leather Handbag contg. 2 Purses, 2 pairs breeches
3 suit Pyjamas, 1 pair trousers, 1 silk scarf, 2 pairs socks, 2 P.S. Caps, 6 shirts
1 brush, 1 pair shoes, 1 pair spurs, 2 Books 'Egypt', 3 Boot hooks, 12 hdk'fs,
6 collars, 1 necktie, 1 leather holder contg. 2 Buttons & 1 atrop, 1 pair
Suspenders, 1 matchbox Holder, Photographs, 3 badges, 3 coins, 1 programme
1 pair drawers, 1 singlet, 1 greatcoat, 1 pair Field boot, 1 Revolver (unloaded)
& case, 1 Canvas holdall contg. buttons, cotton etc, 1 linen bag, 1 Cholera
belt, 1 pair gloves, 1 pair braces, 1 Tobacco pouch, 1 Cardigan jacket.

No. of Package— E.D.S. No 1365
Cheshire

P.S. 30.—20000.—616.

JUL 2 - 1918

O.C. AUSTRALIAN DEPOT STORES.

Sergt.

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Image 12 © naa.gov.au 2026
Inventory of Effects

Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Tuesday 7 May 1918, page 5

THE AUSTRALIANS.

BIOGRAPHICAL.

LATE LIEUT. M. O. FARMER.

News has been received by Mrs. Farmer of the death in action of her husband, Lieut. Melville Owen Farmer, of the 9th Light Horse Regiment. The deceased soldier, who was exceedingly popular with his comrades, and a man of great bravery and resolution, was the son of Mr. Farmer, who is in charge of the police station at Victor Harbour. When he enlisted he was employed in the offices of the Australian Mutual Provident Society in Adelaide. He was one of the first 100 recruits in South Australia; he left Melbourne for the battlefield on January 15, 1915; and, with slight intervals, had been actively fighting until his death on April 30. When he sailed from Australia he was quartermaster-sergeant, but was promoted on the field to the higher position. He was married at Port Said on July 25, 1915, to Miss Ruby Adams, the eldest daughter of Mr. J. H. G. Adams, General Secretary to the Board of Governors of the Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery. A fortnight after Mrs. Farmer went to London, and was occupied for a year in work in the War Office. The late lieutenant visited London on furlough towards the end of last year, and on his advice his wife returned to Australia, which she reached in February last.



National Library of Australia

Image 13 © nla.gov.au 2026
Register obituary

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article60353815>

BIRTHS.

MERR.—On the 29th April, at Forest, North Adelaide, the wife of B. D. Merr, 13 George street, Norwood—4 sons daughter.

MILLER.—On the 29th April, at Cruger Lea, Springton, to Mr. and Mrs. P. T. Miller—4 sons. Both well.

DEATHS.

LANGMAN.—On the 29th April, Mary Littlecrapp, daughter of Mrs. Langman, Sheffield street, Malvern, and the late Richard Langman, of Wattlebury road, Lower Mitcham, aged 33 years. At rest.

HOWE.—On the 29th April, at his late residence, Prince street, Alberton, Arthur Vernon, beloved husband of Ada Mary Howe, and eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Howe, of Neerman street, Semaphore, aged 44 years.

HUTTON.—On the 29th April, Esther Elisabeth, the beloved wife of James Hutton, late of Whitty (York), in her 85th year. On whose soul Sweet Jesus have mercy.

STORR.—On the 29th April, at Military road, Grange, Ethel May Storr, the beloved wife of Francis E. Storr, aged 37 years. Also infant daughter. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away.

WAINWRIGHT.—On the 29th April, at Victor Harbour (suddenly), Edward Harley, beloved husband of Marian Wainwright. Interred at Victor Harbour, on the 29th April.

WOOLEY.—On the 29th April, at Nurse Thomas's Hospital, Nairne, Mary relict of the late John Wooley, of Harrogate, aged 85 years.

BATIE.—On the 29th April, at Regent street, Kensington, Grace A., relict of the late John Bath, of Wallaroo, in her 80th year. "His given His beloved sleep."

STUART.—On the 29th April, at the Morphettville Racecourse, Catherine, beloved wife of John Stuart, aged 65 years.

IN MEMORY OF THE BRAVE.

FARMER.—In loving and tender memory of David M. O. Farmer, killed in action at Ka Sait, Palestine, on the 29th April, 1918. Though the warrior's sun has set His light shall linger round us yet, Bright, radiant, true. —Inserted by his affectionate parents, brother, and sister.

IN MEMORIAM.

CHARKE.—In fond memory of Thomas, the beloved husband of Elizabeth Lillian Charke, who died on the 29th April, 1914. God is good and gives us strength To bear our heavy cross;

He is the only one who knows Our loneliness and lone. —Inserted by his loving wife and children, Cliveden, Diamond terrace, Norwood.

CHAM.—In loving memory of my dear husband and father, Allan Cham, who passed away on the 12th April, 1918, at Annerley Vale, Yungala—Inserted by his loving wife and family.

TILBROOK.—In loving memory of our dear daughter Doris, who died result of accident, on the 20th April, 1916.—Inserted by her parents, H. and E. Tilbrook. "All that is meant to love her only our sad hearts know."

TILBROOK.—In loving memory of our darling granddaughter, who was accidentally killed at Macclesfield on the 29th April, 1918.

We'll sing the broken threads again And spin what we here began. We'll know why clouds instead of sun With over many a cherished plan. Why song has ceased when sorrow began. Yes, there some time we'll understand. —Inserted by her loving grandparents, J. and E. Tilbrook.

TILBROOK.—In loving memory of our beloved son, Henry, killed in action on the 1st April, 1918. Those angel faces smile,

Which we have loved long since and lost awhile. —Inserted by his loving parents, J. and E. Tilbrook.

BEREAVEMENT CARDS.

MR. JOHN ADAMSON and FAMILY, of Gawler, beg to tender their sincere THANKS to all Relations and Friends for letters, telegrams, cards, and floral tributes, and kind expressions of sympathy in their recent and bereavement. Also Dr. Dawes for his kind and unremitting attention to Mrs. Adamson during her late illness.

MR. and Mrs. H. WITHERICK and FAMILY wish to THANK all Friends and Relatives for cards and letters and personal expressions of sympathy in their recent bereavement. Especially Friends at Kadina.

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Journal Death Notice