

# FARMER, Melville Orchard (76) AIF



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

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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*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

Source AWM145 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).

A diagram of a cross-shaped panel, representing panel 7 of the Roll of Honour. The center of the cross is a vertical slot containing a small red poppy, indicating the location of Melville Orchard Farmer's name.

### 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 2026 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

FARMER	Melville (Q.M.Sgt.)	2nd Lieut. 76	LINUT. 9th L.H.R.H.C.
Surname.	Other Names.	Regimental No.	Unit. <i>ASy</i>
PURPORT.			AUTHORITY.
<i>Embarked at Melbourne per H.M.A.T. A26 "Armadale" 12/2/15</i>			
10/7/15 Adm Hosp Anzac Infleunza	(EH)	MEFO 25/1/15	
8/7/15 Ret. from Hosp to duty	(EH)	" 25/2/15	
10/7/15 Adm No 1 Stat Hosp Lemnos	(EH)	" 26/1/15	
5/9/15 Arrived at Alexandria per "Gloucester Castle" (EH) Fever		" 29/9/15	
<i>Transferred to Composite LH Regt.</i>			<i>BRLL</i> <i>7/8</i>
5/9/15 Trans to No 3 Aux Conv Depot H'polis	(EH)	MEFO 31/1/15	
20/10/15 Taken on strength of Composite LH Regt Alex.	(EH)	" 40/3/15	
18/1/16 Taken on strength of 9th LHR from Compos te LH Regt	(EH)	MEFO 5/11/16	
22/2/16 To be Temp Reg QMS	(EH)	" 7/4/16	
18/2/17 Returned from Cavalry School	(ML)	" 7/1-17	
2/2/17 To be 2nd Lieut. to complete establishment	(ML)	" 7/2-17	

National Archives of Australia

NAA: B2455, FARMER M O

PURPORT.		AUTHORITY.
6/3/17 To Sch. of Instr. Zeitoun STATE	2nd LIEUT.	(ML) MEFO 9/2/17
27/1/17 To Cavalry School Zeitoun		MEFO 4/1/17
25/9/17 T.O.S. of 3rd L.H.Tng. Rgt. ex. 9th Rgt.		" 40/1-17
20/9/17 2 wks lve in U.K. Approved		" 42/4-17
18/1/16 Rej. 8th L.H.R.		MEFO 7/1-16
3.5.17. To be LIEUTENANT.		MEFO 28/3/17
3/10/17 Emb. for 2 weeks lve in U.K. Per H.T. Huntspill ex. Alex.		" 44/3-17
28/8/17 proc. to rest camp Pt. Said & ret. to Unit 7/9/17		" 35/1-17
7/12/17 Detd. from unit. from Murolugh U.K.		" 3/1-18
21/9/17 TPD. to 3rd L.H.T.Rgt. (sts. M.O.)		" 42/2-17
20/11/15 To be T/Sgt Cook		MEFO 4/1-16
22/2/16 To be RENS.		MEFO 11/2-16
15/7/15 Trans. from No 1 Sty. Hosp. Lemnes. to Base.		MEFO 26/2-15
28/6/15 Adm. No 24 C.C.S. Mudros Dysentery.		MEFO 22/1-15
30/4/18 KILLED IN ACTION.		" MEFO 3/0/1-18
30-4-18 KILLED IN ACTION is S.O.S. (ML) AIF LIST 357/8-16.7.18		
25-11-17 Disemb at Alex ex H.T. Ellenga from England	(ML)	MEFO 2/1-18

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**Casualty Form - Active Service.**

Army Form B. 103.

Regiment or Corps		9th LIGHT HORSE.		
Regimental No.	76	Rank	S/2 M.S.	
Enlisted (a) 2/9/14		Terms of Service (a)		
Date of promotion to present rank		Date of appointment to present rank	Service reckons from (a) Numerical position on roll of N.C.O's.	
Extended		Re-engaged Qualification (b)		
REPORT		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, &c., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 26, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.		
Date	From whom received	Place	Date	
Remarks taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 26 or other official documents.				
10/7/15	C.C. Stn	Proceeded to join M.E.F.	16/5/15	D.O.
10/7/15	Regt	Adm to 24 CCS Dysentery	28/6/15	6 2322 22/758
10/7/15	do	Rtd to Duty	8/7/15	A.P.B.213 25/909
10/7/15	Hosp	Adm to Hosp Influenza	do	10/7/5 do 25/270
17/7/15	do	Ad No 1. St H. NYD	10/7/5	C 2526 26/999
24/7/15	Regt	Transf to Base Diarr	15/7/5	C 2590 26/1027
24/7/15	do	Rtd to Duty	19/7/5	Field Return No 19.
24/7/15	Regt	Arr. Pr. Gloucester Castle	5/9/5	A 6898 27/1724
24/7/15	Hosp	Adm No 3 Aux. C.D. Fyrexia	5/9/5	C 3311 31/ 1948
27/11/15	Non Roll	Taken on strength of Composite L.H. Regiment.	Alexandria	20/11/5 Non Roll 4/3438
"	Compt Rg	Promoted Tem/Sgt Cook	Mex	20/11/5 AP 2386 4/121
Reverts to former rank on rejoining original Unit.				18/1/16 7/252
22/1/16	9 Regt	Taken on Strength	Helioplis	18/1/16 Fld Return 42 5/1198
24/2/16	do	To be Tempy Reg Q.M.S.	do	22/2/16 do 48 7/1659
24/3/16	do	To be Regt Q.M.S.	do	22/2/16 do 51a 11/1922
3/2/17	do	Marched out to	Serapeum	27/2/16 AP 4876
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 for, or enlisted into Section D. Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.

(b) e.g., Signaller, Shoeing Smith, Art., &c., also special qualifications in technical Corps duties. (P.T.O.)

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Casualty and Active Service Form

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REPORT		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, &c., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 26, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	
Date	From whom received	Place	Date
Remarks taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 26, or other official documents.			
24/2/17	9 Regt	To be 2nd List to complete establishment	E.E.F. 4/2/17 LH 2875 LP 1200 D.O.
21/2/17	A.M.D.	do	do 6/3/17 List No 9 (LP 947 7/773
10/3/17	9 Regt	To School Instn Zeitoun	do 6/3/17 LH 3140 9/956
24/3/17	do	Rtd from do	do 18/3/17 LH 3306 11/10484
23/3/17	ImSc Inst	Instructor Hochi Gun B Crse Zeitoun	1/4/3/17 D 19340 14/1438
16/7/17	AIF Order	To be Lieutenant	E.E.F. 3/6/17 LP 1746 LH 5398 29/2869
List 14			
16/8/17	do	Date of prom to Lt 6 do	20/5/17 LP 1910 31/3125
Not as previously shown 2/6/17			
15/9/17	9 Regt	To Rest Camp Port Said	do 28/8/17 LH 6285 35/3450
From do			
24/9/17	D.A.A.G	Granted 2 Weeks leave UK	do 7/9/17 89/1/57 42/9997
27/10/17	9 Regt	To 3rd L.H.Tro Regt	do 21/9/17 LH 7030 42/4228
28/9/17	3L.H.T.R	Taken on Strength x 9 Reg	do 25/9/17 LH 6546 40/9572
6/10/17	do	Proceeding to England	do 2/10/17 LH 6673
7/10/17	Non Roll	Embarked 2 Wks leave U.K. Alexandria	3/10/17 D 24403 51/1/165 44/10230
H.F. Huntbill			
29/11/17	Em Staff	Disembarked x H. Telling	do 25/11/7 LP 2495 LP 2595
Officer from England			
8/12/17	9 Regt	Rtd from Furlough U.K.	E.E.F. 7/12/17 LH 6119 3/163
1/5/18	3 B.H.Q.	Killed in Action	do 30/4/18 AE 646 AT 1101 30/1635
A.Mt.Div			
4/5/18	9 Regt	do	do AE 611 CEBG 1111
Burial Report			
Buried by R.C.Turner C.F. near Es-Salt 1/63560 Composite Map H 29 30/4/18 AJ 587 AJ 589 AS 94 31/770			
Reported killed in Action			
29/5/18	AIF Egypt	List 25 is struck off strength of 9th L.H.	30/4/18 LP 5065 34/1978
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 12 1922

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

D 2033/9.22.—C.13580.—6M.

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

xxxx 4780

30 AUG 1927

B.

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, Wattle 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 *44-9-18 Dated Major*

One Brown Leather Handbag conts. 1. Tunics, 2pr. breeches  
3 suit Pyjamas, 1pr. trousers, 1 silk scarf, 2pr. socks, 2 P.P. Caps, 6 shirts  
1 brush, 1pr. shoes, 1pr. spurs, 2 Books 'Egypt', 3 Boot hooks, 12 hdk's, 1  
6 collars, 1 necktie, 1 leather holder conts, 2 mavers & 1 strop, 1 pair  
Suspenders, 1 matchbox Holder, Photographs, 2 badges, 3 coins, 1 programme  
1pr. drawers, 1 singlet, 1 greateant, 1pr. Field boot, 1 Revolver (unloaded)  
& case, 1 Canvas holdall contg. buttons, cotton etc, 1 linen bag, 1 Choker  
belt, 1pr. gloves, 1pr. braces, 1 tobacco pouch, 1 Cardigan jacket.

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

Ghesireh

JUL 2 1918

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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. Merville 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 29, 1916, 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 expected 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.



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Image 13 © nla.gov.au 2026  
Register obituary

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

**BIRTHS.**

**MERR.**—On the 26th April, at Norwood, North Adelaide, the wife of S. D. Kerr, 18 George street, Norwood—a daughter.

**MILLER.**—On the 26th April, at Craggy Lea, Springfield, to Mr. and Mrs. P. T. Miller—a son. Both well.

**DEATHS.**

**LANGMAN.**—On the 26th April, Mary Lillie Lapp, daughter of Mrs. Langman, Sheffield street, Malvern, and the late Richard Langman, of Watshirey road, Lower Mitcham, aged 33 years. At rest.

**HOWE.**—On the 26th April, at his late residence, Prince street, Alberton, Arthur Venus, beloved husband of Ada Mary Howe, and elder son of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Howe, of Newmarket street, Semaphore, aged 44 years.

**HUTTON.**—On the 26th April, Esther Elizabeth, the beloved wife of James Hutton, late of Whitley (York), in her 55th year. On whose soul sweet Jesus have mercy.

**STORR.**—On the 26th April, at Military road, Grange, Ethel May Storr, the beloved wife of Fred E. Storr, aged 37 years. Also infant daughter. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away.

**WATKINSON.**—On the 26th April, at Victor Harbour (Adelaide), Edward Watkins, beloved husband of Marian Watkinson. Interred at Victor Harbour, on the 28th April.

**WOOLLEY.**—On the 26th April, at Nairne Thorpe's Hospital, Nairne, Mary relief of the late John Woolley, of Narragae, aged 85 years.

**BATH.**—On the 26th April, at Regent street, Kensington (London), A. relief of the late John Bath of Wallasea, in her 80th year. "He giveth his beloved sleep."

**STUART.**—On the 26th April, at the Morphettville Racecourse, Catherine, beloved wife of Tom Stuart, aged 66 years.

**BEREAVEMENT CARDS.**

**M. R. 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 sad bereavement. Also to Dr. Davies for his kind and unceasing attention to Mrs. Adamson during her late illness.

**M. R. 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.

Image 14 © nla.gov.au 2026  
Journal Death Notice

**IN MEMORY OF THE BRAVE.**

**FARMER.**—In loving and tender memory of G. M. O. Farmer, killed in action at El Salt, Palestine, on the 26th April, 1918.  
Though the warrior sun has set  
His light shall linger round us yet,  
Bright, radiant, still.  
—Imperial by his affectionate parents, brother, and sister.

**IN MEMORIAM.**

**CLARKIN.**—In fond memory of Thomas, the beloved husband of Elizabeth (Lillian) Clarkin, who died on the 26th April, 1918.  
God is good and gives us strength  
To bear our heavy cross;  
He is the only one who knows  
Our loneliness and loss.  
—Imperial by his loving wife and children, Cleveland, thousand terrace, Woodstock.

**CRAM.**—In loving memory of my dear husband and father, Alan Cram, who passed away on the 26th April, 1918, at Amherst Vale, Yengarie. Interred by his loving wife and family.

**TILBROOK.**—In loving memory of our dear daughter, Lillian, who died as a result of accident, on the 26th April, 1918.—Interred by her parents, H. and A. Tilbrook.—All that it meant to lose her only our hearts know."

**TILBROOK.**—In loving memory of our darling granddaughter, who was accidentally killed at Morphett on the 26th April, 1918.

Well eaten the broken threads again  
And forth what we here began.

Well know why clouds instead of sun  
Wore over many a cherished plan,

Why song has ceased when sorrow began,

Yes, there some time we'll understand.

—Imperial by her loving grandparents, J. and E. Tilbrook.

**TILBROOK.**—In loving memory of our beloved son, Wesley, killed in action on the 1st April, 1918. Those angel faces smile.  
Which we have loved long since and lost awhile.  
—Imperial by his loving parents, J. and E. Tilbrook.

**BEREAVEMENT CARDS.**  
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<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article213262437>