

GOSSÉ, William Hay (104) RA



Name	GOSSÉ, William Hay Major RA
Service Number	104
Date of Birth	21st October 1875
Died	5th April 1918
Place of Birth	Kent Town SA
Resident	Western Australia
Cemetery	Varennes Military Cemetery,

Image 1

*Studio portrait of William Powell GOODE, the
photographer is unknown. This image was
scanned from the photograph on the Waitpinga
Honour Roll board.*

William Hay Gosse was born at Kent Town, South Australia on 21 October 1875, the son of explorer William Christie Gosse and Agnes Gosse (nee Hay). He received his education at Melbourne Grammar School, Geelong Grammar and St. Peters in Adelaide and later attended the University of Adelaide where he was prominent in the Men's Rowing Team. He competed in the 1896 Oxford-Cambridge Race and the 1899 Inter-colonial University Boat Race.

In late 1899, he enlisted for service in the South African War (Boer War) with a regimental number as 104. He was posted to the 2nd South Australian Mounted Rifles Contingent and embarked from Adelaide on 26 January 1900. He served with the unit until its return to Adelaide in May 1901. In 1908, William took up farming in Western Australia and in 1911 married Muriel Mary Davidson. They were two children of the marriage. The family holidayed regularly at Victor Harbor.

On 7 May 1915, William volunteered for service with the British Army. He was commissioned as a Lieutenant and posted to "A" Battery of the 79th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery (RFA). The 79th Brigade RFA formed part of the 17th (Northern) Division and was commanded by Major-General T.D. Pilcher CB. The Division embarked for France on 12 July 1915 and saw its first action in the Ypres Salient in Belgium. By June 1916, the 17th was deployed at Pozieres where it took part in the battles around Pozieres, which resulted in the capture of Fricourt, Fricourt Wood and the trenches around Contalmaison. The 17th and the 38th (Welsh) Divisions attacked the heavily defended Mametz Wood on 7 July, however heavy casualties were suffered. Field Marshal Haig was appalled with the handling of the operation and sent General Pilcher and the Commander of the 38th Division home, in disgrace. Three days later, the two Divisions attacked the Wood again and most of the objective was taken, but at a heavy cost in men.

In August 1916, the 17th Division was heavily engaged at Longueval and Delville Wood, suffering from heavy and continuous shell and machine-gun fire whilst holding the line. Throughout the

winter of 1916-1917, it remained on the Somme and engaged in constant hard fighting and endured great hardships throughout the severe and trying weather conditions. On 1 January 1917, William was promoted to the rank of Captain. By now he had served with "A" Battery of the 79th Brigade through all its campaigns to date. In September 1917, the Division moved north to play its part in the Third Battle of Ypres and the struggle for the Passchendaele Ridge. In the attack on 12 October, it was the only division to gain all its objectives.

On 19 June 1917, the Division moved to the Arras front and was successful in taking its objective that included the ruined chemical works at Roeux on the night of 26 June. William's leadership and intelligence skills played an important role in the capture of the Division's objective and he was awarded the Military Cross. He was later promoted to Major.

Further intensive fighting followed for the Division that year near Cambrai, and in March 1918, the men were in the thick of the great German Spring Offensive. On 21-23 March, all enemy attacks on the Division were successfully repulsed, however it was forced to retreat because of chaotic British organisation.

On 5 April 1918, William was leading his Battery against a strong German attack when his command post was struck by a shell and he was killed instantly. William was buried by his men in the village of Varennes.

Major William Hay Gosse MC was survived by his wife Muriel, son George and daughter Agnes. Muriel died in 1920, leaving George and Agnes in the care of their paternal grandmother. Major Gosse is commemorated on the Victor Harbor War Memorial.

End note

Major Gosse's daughter Agnes (born 1913, died 1981) married Donald Maxwell Hole (born 1905), a serving RAN officer, in 1935. Lieutenant-Commander Hole was killed in action aboard HMAS Canberra on 9 August 1942 during the Battle of Savo Island.

Major Gosse's son George (born in 1912) enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy on 1 January 1926, as a cadet. He served with the RAN during World War Two and held the rank of Lieutenant Commander and specialised in the clearance of sea mines. In April 1945, he was sent to Bremen, Germany after the capture of that port.

He was awarded the George Cross for his actions in disarming new, and previously unknown, German mines in the murky waters of Bremen harbour during May 1945. George Gosse was demobilised in March 1946 and died on 31 December 1964, age 54.

References:

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Compiled by the Victor Harbor RSL History Research Team, May 2011. Updated by T. Young
02/01/2026

*Please note that all locatable files from the UK government are only available under subscription.

Appendix

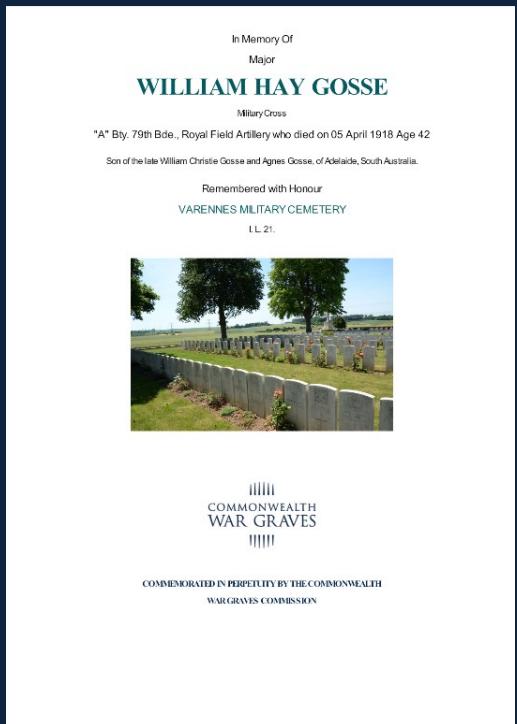


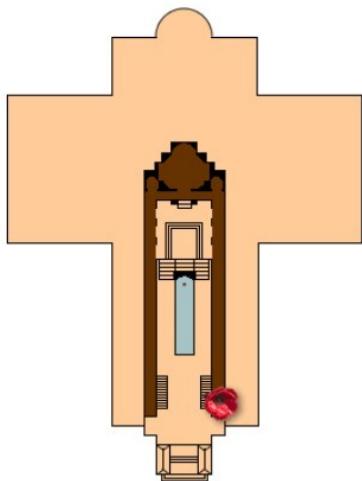
Image 2 ©cwg.org.au 2011



Image 4 ©Ian Milnes 2011
Graves, including that of Major William Hay Gosse MC, in the Varennes Military Cemetery, France

Location of the Commemorative Roll

The names of the people on the Commemorative Roll are in a book located in the Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial.



The Commemorative Roll records the names of those Australians who died during or as a result of wars in which Australians served, but who were not serving in the Australian Armed Forces and therefore not eligible for inclusion on the Roll of Honour. It includes those Australians who died while members of Allied Forces, the Merchant Navy, philanthropic organisations attached to the forces, or as war correspondents or photographers.

Image 2 ©awm.gov.au 2011
Location of name in the Australian War memorial

Nominal Roll—*continued.*

No. and Name.	Rank.	Remarks.
N.C.O.'S AND MEN— <i>continued.</i>		
75. Bostock, Robert Vernon ..	Trooper ..	Sergeant Despatches, <i>London Gazette</i> , 16.4.01. D.C.M.
76. Brown, Herbert Woolmer ..	" ..	<i>Vide "Promotions"</i>
91. Blue, Sinclair ..	" ..	Lance-Corporal
97. Ball, Henry ..	" ..	
103. Bateson, Frederick Westbrook ..	" ..	
34. Bartlett, Francis ..	" ..	Died of fever, Pretoria, 26.12.00
54. Francis Walter ..	" ..	
85. Campbell, John Angus ..	" ..	
93. Campbell, Donald Angus ..	" ..	Invalided to Australia, arr. 10.8.00
69. Carter, William Daniel ..	" ..	
50. Clarke, James Gregory ..	" ..	
30. Corps, Hugh Robertson ..	" ..	
14. Cook, William Arthur ..	" ..	
108. Coon, John A. ..	" ..	Lance-Corporal
9. Croucher, Joseph Erskine ..	" ..	Severely wounded near Pretoria, 4.6.01
2. Cuttle, William George ..	" ..	
61. Davies, Albert Chas. William ..	" ..	
101. Dayman, Arthur Shorer ..	" ..	
58. Dougas, James ..	" ..	
18. Evans, Edward James ..	" ..	
84. Ferbrache, Charles ..	" ..	
51. Fetch, Hubert Harry ..	" ..	Corporal. Despatches, <i>London Gazette</i> , 16.4.01
77. Florence, James ..	" ..	
109. Goode, Stanley Livingstone ..	Lance-Corporal ..	Corporal
82. Gordon, Leonard William ..	Trooper ..	<i>Vide "Promotions"</i>
104. Gose, William Hay ..	" ..	
6. Halliday, William Arthur ..	" ..	Invalided to Australia, arr. 10.8.00
68. Hamilton, Reginald Alexander ..	" ..	<i>Vide "Promotions"</i>
88. Hancock, Edmund Joseph ..	" ..	
39. Hillman, Alfred Stanley ..	" ..	
5. Hardy, George Lawrence ..	" ..	Died of enteric at Bloemfontein, 4.6.00
Hawker, Henry Colley ..	" ..	
38. Henderson, Leo Morphett ..	" ..	
27. Horne, William Bannister ..	" ..	
7. Huskisson, Arthur Frederick ..	" ..	
66. Jenner, Edward ..	" ..	
95. Jones, Philip ..	" ..	Corporal
81. Lee, Arthur John ..	" ..	Invalided to Australia, arr. 10.8.00
47. Loller, James Leslie ..	" ..	
78. Lowe, Percy Thomas ..	" ..	Invalided to Australia, arr. 10.8.00
43. Lynskey, Michael Frank ..	" ..	
4. Macauley, Anlay Babington ..	" ..	
13. Marsden, Thomas Bradshaw ..	" ..	Died of pneumonia at Britstown, 5.4.00
149. Makin, Frank Humphrey ..	" ..	Corporal
111. Malcolm, Wilfred Walter ..	" ..	
35. Millar, James Hay ..	" ..	
Moore, Albert Walter ..	" ..	
74. Morrow, John Henry ..	" ..	
28. Mounsey, John ..	" ..	Invalided to Australia, arr. 27.10.00
64. Morton, Daniel ..	" ..	
99. McInerney, William ..	" ..	Corporal
46. Newbold, Hartlet Herman ..	Shoeing-Smith ..	Corporal