

# A Soldier of the Great War

## Lance Corporal Norman Bunn

### 11<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Company



**Service Number:** 20

**Rank:** Lance Corporal

**Roll title:** 11 Machine Gun Company (June 1916)

**Conflict:** First World War, 1914-1918

**Date of embarkation:** 5 June 1916

**Place of embarkation:** Sydney

**Ship embarked on:** HMAT *Borda* A30

Norman Bunn is in this Photo of the 11<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Company.



Reference- Wikipedia



**Another photo of the 11<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Company. Which one is Norman ?**

**Machine Gun Section (or a Section) of 11th Machine Gun Company, Belgium, January 1917**

Photo provided by Paul Hannon. [http://www.karkeeweb.com/patterns/1914/components/1914\\_pistol.html](http://www.karkeeweb.com/patterns/1914/components/1914_pistol.html)

**Norman Bunn** was born in Birmingham England to Elizabeth Bunn, his next of kin his mother still living in England when he went to war.

At the age of 23 years and 1 month this young farm labourer was to answer the call to fight for his country on the Fields of Flanders and the Western Front.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> January 1916 just 8 months after the Gallipoli campaign he was to enlist for the army at the Chermside office in Brisbane.

After training he was allocated to the 11<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Company and on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 1916 he boarded the transport *A30 Borda* at Sydney. The 11<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Company was predominantly from Queensland.

He was first to make landfall at Tel-El Kir and then onto Alexandria in Egypt before finally arriving in Southampton in England and making his way to the Salisbury Plains in England where he was to be trained in machine guns.

During August 1916 he trained and was even paid a visit by the King on September 27<sup>th</sup>. He was trained at Gas school and was promoted from private to Corporal on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 1916. A short time later his aptitude had seen him promoted once more to Sergeant.

They were finally given orders to move on November 19<sup>th</sup> 1916.

Arriving in Bailleul and Armentieres in France on December 22<sup>nd</sup> they were now close to the Western Front.

Here the Company set about securing their positions and taking action upon German trenches with machine gunfire particularly at night. They were often supporting advancing battalions while also securing forward positions.

For the next few months Norman took part in many battles and advances around the Armentieres region. They would often move from front line positions to others and

took part in raids on trenches around Ploegsteert . The trenches were to remain much the same here for the duration of the war.

In late April 1917 they were removed back to the safety of Armentieres which was now safely under allied control. Here they were billeted and trained also in trench to trench warfare.

In June 1917 , a stroke of good fortune was to be awarded to Norman as he was selected to be moved back to England for a machine gun course at Bisley in England

This area south of Messines was safe but Norman's company was to take part in action around Messines Ridge in June 1917 as relief to other companies.

The Battle of Messines Ridge precipitated by the detonation of 19 enormous mines under German Lines was a significant battle aimed to strengthen and ensure successes in future battles east of Ypres.

August and September was taken up with various actions by the company in support or on their own with the 41<sup>st</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> battalions south of Poperinghe and on the Passchendale Rd often known as the Third Battle of Ypres .

Both battles of Messines Ridge and Passchendale were to see many Australian deaths. In eight weeks of fighting nearly 38 000 Australian casualties were recorded.

Other battles around this time were the Mernin Road from 20-25<sup>th</sup> September 1917 Polygon Wood 26<sup>th</sup> October to 3<sup>rd</sup> November and Passchendale 26<sup>th</sup> October to 10<sup>th</sup> November.

Norman was to return to the field on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1918 ( nearly 2 years since he left the shores of Australia) having been fortunate to miss some significant battles but to lose many of his company in his absence.

Norman was now promoted to Lieutenant and marched back to the front line . His time back at the front was short lived with him being severely wounded in the chest on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 1918 at Sailly Le Sec not far from Amiens and Villers Brettoneux where the Germans had hoped to advance.

This was to be a battleground that was a turning point for the war. On the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> April Australian soldiers recaptured the town and defeated the Germans.

He was transferred back to England and recuperated there until late May 1918 when he was discharged and returned to the front lines finally rejoining his unit on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 1918.

His unit was to take part in action to the east of Amiens where the front line was now positioned near Villers Brettoneux. The April offensives here were to take significant numbers of lives.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> July Norman Bunn was awarded the Military Cross

*"When in charge of 4 machine guns, his section suffered casualties .... he redistributed the loads, carrying the normal load of 2 men and on arrival at the objective personally sighted his own and 3 captured guns under heavy fire throughout."*

This bravery in the Villers Brettoneux sector was to be some of the action that Norman Bunn was to participate in. He continued to move with his battalion which was now becoming more made up of a collection of battalions in the final offensives of the war under the command of General Monash.

The Battle of Hamel on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 1918 took just 93 minutes to conclude. Australian soldiers moved from Hamel to Mont St Quentin and Peronne driving the Germans back until finally the Armistice was called on the 11<sup>th</sup> November.

Norman was to survive the final battles with his company.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> November he was granted leave to Paris.

In April 1919 he returned to England and took a job as a mixed farmers labourer where he stayed until July 1919 finally returning to Australia on the "Argylshire" from Liverpool on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1919 .

### **The Military Cross**

The award was created on 28 December 1914 for commissioned officers of the substantive rank of Captain or below and for Warrant Officers. In August 1916 Bars were awarded to the MC in recognition of the performance of further acts of gallantry meriting the award.

**Rank:** Lieutenant

**Unit:** 11th MGC

**Service:** Army

**Conflict:** First World War, 1914-1918

**Award:** Military Cross

**Date of Commonwealth of Australia Gazette:** 12 February 1919

**Location in Commonwealth of Australia Gazette:** Page 264, position 5

**Date of London Gazette:** 24 September 1918

**Location in London Gazette:** Page 11315, position 7



### **Machine Gun Companies**

These were formed in February 1916 from the four battalion machine gun sections in each brigade. Each was equipped with 16 Vickers Machine Guns. They bore the same numbers as the brigades of which they were part, and usually had the state affiliation. In 1917, divisional machine gun companies were formed, numbered 21 to 25, where the last digit was the same as the parent division. The four companies in each division were consolidated into machine gun battalions in March 1918.

**11th Machine Gun Company (Queensland) [3rd Machine Gun Battalion]**

Formed Queensland February 1916 and assigned to 9th Infantry Brigade. Departed Sydney [\*Borda\*](#) 5 June 1916. Assigned to 3rd Machine Gun Battalion 2 March 1918. 1st Reinforcements departed Sydney [\*Borda\*](#) 5 June 1916,

[http://www.aif.adfa.edu.au:8888/Machine\\_Gun.html](http://www.aif.adfa.edu.au:8888/Machine_Gun.html)



# AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

### Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. 20

Name Bunn Norman

Unit 4th Depot Battalion 11th Machine Gun Co.

Joined on

28 JAN 1916

11th M.A.C.GUN.S

#### Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

1. What is your Name? NORMAN BUNN
2. In the Parish of \_\_\_\_\_ in or near the Town of Birmingham in the County of England
3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown.) yes
4. What is your Age? 23 years 1 month
5. What is your Trade or Calling? farm labourer
6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? no
7. Are you married? no
8. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) Mother Mrs Elizabeth Bunn  
Chorleywood, England  
Hertfordshire
9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? no
10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Incurable and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with Disgrace from the Navy? no
11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge no
12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? yes
13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? no
14. (For married men, widowers with children, and soldiers who are the sole support of widowed mother)—Do you understand that no separation allowance will be issued in respect of your service beyond an amount which together with pay would reach eight shillings per day? no
15. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against small pox and enteric fever? yes

I, Norman Bunn do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to allot not less than two-fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during my service for the support of my wife and children.

Date 28 JAN 1916

Norman Bunn  
Signature of person enlisted.

Army Form B. 103.

3rd MACHINE GUN BATTALION A.I.F.

Casualty Form—Active Service.

Regiment or Corps 11th Machine Gun Company 3rd Div. Regimental Number 20  
 Rank Cpl Surname BUNN (M.C.) Christian Name Norman  
 Religion C. of E Age on Enlistment 23 years 1 months.  
 Enlisted (a) 28.1.16 Terms of Service (a) War + 4 months Service reckons from (a) 28.1.16  
 Date of promotion to present rank 15.6.16 Date of appointment to lance rank  
 Extended                      Re-engaged                      Qualification (b)                       
 or Corps Trade and Rate farm laborer

Signature of Officer i/c Records.

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.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 26, or other official documents
Date	From whom received				
		Embarked ...			
		Disembarked...			
12/7/16	Non Roll	Embarked for O/Seas			
		per S.S. Borda	Alexandria	12/7/16	D10112
21.10.16	A.F.B. 213/ Larkhill	Prom: to Sgt.	England	14.10.16.	F.R. 227 D.O. 12 F.
23.11.16		PROCEEDED OVERSEAS FRANCE.	Southampton	23.11.16	F.R. 1576 = 12
30.3.17	Acc. 11th M.G. Coy.	Appointed Acting C.I. M.			20/3/1917
		vice C.I. M. temporary commission	Field	30.3.17	B213 C18/18
6.4.17	do	On Command to Div. Gas School	Camiers	1.4.17	B213 C18/17
13.4.17	do	To be C.S. No. 40. Olanth.	Field	2.4.17	B213 C18/20
12.4.17	do	Rejoined from Gas School	do	6.4.17	B213 C18/20
1.6.17	do	To 3rd Div. Con. Camp	do	27.5.17	B213 C18/27
15.6.17	do	Rejoined Unit From Con. Camp	do	13.6.17	B213 C18/20

(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) Signaller, Shoeing-smith, &c.  
 (B. 103) W 12012-2134 J. P. & Co., Ltd. Forms B. 103 & 213. [P.T.O.]



SHEET 2

Army Form B. 103.

(4)

Regimental Number.....

## Casualty Form—Active Service.

Regiment or Corps 3rd MACHINER GUN BATTALIONRank LIEUT Surname BURN (M.C.) Christian Name NormanReligion C. of E. Age on Enlistment 23 years 1 months

Enlisted (a)..... Terms of Service (a)..... Service reckons from (a).....

Date of promotion to present rank..... Date of appointment to lance rank.....

Extended { } Re-engaged { } Qualification (b).....  
or Corps Trade and rate.....

Occupation..... Signature of Officer.....

Report		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, &c., during active service, as reported on Army Form B.213, Army Form A. 36, or to other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army Form B.213, Army Form A.36, or other official documents.
Date	From whom received				
		Embarked ...			
		Disembarked ...			A.K. 2490/68
22.4.18	AIF List 319	PROMOTED LIEUTENANT	Field	15.2.18	DO.6/859 (1918)
15.4.18	OC St John's	Wounded. To England	Etaples	15.4.18	AK.2490/99
15.4.18	-do-	Admitted Wounds.	-do-	15.4.18	DO.6/825 (1918)
15.4.18	"Pcess Elizabeth	Transferred to England	-do-	15.4.18	AK.2490/91
					DO.6/710. (1918)
15.4.18	AIF List 326	Placed on Seconded List	-do-	4.4.18	DO.8/E 338E
					20.5.18.
15.4.18	3rd Lon.Gen.	Ad.GSW.Chest Severe	England	15.4.18	HR.594 DO.4/E
27.5.18	-do-	Disc.to O/Seas Tng Bde	-do-	27.5.18	R.13
8.6.18	E.30	Proceeded O/Seas France	Folkestone	8.6.18	GR.4309/2/e
					DO.12/E 17.6.

(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) Signaller, Shewing Smith, &amp;c.

W 1635—M2733 2000m 8/17 (83611) C. P. &amp; S., Ltd., Form B.103 E/1907.

P.T.O.



(5)

Report		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form 3-215, Army Form A, 38, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army Form B-215, Army Form A-38, or other official documents.
Date	From whom received				
8.6.18	M.G.R. Depot	Marched into Base Depot.	Caniers	8.6.18	183/416/23 DO.15/1753
12.6.18	-do-	Marched out to Battalion	-do-	12.6.18	183/416/23 (1918)
15.6.18	CO. 3rd MGBn.	Rejoined unit from England.	Field	13.6.18	vide 91FLIST 350. B. 215, C. 80/13.
		AWARDED MILITARY CROSS.			vide 91FLIST 389. dated 24.9.18. 8028/4379 (1918)
<p>LAUDATORY :- On the 3/4th July 1918, when in charge of four Machine Guns, his Section suffered Casualties. He re-distributed the loads, carrying the normal load of 2 men himself, and on arrival at the objective personally sighted his own and three captured Machine Guns, under heavy fire throughout. (3rd D.R. Orders Special).</p>					
17.11.18	2nd Lt. G. P. R.	2nd Lt. G. P. R.	Yarron	16.11.18	16.11.18
21.12.18	do.	1st Lt. injured from Yarron	do	18.12.18	C 80/46
1.3.19	do.	1st Lt. leave to Paris	do	25.2.19	C 80/50
17.1.19	3 do	Mto to V.H. for N.M.E.	do	6/4/19	C 80/56
10.4.19	A.P.B.	Mto to England.	Nare	10.4.19	9975/29/11/1919
19.4.19	1st Lt. R. S.	James born 14/4/19 - 14/7/19	London	14/4/19	LX 4625/4
		with pay route			do 8/1/19
		Reason: Farming.			25/4/1919
		Address: A.H. Bang. Newhouse			
		Farm: Buckinghamshire.			
11/4/19	N/R C. S. 10	Diseng. from France & Rpt	Stamilton	11/4/19	LX 4619
		to Paris house			
15/7/19	1st Lt. R. S.	Diseng. 8/1/19. Pines of 10mi. up road on 14/7/19			D/119
		Engo to slants for disposal		16.7.19	do. 140/29
		Engo to Paris to Sutton 16.7.19			21/7/19

D.B.

TELEPHONE:  
CENTRAL 4780.

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS  
TO "THE SECRETARY."



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

No. ....

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE,  
BASE RECORDS OFFICE, A.I.F.

MELBOURNE, 26th February, 1919.

DESPATCHED

Dear Madam,

I have much pleasure in forwarding hereunder copy of extract from  
Fourth Supplement No. 30915, to the "London Gazette,"  
dated 24th September, 1918, relating to the conspicuous  
services rendered by the undermentioned member of the Australian  
Imperial Force.

AWARDED THE MILITARY CROSS.

"HIS MAJESTY THE KING has been graciously pleased to approve of  
the above award to the undermentioned officer, in recognition of his  
gallantry and devotion to duty in the field:—

Lieutenant NORMAN BUNN.

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when in charge of  
four machine guns during an attack. He behaved with great coolness under  
heavy fire, and on arrival at the objective he personally sited his own  
guns and three captured guns. Throughout the operation he worked his  
guns with great skill, and set a fine example of courage and devotion to  
duty."

The above has been promulgated in "Commonwealth of Australia  
Gazette," No. 23, dated 12th February, 1919.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs. F. Bunn,  
Cherleywood,  
Hurtfordshire,  
ENGLAND.

Captain,  
for Officer i/c Base Records.

C.2425.



BUNN		LIEUT. Norman (L. Cpl)		2nd Lt 20	11th M.G. Coy.
WAR GRATUITY SCHEDULE		Other Names 11/12/12		Regimental No.	Unit.
PURPORT.				1st M. D.	AUTHORITY.
Embarked at Sydney per A30 "Borda" on 5/6/16.					
14/10/16 Prom to Sgt				LDN 12/7-16	
23-11-16 Proceeding O/S to France ex Southampton. (ER)				LDN. 12/1-16	
30/3/17 App. A/ C.S.M.				BEFO 13/1-17	
2/4/17 PROMOTED TO COMPANY SERGEANT MAJOR. & W.O.				BEFO 14/1-17	
3/7/17 TRANS. TO CADET SCHOOL MGCOURSE BISLEY ENGLAND				BEFO. 26/1-17	
18/1/17 1/8/17 on command at No 1 M.G. Officers Cadet Bn (IM)				LDN 37/1-17	
7/11/17 To Be 2/Lt and posted to M.G. Coy Rfts				LDN 46/1-17	
26/1/18 Pro O/Seas to France				LDN 5/1-18	
30/1/18 T.O.S. 11th M.G. Coy from Cadet Bn England				BEFO 9/1-18	
15/4/18 Adm to 3rd Ldn Gen Hosp GSW CHEST SEV.				IB 461/38-18	
27/5/18 Dis to O/Seas Tng Bde GSW CHEST-SEV				IB 488/72-18	
31/7/18 AWARDED MILITARY CROSS. (Sts Lt. & 3/MGBn) AIF List 367				1-9/8/18.	
D.825/2.16.-C.1924.					

  

PURPORT.		AUTHORITY.	
24/9/18 AWD. MILITARY CROSS. (Sts Lt. & 3rd MGBn.)	(DE)	BEFO 28/7-18	
15/4/17 Invld to U.K.	(LL)	BEFO 6/5-18	
on 8/6/18 M/In to M.G. Base Dpt from U.K. ex wounds	(LL)	BEFO 13/2-18	
4/4/18 Placed on Regl. Seconded list (Wounded)	(LL)	LDN 8/1-18	
15/4/18 Adm L of C Hosp. wounds	(LL)	BEFO 6/7-18	
AWD. MILITARY CROSS (Sts 3rd M.G. Btn & Lt.) AIF LIST 389/8		24/9/18	
15/4/18 Adm 3rd Lon. Gen. Hosp. GSW Chest sev.	(LL)	LDN 4/1-18	
30/3/18 Wounded (Sts 3rd M.G. Btn)	(LL)	BEFO 4/5-18	
15/2/18 PROM LIEUT.	(LL)	BEFO 6/8-18	