

William was born in Dubbo, NSW, the son of Thomas William Bates and Mary Emily Bates, nee Fitzsimmons. Williams father died in 1901 and his mother had remarried Raymond Randolph Coupe in 1912.

For some unknown reason, William enlisted into the Machine Gun Section of the AN&MEF on 11th August 1914, under his brother's name – Albert Robert Bates. He stated that he was a brewer's labourer and gave his mother, at 25 Ridge St, Leichardt, as his next of kin. He further stated that he was in the Australian Garrison Artillery from Oct 1907 till April 1914.

William returned from Rabaul and was discharged, term expired, on 4th March 1915, having served 206 days.

On 12th March 1915, he enlisted into the 5th Machine Gun Company, part of the 19th Battalion, under his real name, William Thomas Bates and was assigned the regimental number 1453. He departed with the battalion for Suez on the 25th June aboard the CERAMIC.

He was promoted corporal on 12th October 1915, to Sergeant on the 16th March 1916 and to Company Sergeant Major (CSM) on 23rd March 1918. His promotion to CSM was within the newly formed 2nd Machine Gun Battalion which came into existence on 16th March.

William was killed on 16th April 1918. In a letter written by his brother, Albert Robert Bates, reg number 2761, dated 7th November 1918, Robert states; -

"... my brother was killed in action on 15th April 1918 at a village named Gentilles, which is about 3 miles West of Villers Bretonneux in the Somme area – and is buried in the civilian cemetery at Gentilles. He has been posted as "Missing" for about 5 months and was last seen alive at his Company H.Q. on the afternoon of 15-4-18. He was seen right up till a few seconds of the shell landing which destroyed the H.Q. and since then he has not been seen or heard of, up till 18-9-1918."

Around the 19th Arthur was able to go to the site and identify the remains of his brother which were then buried. William was buried at Gentelles Community Cemetery and is remembered on Panel 177 at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.