Corporal J. Eric White (XC 1899-1902)

AWM ~ Roll of Honour
James Eric White

Service Number: 513
Rank: Corporal
Unit: 5th Australian Infantry Battalion
Date of death: 25 July 1916
Place of death: France
Age at death: 25
Place of burial: No known grave
Place of association: Camberwell, Australia
Memorial details: Australian National Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux, Somme, France.

From “The Xaverian” 1914 p. 45
J. Eric White was re-elected Hon. Sec. of the O.X.A., and Hon. Sec. of the Boat Club last May. He had done unexampled work as an organiser, and was full of plans for the building of school baths. Indeed, he came to the Editor to discuss these topics the night the war broke out, but it was plain his mind was otherwhere. His one idea was how to get to the front. Then volunteers were called for, and the next day came his resignation. He was, we think, the first Old Xaverians to volunteer. . .

“It’s a long way to Tipperary,” but if this should reach him the Editor can assure him that this office would most gladly see him dropping in again as in former times. Sursum Corda. The last note we had from him ended: “How is the O.X.A.?”

From “The Xaverian” 1916 p. 67
Corporal James Eric White.—It is with deep regret that we chronicle the death of “Eric.” White, one of the most staunch and true of the old Xaverians of recent years. On August 17th, 1914 Eric joined the A.I.F., and was drafted into a Battalion at Broadmeadows. After a few months in training he sailed by a transport on October 21st, 1914, for Gallipoli. Having spent some time in Egypt he was invalided to England suffering from his throat and eyes. On his recovery he returned to Gallipoli, was there until evacuation, and then proceeded to France, where he was killed in action on July 25th,
1916, in the biggest action the Australians have taken part in, his death was a fearful sudden one. A piece of shell struck him on the head, killing him instantaneously. Thus, at the early age of 25, one of Xavier’s best and truest left this earth. Death’s summons was a sharp one, but it found him not unprepared. It death be the echo of life, then in poor Eric’s case that echo must have been a very sweet one.

I knew poor Eric well, and felt how thoroughly he deserved every success that came to him in his unblemished years. May he rest in peace. The sympathy of the School is offered to his mother, on whom this terrible blow has come.