

Sutton Veny War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



6818 PRIVATE

F. J. COLLIS

12TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

24TH MARCH, 1918 Age 25

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte F. J. Collis is located in
Grave Plot # 329. D. 19. of St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny*

Francis Joseph COLLIS

Francis Joseph Collis was born at Broadmarsh near Brighton, Tasmania on 11th July, 1892 to parents Nicholas Edward Robert and Mary Jane Collis (nee McShane). He was a 24 year old, single, Farmer from Brighton, Tasmania when he enlisted at Claremont, Tasmania on 29th September, 1916 with the 12th Battalion, 22nd Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 6818 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr N. E. R. Collis of Brighton, Tasmania.

Pte Francis Joseph Collis embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Ulysses* (A38) on 25th October, 1916, along with his younger brother – Pte Albert Edward Collis, 6819. They disembarked at Plymouth, England on 28th December, 1916.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Private Francis Joseph Collis was marched in to 3rd Training Battalion at Durrington Camp, Wiltshire on 29th December, 1916.

Private Francis Joseph Collis proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 5th April, 1917. He joined Base Depot at Etaples, France on 6th April, 1917 where he was struck off strength on 9th April, 1917 & taken on strength on 12th April, 1917.

Private Francis Joseph Collis was wounded in action on 5th May, 1917 & admitted to 5th Field Ambulance on 7th May, 1917, with illness "NYD Nervousness" (NYD – not yet determined). Pte Collis was transferred to 47th Casualty Clearing Station on 8th May, 1917 "NYD Shell Shock." Pte Collis was admitted to Hospital at Doullens on 17th May, 1917 & discharged to duty on 22nd May, 1917 in France.

Pte Collis rejoined his Battalion on 27th May, 1917. He was sent to Hospital sick on 13th August, 1917. On 17th August, 1917, Pte Collis was admitted to 53rd Casualty Clearing Station with Trench Fever & transferred to 54th General Hospital with Trench Fever on 20th August, 1917.

Pte Collis it was decided would be transferred back to England & on 23rd August, 1917 he embarked for England on board the Hospital Ship *St. Patrick*.

Pte Collis was admitted to Guildford War Hospital in England on 23rd August, 1917 & transferred to 3rd Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford on 8th October, 1917. He was discharged to Depot at Weymouth on 12th October, 1917.

Pte Collis was marched in from No. 2 Command Depot on 17th October, 1917 & marched out to No. 4 Command Depot at Hurdcott, Wiltshire. Pte Collis was marched in to Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deverill, Wiltshire on 30th November, 1917.

Private Collis was admitted to the Military Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 14th December, 1917 with Influenza.

A telegram was sent to Mr N. Collis (father of Pte Collis) on 25th January, 1918 reporting that Private Francis Collis was seriously ill. Another telegram was sent on 5th February, 1918 advising that Private Francis Collis was improving.

Private Francis Joseph Collis died on 24th March, 1918 at the Military Hospital, Sutton Veny of Tuberculosis Generalised.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing File for Pte F. J. Collis contains a letter from the Assistant Matron of the Military Hospital., Sutton Veny, which reads:

"Pte Collis died in this Hospital on 24.3.18 of pneumonia. He was also I believe thought to be turbercular, He was here for several months and improved a little at one time and then gradually seemed to get a little weaker every day. He never complained much, always thought he would be better in a day or two. He had a good many people to see him (locally) who used to bring him flowers and fruit, and he had every attention. He was

mercifully unconscious for some little time before he died and the priest visited him every day. The Sister of the Ward did write to his people. He is buried in Sutton Veny Churchyard."

A death for Frank J. Collis, aged 25, was registered in the March quarter, 1918 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

Private Francis Joseph Collis was buried on 27th March, 1918 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny - Grave no. 329. From the burial report of Pte Collis - *The deceased was accorded a military funeral, the coffin being oak with brass fittings and name plate. The Firing Party was composed of men of deceased's unit and the Funeral was attended by about 40 members of the 3rd Brigade.*

Pte Francis Joseph Collis requested in his Will dated 4th November, 1917 that all his money & effects to be left to his mother – Mary Collis of Brighton Junction, Tasmania.

Private F. J. Collis is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 65.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

F. J. Collis & his brother A. E. Collis are both remembered on the Brighton Roll of Honour located in Brighton Council Chambers in Gagebrook, Tasmania.



Brighton Municipality Roll of Honour (Photo from Monument Australia – Arthur Garland)

F. J. Collis & his brother A. E. Collis are both remembered on the War Memorial at Pontville, located in a small park on the Midland Highway, Tasmania.



War Memorial at Pontville (Photos from Monument Australia – Diane Watson)

Pte Francis Joseph Collis was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal as he had entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Collis' father – Mr N. E. R. Collis (sent December, 1921 & October, 1922).

A War Pension was granted to Mary Jane Collis, mother of late Pte Francis Joseph Collis – “Granted 20/- per fortnight from 27/5/18 in addition to pension of 20/- per fortnight from 9/12/17 granted in respect of Albert E Collis.”

The CWGC lists Private Francis Joseph Collis, 6818, of 12th Battalion, Australian Infantry, A.I.F., as the son of N. E. R. and Mary Jane Collis of Brighton Junction, Tasmania.

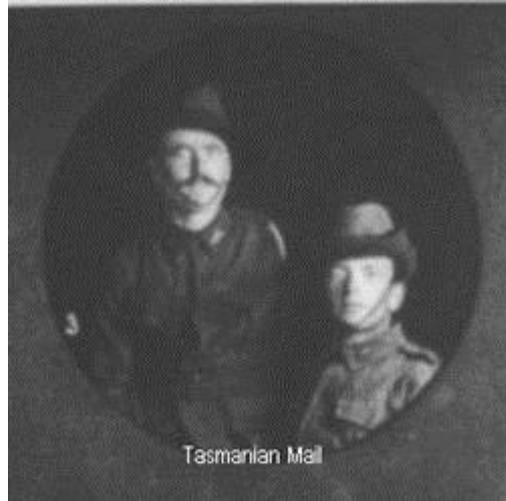
(51 pages of Pte Francis Joseph Collis' Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives.



[Connected to Pte Francis Joseph Collis –](#)

[Pte Albert Edward Collis, 6819, 12th Battalion A.I.F. Died of wounds on 21st September, 1917 & is buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium.](#)



Newspaper Reports

TASMANIAN CASUALTIES

DIED

Pte F. J. Collis, Brighton – 24/3/18

(The North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times, Tasmania – Wednesday 10 April, 1918)

ROLL OF HONOUR

COLLIS – On March 24, 1918, at Sutton Veny Military Hospital, England, Francis Joseph, the dearly beloved second son of Mr and Mrs Nicholas Collis, sen., of Brighton Junction, aged 25 years. R.I.P.

(The Mercury, Hobart, Tasmania – Tuesday 23 April, 1918)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone at St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)

Pte Francis Joseph Collis does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Photo of Pte F. J. Collis's Headstone in St. John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.



(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)



War Graves at Sutton Veny *(Photos from CWGC)*