

Sutton Veny War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War 1



59349 PRIVATE

F. N. OLSSON

AUSTRALIAN REINFORCEMENT

11TH OCTOBER, 1918

*CWGC Headstone for Pte F. N. Olsson is located in
Grave Plot # 359. E. 11. of St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny*

Frederick Neil OLSSON

Frederick Neil Olsson was born at Williamstown, Melbourne, Victoria on 29th January, 1887 to parents Neil & Sarah Olsson.

Frederick Olsson (born 188), Harold Victor Olsson (born 1891) & Olga Olsson (born 188) were listed in the Children's Registers of State Wards 1850-1893.

From the New South Wales Police Gazette for 1910 –

- *“Deserters from His Majesty's Service – From H.M.S. Prometheus at Melbourne on 10th March, 1910. Frederick Neil Olsson, stoker, 2nd class, born in North Melbourne, Victoria, 23 years of age, 5 feet 4 ½ inches high, dark-brown hair, dark-grey eyes, dark complexion (tattoos – clasped hands, heart, &c. on right forearm) scar on left knee. A reward of £3 will be paid for the apprehension of each of the abovenamed deserters.*

Frederick Neil Olsson was a 29 year old Seaman when he enlisted with 2nd Field Artillery, 11th Reinforcements in 28th August, 1915. He was given a service number of 5608 & his next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Sarah Olsson of 143 Melrose Street, North Melbourne. His rank was Driver. Driver Olsson did not embark – he absconded without leave. Driver Frederick Neil Olsson was discharged in January, 1916.

F. N. Olsson, aged 29, born Williamstown was listed as crew – Able Seaman on *Peregrine* which departed from Melbourne & arrived at the port of Sydney on 11th February, 1916.

Frederick Neil Olsson was a 29 year old, married, Sailor from 143 Melrose Street, North Melbourne when he re-enlisted on 15th May, 1916 at Melbourne, Victoria with 23rd Howitzer Brigade, 109th Battery. His service number was 22267 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Sarah Olsson of 143 Melrose Street, North Melbourne. He had previously been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service due to his teeth. (Embarkation Roll records that Frederick was a widower).

Driver Frederick Neil Olsson embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Medic* (A7) on 20th May, 1916. He was admitted to Ship's Hospital on 9th June to 28th June, 1916 with VD then again from 28th June to 1st July, 1916 with Influenza. Driver Olsson disembarked at Plymouth, England on 18th September, 1916.

A War Pension claim was submitted by Frederick Neil Olsson for himself but the claim was rejected as “not incapacitated” on 2nd June, 1916.

Frederick Neil Olsson, aged 30, married Annie Gray, aged 24, on 26th July, 1917 at St. Mark's Church of England at Mitcham, England. Both listed their address as Fairview, 4 London Rd, Mitcham. Their fathers details were listed as – Neil Olsson (deceased) Carpenter & William Henry Gray, plasterer.

Driver Olsson was taken on strength with 23rd Field Artillery Brigade on 2nd August, 1916 at Parkhouse & transferred to No. 3 D.A.C. (Divisional Ammunition Column) at Larkhill on 7th August, 1916 & his rank changed to that of Gunner.

Gunner Olsson was absent without leave whilst on active service from midnight 8-9th October, 1916 until 10 a.m. on 9th October, 1916. He was confined to Barracks for 7 days & forfeited 1 days pay.

Gunner Olsson proceeded overseas to France on 24th November, 1916 & was admitted to Hospital on 17th December, 1916 with cystitis. He was discharged to duty on 25th December, 1916.

Gunner Olsson was admitted to 10th Australian Field Ambulance on 25th April, 1917 with appendicitis. He was transferred to 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station on 7th April, 1917 then transferred to 35th General

Hospital at Calais, France. Gunner Olsson embarked for England on 23rd April, 1917 on Hospital Ship *Cambria*.

Gunner Olsson was admitted to London General Hospital, Wandsworth from 24th April, 1917 to 7th May, 1917 with a burst appendix. He was transferred to the Holborn Military Hospital at Mitcham on 7th May, 1917 until 21st June, 1917. Gunner Olsson was transferred to 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield from 21st to 23rd June, 1917. Gunner Olsson was discharged to No. 2 Command Depot on 23rd June, 1917.

A Medical Report was completed on August, 1917 at No. 2 Australian Command Depot, Weymouth, regarding Gunner Olsson's disability – Appendectomy which had occurred 4 months previously. The report stated that Olsson was a "sallow anaemic man.....had pain & tenderness over a large area of the abdomen but has no localising signs. Is apparently neurotic over his conditions.....vomiting last 4 months and practically in bed for this time." The Medical Board found that Gunner Frederick Neil Olsson was permanently unfit for General Service & permanently unfit for Home Service. As a result Gunner Olsson was to embark from Devonport for Australia on 27th August, 1917 on *Pakeha*. He returned to Australia on 22nd October, 1917.

Gunner Frederick Neil Olsson was discharged on 19th January, 1918. A War pension was granted to Frederick Neil Olsson of 143 Melrose St, Nth Melbourne in the sum of 46/6 per fortnight from 20th January, 1918. A notification was sent to Frederick Neil Olsson of Ward 11, 11th A.G.H. in which his War Pension was increased from 46/6 to 62/- per fortnight from 31st January, 1918.

Frederick Neil Olsson was a 31 year old, married, Labourer from North Melbourne, Victoria when he re-enlisted at Sydney, NSW on 15th May, 1918 with the 12th (N) Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 59349 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Annie Olsson of Sibthorpe Terrace, London Road, Mitcham, Surrey, England. Frederick Olsson also listed 2 children on his Attestation form – Ethel Maud – aged 5 years & William Henry – aged 7 years. Frederick had previously served 2 years with the Navy.

Pte Olsson was written up on the Conduct Sheet for disobedience of orders on 13th June, 1918 while at camp in Liverpool, NSW. He was severely reprimanded by Capt. Harper.

Private Frederick Neil Olsson embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Borda* (A30) on 17th July, 1918 & was made Acting Corporal the same day. Acting Corporal Olsson was admitted to the Ship's Hospital while at sea – 31st July to 1st August, 1918 with Contusions in side (Bruises); 5th August to 6th August, 1918 with pedicule pubis; from 11th August to 12th August, 1918 with scabies & from 12th August to 13th August, 1918 with febricula. He disembarked at London, England on 27th September, 1918. Olsson's rank reverted back to Pte on landing in England.

A letter was written to Base Records dated 28th July, 1918 from Annie Olsson of Mitcham, England, wife of Frederick Neil Olsson. She had been instructed by the Chief Paymaster, A.I.F. London to apply to Base Records for information concerning her husband No. 22267 Pte F. N. Olsson, 109th Howitzer Battery. She stated that she had heard from her husband "when he was sailing & was later informed by the Immigration Dept. that my passage had been paid & I was to await further news regarding a sailing. Later the Dept. notified me that they had received a cable form Australia stating that my husband was returning to England & that my sailing was postponed but the passage money was not withdrawn. I myself have not heard anything whatever from my husband since he sailedif you could give me any information at to his (husband's) whereabouts." Base Records advised Mrs Olsson that her husband had returned to Australia on 22nd October, 1917 & was discharged from A.I.F. on 19th January, 1918. They also advised that her husband had re-enlisted on 15th May, 1918 & re-embarked for active service on 17th July, 1918.

Private Frederick Neil Olsson was marched in to 5th Training Brigade from Australia on 27th September, 1918 & allotted to Reinforcements of 18th Battalion.

Private Olsson was marched in from Training Brigade at Fovant, Wiltshire to R.B.A.A. (Reserve Brigade Australian Artillery) at Heytesbury, Wiltshire on 4th October, 1918 & transferred to Artillery Details.

Private Frederick Neil Olsson was admitted to the Group Clearing Hospital on 4th October, 1918 with Influenza – Pneumonia?. He was transferred to Military Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 8th October, 1918 with Whooping cough & Broncho pneumonia, dangerously ill.

Private Frederick Neil Olsson died at 00.15 hrs on 11th October, 1918 at the Military Hospital, Sutton Veny of Whooping Cough & Pneumonia.

A death for Frederick N. Olsson, aged 31, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

Private Frederick Neil Olsson was buried on 14th October, 1918 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny - Grave no. 359. From the burial report of Pte Olsson - *Coffin was good polished Elm with Brass Mounts – Deceased was buried with full Military Honours, the coffin draped with the Union Jack being borne to the graveside on a Gun Carriage preceded by a Firing Party and Band. Six of Deceased's Unit comrades acted as Pall-Bearers. Chief mourners present were (wife) Mrs Annie Olsson and (Brother-in-law) Mr S. Gray of Fairview, 4 Sibthorpe Terrace, London Road, Mitcham, Surrey. A number of Unit comrades also attended as mourners. Headquarters A.I.F. Depots in U. K. were represented at the funeral.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Pte Frederick Neil Olsson contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of his relatives to find out particulars of his illness, death and burial.

- A letter from Constance Keys for Matron of No. 1 Australian General Hospital dated 4th June, 1919 reads: "*Pte Fred H. Olsson 12th Gen. Rfts. who died in this hospital on the 11th October 1918. The hospital at that date was under R.A.M.C. administration and there are no records to be had here now of that period.*"
- A letter from Staff Officer, M.R.C. British Museum dated 15th July, 1919 reads: "*On 8.10.18 Gunner F. N. Olsson 59349 Res. Bgde Aust. age 31. Service 5/12 was admitted to the Military Hospital (Central) Sutton Veny, suffering from Whooping Cough and died (0015) on the 11.10.1919.*"

Pte Frederick Neil Olsson requested in his Will dated 12th July, 1918 that all his real & personal Estate be left to his wife – Annie Olsson of Mitcham, Surrey, England.

A letter was written to Senator Russell dated 24th April, 1919 from Harold Olsson, brother of late Frederick Neil Olsson which reads in part: "*My mother on Saturday the 19th inst. received communication worded thus, Sarah Olsson 143 Melrose St, Nth Melbourne. If you are at any time without adequate means of support you may apply for war pension in respect of the death of your son. This is the first word she has had, she went to make inquiries & she learned practically nothing, on Tuesday 22nd the second notice came worded thus Sarah Olsson 143 Melrose St, Nth Melbourne. I have to inform you from information received recently it is understood your son Frederick Neil Olsson died while in training camp in England on the 11th October, 1919. If any further particulars are received you will be notified from this office*". Harold Olsson writes further "*Now if you notice the dates you will see the blundering way in which the Dept. has handled this information & made it more painful to my mother.....*" The letter to Senator Russell was referred to Base Records, Melbourne & their reply stated "*....the notices receivedwere evidently transmitted from the Deputy Commissioner of Pensions, Melbourne, and not from this office. The next-of-kin of the late soldier is recorded as wife, resident in England, who would have been notified direct from A.I.F. Headquarters, London of the regrettable loss of her husband. As your mother's name did not appear on the records here, you will understand why she was not notified of the casualty. Her name and address have now been noted, and any information that may come to hand, will be transmitted to her. The only advice at present received is to the effects that Private Olsson was admitted on 8/10/18 to Sutton Veny Military Hospital, England suffering from pneumonia – seriously ill- and died on 11/10/18.*"

Mrs Olsson, mother of late Pte F. N. Olsson, paid £3 in July, 1921 to have photo of her son's headstone sent to her.

Private F. N. Olsson is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 185.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Pte Frederick Neil Olsson was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also to be sent to Pte Olsson's widow – Mrs. A. Olsson but it was noted in November, 1922 that Mrs A. Olsson had returned to Australia when the British War Medal & Victory Medals were being sent out to the next-of-kin. As Mrs A. Olsson's address was unknown in Australia, Base Records wrote to Pte Olsson's mother requesting her daughter-in-law's address. She replied with the address in England. The War Medals were returned from Australia House in England. It is unclear whether Mrs A. Olsson received the War Medals or the Memorial Scroll & Plaque. Normally signed receipts for these items are filed in the Service record file of the soldier concerned. No signed receipts for any of these items are located in Pte Olsson's Service Record file.

The CWGC lists Private Frederick Neil Olsson, 59349, of 12th Australian Reinforcement, A.I.F. No family details are listed.

(120 pages of Pte Frederick Neil Olsson's 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 file) & National Archives.



Newspaper Reports

The 445th CASUALTY LIST

DEAD, OTHER CAUSES

Pte F. N. Olsson (England), illness

(The Farmer and Settler, Sydney, NSW – Tuesday 10 December, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

OLSSON – In loving memory of my brother, Frederick Neil Olsson, who passed away in Sutton Veney Hospital, England, on the 11th Oct., 1918.

Sadly missed.

- (Inserted by his loving brother, Harold Olsson).

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – Saturday 11 October, 1919)

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 Veney. 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 Frederick Neil Olsson does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.



Photo of Private F. N. Olsson's CWGC headstone in St. John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.



(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)



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