

Compton Chamberlayne War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



9956 DRIVER

A.H. OLIVER

AUSTRALIAN FIELD ARTILLERY

22nd MARCH, 1918 Age 25

IN LOVING MEMORY

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Driver A H Oliver is located in Middle Row
Grave Plot # 1 of Compton Chamberlayne Cemetery*

Alison Hope Oliver was born in 1893 at Bourke, NSW, to parents William & Elizabeth Dowell Oliver (nee Whately). He was a Jackeroo, single & aged 22 years from Neutral Bay, NSW when he enlisted on 18th October, 1915 with the 1st Field Artillery Brigade, 13th Reinforcements of the Australian Army. His service number was 9956 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs E Oliver of Pendriana, Macpherson Street, Neutral Bay, NSW.

Gunner Alison Hope Oliver embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Berrima* (A35) on 17th December, 1915 & disembarked at Suez on 23rd January, 1916.

Gunner Oliver was posted to Cairo, Serapeum & Tel El Kebir. He was posted to France on 17th May 1916.

On 1st July, 1916 Oliver was transferred to Muster Driver in the Field.

In December, 1916 he was admitted to hospital with “sore feet”. He was admitted several times to hospital over the next several months & in June, 1917 was transferred back to England.

Advice was sent on 15th June, 1917, to Mrs E Oliver (mother) that Driver A H Oliver was suffering trench fever – mild, and had been admitted to 3rd Southern General Hospital, Oxford, England.

In August, 1917 Oliver was transferred to several training units on the Salisbury Plain.

On 17th November, 1917 Gunner Oliver was again posted to France & admitted to hospital on 1st December, 1917 suffering from influenza. He was transferred back to England on 6th December, 1917 to hospitals at Winchester, Harefield & Hurdcott.

On 5th February, 1918 it was noted that Driver Oliver was suffering from bronchitis & he was transferred to Military Hospital at Fovant.

Driver Alison Hope Oliver died at 3.10 p.m. on 22nd March, 1918 at the Military Hospital at Fovant. A post mortem was conducted & a large solid tumour, filling the whole of the left pleural cavity was found. Cause of death was listed as Sarcoma of left lung. A death for Alison H Oliver, aged 24, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Wilton, Wiltshire. (Fovant was a parish in the district of Wilton).

Dvr Alison Hope Oliver was buried at Compton Chamberlayne cemetery on 25th March, 1918. From the burial report of Driver A H Oliver – Coffin was good, Polished Beech with Brass Mountings –*Military Funeral. The funeral was attended by a platoon of men from his company in the Depot. His two brothers who had come over from France assisted the pallbearers.*

L/Cpl Percy Dowell Oliver No 5937 of 18th Battalion (enlisted 9/5/1916) & Gnr James Whateley Oliver no 35652 of 4th Bty (enlisted 2/2/1917) attended their brother’s funeral.

Driver A H Oliver's Will dated 15th December, 1915 – 2 days before embarking:

Dear Ken

These few lines are just to express a few little wishes. The trinkets of mine Cigarette case and match box are to be given to Jim. My deferred pay and any money that I might have saved is to go to Mother if anything should happen to her then it is to go to Jean. There is nothing more worth mentioning which is property of mine. I remain Your affectionate Brother A. H. Oliver

A later Will, dated 16th July, 1917 stated "my personal estate I bequeath to Elizabeth Oliver "Pendiana" Macpherson Street, Neutral Bay, Sydney".

Letter from The Matron, Military Hospital, Fovant – dated 10th April, 1918

Pte Oliver died in this hospital on the 22.3.18 from malignant growth of the lung. He was admitted on the 7.2.18 with pain in the chest and left eye, growth on the chest rapidly extended, specialists were called in, but it was agreed an operation could not be performed and he gradually got worse until he passed away. We sent for his two brothers from France and they were with him and for some time previously until his death. He asked to be told the worst and his resignation and patience to what he knew was inevitable was splendid, we never had a better patient. He was buried at Compton Chamberlayne.

Driver A H Oliver is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 16.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Driver A H Oliver is also remembered on the North Sydney War Memorial at St Leonards Park, Cnr Walker and Ridge Streets, North Sydney, NSW. The War Memorial contains the names of 616 veterans of World War 1, World War 2, Korean Campaign & South African campaign.



(Photos by David Roden and Andrew Howell)

Driver A H Oliver was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll (November, 1921) & Memorial Plaque (October, 1922) were sent to Driver Oliver's mother – Mrs Elizabeth Oliver of Neutral Bay, Sydney, NSW.

The National Museum of Australia in Canberra has a collection of 10 items that belonged to Driver Alison Hope Oliver – 9956. Items include Death plaque, Commemorative Certificate, British War Medal, Victory Medal, Mothers & Widows badge (Issued to Driver Oliver’s mother) [Images](#) (Purchased 1 July 2003- 30 June 2004)



Mother's & Widows Badge



Death plaque for Driver A H Oliver

Images from National Museum of Australia

(72 pages of Driver A H Oliver’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) & National Archives

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Driver Alison Hope Oliver was one of 5 brothers that enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF)

- Pte William Dalgleish Oliver no 321 of Light Horse Regiment (enlisted 22/8/1914)
- Pte Jack Davidson Oliver no 46 of Light Horse Regiment (enlisted 19/10/1914)
- Driver Alison Hope Oliver no 9956 (enlisted 18/10/1915)
- L/Cpl Percy Dowell Oliver No 5937 of 18th Battalion (enlisted 9/5/1916)
- Gnr James Whateley Oliver no 35652 of 4th Bty (enlisted 2/2/1917)

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ROLL OF HONOUR

OLIVER – March 22, 1918, died of illness in England, Driver Alison H. Oliver, 88th Battery, fifth son of Mrs E. D. Oliver, of Macpherson Street, Neutral Bay, aged 24 years.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – Thursday 28th March, 1918)

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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 Compton Chamberlayne Cemetery. 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)

Driver Oliver does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Photo of Driver A H Oliver 's Headstone at Compton Chamberlayne War Graves Cemetery



Photo courtesy of Andrew Stacey