

Sutton Veny War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



3122 PRIVATE

V. BEST

50TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

7TH APRIL, 1917

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte V. Best is located in
Grave Plot # 286. C. 11. of St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny*

Victor BEST

Victor Best was born in Adelaide, South Australia in 1896 to George & Isabella Best (formerly Morbey). He was a 20 year old, single Labourer when he enlisted at Adelaide on 4th October, 1916 with the 8th Reinforcements, 50th Battalion of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 3122 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his half-sister – Mrs M. Whipp of Norwood, Sth Australia (parents deceased).

Pte Victor Best embarked from Adelaide on HMAT *Berrima* (A35) on 16th December, 1916 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 16th February, 1917.

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 Best was marched in from Australia to 15th Training Battalion at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 21st February, 1917. He was transferred to 13th Training Battalion at Codford, Wiltshire on 6th March, 1917.

Pte Victor Best written up for overstaying leave from Codford from 1 a.m. on 27th March, 1917 until 7.30 a.m. on 30th March, 1917. He was awarded 10 days F.P. & forfeited a total of 13 days' pay.

Private Victor Best was sent sick to Group Hospital at Codford on 4th April, 1917 & admitted to the Military Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 6th April, 1917. He was reported as seriously ill.

Private Victor Best died on 7th April, 1917 at the Military Hospital, Sutton Veny of Broncho pneumonia.

A death for Victor Best, aged 20, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire. A copy of his death certificate is included in Pte Victor Best's service record file.

Private Victor Best was buried on 12th April, 1917 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny - Grave no. 286

Pte Victor Best's Red Cross Wounded & Missing file contains a letter from The Matron, Military Hospital, Sutton Veny regarding Pte Victor Best which reads:

"He was admitted into hospital on April 5th suffering from acute Broncho-pneumonia. Everything that was possible was done for him but he died two days later. He was a R.C. and was visited by the priest. He had no other visitors. The sister of his ward wrote to his relatives telling all particulars and sent a money order to them, which had belonged to him. He is buried in Sutton Veny, Grave No. 286. This is all the information we can give you, as he was in so short a time."

Private V. Best is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 150.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

The National War Memorial in Adelaide commemorates those from South Australia that served in the First World War. The names of those that died are listed inside the Memorial, which is located on the corner of North Terrace & Kintore Avenue, Adelaide.



National War Memorial – Adelaide (Photos by Bilby)

Pte Victor Best was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Best's half-sister & foster-mother – Mrs M Whipp (sent August, 1921 & July, 1922). (Base Records had previously contacted Mr R. Morbey of Evandale, South Australia as he was the closest relative of Pte Victor Best – being his half-brother, with Mrs M. Whipp, being a half –sister & foster mother to Pte Victor Best, it was suggested by Base Records that Mrs Whipp receive Pte Victor's medals as Mr R. Morbey would be receiving his own medals for his own service.). (The family situation was described by Mrs Whipp in a letter dated 28 May, 1921 to Base Records – “..... My mother as a widow with 3 children named as follows Edith Morbey (eldest), Margaret Morbey (second) & Reginald Morbey(youngest). She then married again to George Best and another son was born that was Private Victor Best 3122, so you see we are all of the one mother.....”

The CWGC lists Private V. Best, 3122, of 50th Battalion, Australian Infantry, A.I.F.. No family details are listed.

(62 pages of Pte Victor Best'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.



Newspaper Reports

CASUALTY LISTS

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LOSSES

289th LIST

Died of Sickness

3122 Pte V. Best, Norwood (April 7)

(*Chronicle*, Adelaide, Sth Australia – Saturday 28 April, 1917)

THE LATE PRIVATE V. BEST

Mrs M. Whipp, of William-street, Norwood, has been notified that her brother Private Victor Best (known as Victor Morbey) died of pneumonia in the Sutton Veney Military Hospital, England, on April 7. He was the son of the late George & Isabella Best, and left Adelaide on December 16 last with the 8th Reinforcements of the 50th Battalion. He was 20 years of age, and before his enlistment was employed at the Waverly vinegar works. He was of a happy disposition and was well liked by all who knew him.



(*The Register*, Adelaide, Sth. Australia – Saturday 5 May, 1917 & *Chronicle*, Adelaide, Sth Australia – Saturday 12 May, 1917)

HEROES OF THE GREAT WAR

BEST - In loving remembrance of our dear brother, Victor, who died at Sutton Veny Hospital, England, on April 7, 1917, aged 20 years.

Far, far from the home of his childhood;
 Away o'er the ocean so deep,
In a faraway land, dear Victor,
 Is taking his last long sleep.
Sweet is the memory he left behind
Of a life that was manly, true, and kind.

-Inserted by his sisters, brother, and brother-in-law.

(*The Advertiser*, Adelaide, Sth. Australia – Saturday 6 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*)

A letter, dated 20th July, 1921 was sent by Mrs M. Whipp of Kent Town, Sth Australia advising that she could not afford to the cost of a headstone for her brother Pte Victor Best "I have had a very hard struggle to make ends meet as I have not had a chance to save any money in addition to rearing my brothers". A reply was sent dated 29th July, 1921 advising Mrs Whipp that the cost of the headstone was at the expense of the Government, however if an inscription was desired that the relatives were to pay this cost & forms sent with the reply letter.

Pte Victor Best does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.



Photo of Pte V. Best'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)*