In Memory of

Private
OLIVER WILLIAM WOOLFREY
149, 2nd Ammunition Sub-Park, Australian Army Service Corp.
who died age 27
on 20th August 1917

Son of Arthur William and Emma Jane Woolfrey, of Langside St.,
Brisbane, Queensland.

Remembered with honour
MENIN ROAD SOUTH MILITARY CEMETERY, BELGIUM

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL   P03452.015

Oliver William Woolfrey was a Brisbane resident, but a graduate of the Toowoomba Grammar School, who enlisted on 20 August 1914. He was a 24-year-old motor mechanic and, therefore, very useful to the army even in those days when horse-drawn transport was still a major component of the AIF's logistics. Oliver was the son of Arthur William and Emma Jane Woolfrey, of Langside Street, Hamilton, Brisbane. He wrote his birthplace as Fortitude Valley.

Oliver was short and slightly-built at 5'4" and 112 pounds. He had a fair complexion, brown eyes, fair hair and wrote his denomination as COE. His slight frame probably excluded him from the infantry in the early months of recruiting, but his trade was a definite advantage and he was placed in the first expeditionary force to leave Australia on 24 September 1914. He had some military experience in the 9th Infantry but was now attached to the 1st Light Horse Brigade Train. He sailed aboard the A5 *Omrah* from Brisbane bound for Egypt.

It is not clear from his file if Oliver actually served on Gallipoli. He certainly embarked for the Peninsula at Alexandria on 9 May 1915, but by the end of the month he had returned to Egypt to work with the 5th Company ASC (Army Service Corps). His mechanical skills were evidently required in Egypt.

In June 1916 Oliver sailed to Marseilles to support the AIF in the coming campaigns on the Western Front. He served in France for two months as a member of the 14th Company ASC, until ill health led to his evacuation to hospital in England. After hospital discharge in August he worked at the depots in England for about six months, possibly including artillery details; then his transfer came to return to service overseas in France. From February 1917 Oliver was with his unit in France and Belgium, chiefly occupied in maintaining the army's motor-driven vehicles and often working close to the front lines.

In the late summer and autumn of 1917 the British Army conducted a major offensive at Ypres in Belgium. The AIF was heavily involved and suffered enormous casualties. On 20 August Oliver was badly wounded, apparently a victim of effective German shelling of the back areas and support units, a feature of the Ypres campaign. There are no official accounts of the actual event, but it is known that he was evacuated to the 42nd Field Ambulance, where his injuries were described as "shell wounds, face and thigh". A few days later his record was closed with the stark entry: "Admitted shell wounds multiple, fractured left thigh, and DIED (sic)". Oliver died on the day of his wounding, the 20 August, the third anniversary of his enlistment.

Oliver was buried in the Menin Road South Military Cemetery (grave II.C.4) about 2 kilometres east of Ypres, in Belgium. In 1921 and 1922 his parents received his medals and mementoes from the government. Oliver's father corresponded with the army to close his affairs and the Protestant Alliance Friendly Society of Australasia, Pride of Queensland, Lodge No. 3, Queen Street, Brisbane, required a

death certificate to attend to insurance matters. Oliver had served 3 years with the AIF and died at 27 years of age.

Toowoomba Grammar School Archive Records state that he started school on 30th January 1906 and left on 13 December 1907. The School Magazine dated November 1917 states, '*WOOLFREY, OLIVER-Son of Mr. and Mrs. Woolfrey, of Hamilton, Brisbane-At School T90-Driver. Died of wounds, France, August 1917. Age 27.*'

External Links:
CWGC
AWM4 AIF unit war diaries25/53/2 2ND AUSTRALION AMMUNITION SUB PARK AUG 1917
Australian War Memorial Honour Roll
Australian National Archives Military Record

W. O. Woolfrey