

**Efford Cemetery,
Plymouth, Devon, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



15892 SAPPER

P. O. BECK

AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS

15TH JANUARY, 1917 Age 18

Phillip Oswald BECK

Phillip Oswald Beck was born at Mossiface, East Gippsland, Victoria on 28th July, 1898 to parents Henry Nicholas Beck & Alice Ann Beck (nee Corker). (His place of birth was listed as Bruthen on Victorian Births, Deaths & Marriages).

Phillip Oswald Beck attended St. Arnaud High School, Victoria.

Phillip Oswald Beck was an 18 year old, single, Salesman from 239 Gold Street, Clifton Hill, Victoria when he enlisted on 5th October, 1916 in Melbourne, Victoria with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Roman Catholic & his next of kin was listed as his father – Henry V. Beck (“Henry V. Beck” as listed on Embarkation Roll), State School, Tanek’s Corner, Victoria. Phillip Beck stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously been rejected as unfit for His Majesty’s Service due to a Hernia.

As Phillip Oswald Beck was under the age of 21, his parents were required to sign their consent for their son to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.) for active service abroad. H. N. Beck & A. A. Beck both signed their names on a letter dated 5th May, 1916.

Private Phillip Oswald Beck was posted to Signal School, A.I.F. on 5th October, 1916. He was transferred to 17th Reinforcements of 2nd Divisional Signal Company on 12th October, 1916.

Sapper Phillip Oswald Beck, Service number 15892, embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Ulysses (A38)* on 25th October, 1916 with the 2nd Divisional Signal Company, 17th Reinforcements. He was admitted to Ship’s Hospital on 9th December, 1916 with Cerebro Spinal Meningitis. Sapper Beck 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.

Sapper Phillip Oswald Beck was transferred from H.M.A.T. A 38 & admitted to Devonport Military Hospital on 28th December, 1916 – sick severe. The Transfer Certificate recorded “*Meningitis progressing slowly. Cot case. To be swung off.*” The Hospital Admissions form recorded “*A severe case.....*”. He was reported to be dangerously ill with “*Disease No. 5*” on 5th January, 1917.

Base Records advised Mr H. N. Beck, State School, Tancks Corner, Victoria, on 10th January, 1917 that his son Private Phillip O. Beck was dangerously ill with Meningitis. Mr H. N. Beck was advised on 13th January, 1917 that Sapper P. O. Beck had been admitted to Military Hospital, Devonport on 5th January, 1917.

Sapper Phillip Oswald Beck died at 6.35 am on 15th January, 1917 at Military Hospital, Devonport, England from Cerebro Spinal Meningitis.

A death for Phillip O. Beck, aged 18, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Devonport, Devon, England.

Sapper Phillip Oswald Beck was buried on 17th January, 1917 in “Eggord Cemetery, Plymouth” – Class “C” Roman Catholic Ground Grave No. 3465.

This is now recorded as Efford Cemetery, Plymouth, Devon, England – Plot number R.C. C. 3465 and he now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

From information provided by his mother for the Roll of Honour: “*On his 18th birthday he was rejected as unfit for military service but on applying again he was allowed to go under observation in Melbourne Hospital. On 5 October 1916 he went to camp at Seymour, attached to the Engineers. On 25 October 1916 he sailed on A38, became ill and never regained consciousness after landing in England. He died of meningitis in Devonport Military Hospital.*”

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Sapper Phillip Oswald Beck contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of the relatives to obtain the nature of his sickness or wounds. The Lieutenant Colonel, R.A.M.C. in charge of Military Hospital replied with the following letter: *"I much regret to inform you that No. 15892 Private Beck (P.O.), 2nd Div. Signal Coy., A.I.F., died in this Hospital on January 15th 1917. He was admitted here on arrival from Australia from H.M.T. "Eulysses" on December 28th in a critical condition suffering from Cerebro-spinal Meningitis. In spite of every attention by the Medical Officer and Nursing staff he made no improvement, but became gradually worse and died at 6.35 am on 15th January 1917. He was buried at 10 am on January 17th with Military honours in the Egg Buckland Cemetery, Plymouth."*

Margaret A. Beck, Tanck's Corner via Diamond Creek, sister of the late Sapper Phillip O. Beck, applied for a War Pension. It was rejected *"not dependent on earnings of the deceased soldier during 12 months prior to enlistment."*

Headquarters, 3rd Military District, A.I.F., Melbourne, Victoria replied to Base Records on 9th February, 1917 with the following: *"With reference to your 31612 (sub. No. 3) of the 18th ultimo, reporting No. 15892, Sapper P. O. Beck, 2nd Divisional Signal Company, Australian Imperial Force. Died 15/1/17 of Meningitis, at Military Hospital, Devonport, please note that the present address of the next-of-kin (Father) Mr H. N. Beck, is 239 Gold Street, Clifton Hill. Mr Beck has been informed of the death of his son."*

Sapper Phillip Oswald Beck 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 Sapper Beck's father - Mr H. N. Beck, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent December, 1921 & Plaque sent August, 1922).

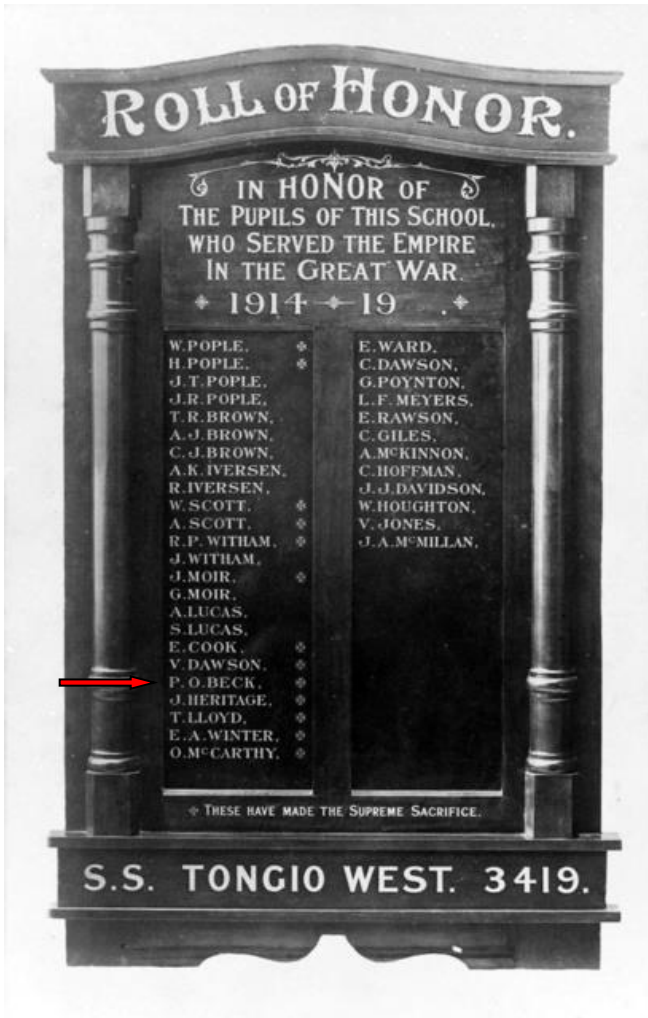
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Sapper Phillip Oswald Beck – service number 15892, aged 18, of 2nd Div. Signal Coy., Australian Engineers. He was the son of Henry Nicholas Beck & Alice Ann Beck, of 45 Murray St., Elsternwick, Victoria, Australia.

Sapper P. O. Beck is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 25.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

P. O. Beck is remembered on the Tongio West State School Honour Roll, located in Omeo Historic Park and Museum, Day Avenue, Omeo, Victoria.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H17682



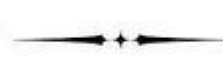
At Omeo Museum 1993. [tongw1.gif]

Tongio West State School Honour Roll

(Photo on left – AWM; right – Victorian Heritage Database)

(40 pages of Sapper Phillip Oswald Beck's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

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





Sapper Phillip Oswald Beck (*Photo from Jeremy Beck – Great Nephew*)



Newspaper Notices

DEATHS

On Active Service

BECK – On the 15th January, at Devonport Military Hospital, London, died of meningitis, Sapper Phillip O., beloved eldest son of H. N. Beck, State school, Tanck's Corner, and of Alice A. Beck, 239 Gold Street, Clifton hill, loving brother of Tom, Hatton, Greta, Ken, and Joe, aged 18 years 5 months.

(The Age, Melbourne, Victoria – 27 January, 1917)

DIED ON SERVICE

BECK – On the 15th January, at Devonport Military Hospital, London, died of meningitis, Sapper Phillip O., beloved eldest son of H. N. Beck, State school, Tanck's Corner, and of Alice A. Beck, 239 Gold Street, Clifton hill, loving brother of Tom, Hatton, Greta, Ken, and Joe, aged 18 years 5 months.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 27 January, 1917) & (The Australasian, Melbourne, Victoria – 3 February, 1917)

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCES

269th CASUALTY LIST

DIED FROM ILLNESS

Spr P. O. BECK, Tanck's Corner, 15/1/17

(Bendigo Advertiser, Victoria – 30 January, 1917)

DIED ON SERVICE

BECK – On the 15th January, at Devonport Military Hospital, London, died of meningitis, Sapper Phillip O., dearly loved grandson of Mr H. Hatton Beck, Dawson Park, Oakleigh, and late of St. Albans.

May his soul rest in peace.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 1 February, 1917)

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. 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)

Sapper Phillip Oswald Beck does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Efford Cemetery, Plymouth, Devon, England

During the First World War, Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse contained between them the Royal Dockyard, Royal Naval Barracks (known as H.M.S. Vivid), the Royal Marine Barracks of the Plymouth Division, and naval and military hospitals. For the duration of the war, Devonport was made headquarters of the Auxiliary Patrol Area. Plymouth was a naval station second only to Portsmouth during the Second World War. Devonport was also an important military station and there was a R.A.F station at Mount Batten, opposite Plymouth. PLYMOUTH (EFFORD) CEMETERY contains 338 scattered burials of the First World War. The 109 Second World War burials, including 5 unidentified, are also scattered apart from a small group in Section C, in a plot set aside for service burials that was actually little used. The Commission also maintains five non-war burials within the cemetery and 12 war graves of other nationalities, most of them Greek merchant seamen. PLYMOUTH CITY CREMATORIUM is situated in Plymouth (Efford) Cemetery and 61 servicemen and women of the Second World War whose remains were cremated there are commemorated on a screen wall set into a recess in the hedge behind the Cross of Sacrifice.

(Information & photos from CWGC)



Cross of Sacrifice in Efford Cemetery, Plymouth *(Photo from CWGC)*



War Graves in Efford Cemetery, Plymouth *(Photo from CWGC)*



War Graves in Efford Cemetery, Plymouth *(Photos courtesy of Rebecca Smith)*

Photo of Sapper P. O. Beck's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Efford Cemetery, Plymouth, Devon, England.



(Photo from Find a Grave - Woose)